Recover with Pride

LGBTQ+ GAMBLING HARM SUPPORT

Keeping Busy and Gambling Recovery

switchboard

REFRAME COACHING

University of Brighton

Keeping Busy and Gambling Recovery

What Is Keeping Busy?

Keeping busy is about filling your time with meaningful, enjoyable, and rewarding activities that support your wellbeing and recovery. When gambling becomes a significant part of someone's life, it can often take up a large amount of time, energy, attention, and emotional focus.

One of the most common challenges people face when reducing or stopping gambling is what to do with the time that gambling once occupied. Boredom, loneliness, restlessness, and a lack of purpose can become powerful triggers for gambling urges.

Keeping busy is not about staying occupied every minute of the day. It is about finding activities that add value to your life, improve wellbeing, strengthen connections, and help create a lifestyle where gambling becomes less appealing and less necessary.

For LGBTQ+ people, meaningful activities can also help reduce social isolation, strengthen community connections, improve confidence, and create opportunities to express identity in positive and affirming ways.

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How to Use This Tool

The aim of this tool is to help you identify activities that are enjoyable, meaningful, and supportive of your recovery.

You may find it helpful to:

- Explore new hobbies and interests.
- Reconnect with activities you enjoyed before gambling became a problem.
- Spend time with supportive friends, family, or community groups.
- Attend LGBTQ+ events or social activities.
- Learn a new skill.
- Engage in physical activity.
- Volunteer or support local causes.
- Create a weekly plan that includes regular activities.

The goal is not simply to stay occupied but to fill your time with things that contribute positively to your wellbeing and quality of life.

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How This Can Aid Recovery From Gambling Harm

Many people identify boredom, loneliness, stress, or having too much unstructured time as key triggers for gambling.

Keeping busy can help by:

- Reducing opportunities to gamble.
- Creating healthy distractions from urges and cravings.
- Increasing feelings of purpose and achievement.
- Improving mood and emotional wellbeing.
- Strengthening social connections.
- Building confidence and self-esteem.
- Developing new interests and hobbies.
- Creating a more balanced and fulfilling lifestyle.

The more meaningful activities you have in your life, the less space gambling has to occupy.

Recovery is often about building a life you no longer need to escape from.

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LGBTQ+ Considerations

Many LGBTQ+ people experience periods of isolation, loneliness, or exclusion, particularly if they have faced discrimination, rejection, identity concealment, or barriers to accessing supportive communities.

You may have experienced:

- Social isolation.
- Difficult family relationships.
- Loss of friendships following coming out.
- Challenges finding affirming community spaces.
- Loneliness linked to minority stress.
- Reduced confidence in social situations.

Keeping busy with positive, affirming activities can help create a stronger sense of connection, belonging, and purpose.

Activities that connect you with LGBTQ+ communities, support networks, hobbies, learning opportunities, or wellbeing initiatives can be particularly beneficial for both recovery and overall wellbeing.

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Practical Recovery Activities

Examples of activities that may support recovery include:

- Joining an LGBTQ+ social or community group.
- Attending recovery peer support meetings.
- Taking up walking, running, cycling, or another form of exercise.
- Learning a new language or skill.
- Taking part in arts, music, photography, or creative projects.
- Reading books or listening to podcasts.
- Volunteering within your local community.
- Visiting friends or supportive family members.
- Exploring nature and outdoor activities.
- Participating in LGBTQ+ events and celebrations.
- Completing personal development or training courses.

Not every activity will be right for everyone. Recovery is about finding what gives you a sense of enjoyment, achievement, connection, and purpose.

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How We Can Help

Our Recover With Pride Recovery Coaches understand that one of the biggest challenges in recovery can be replacing the time, energy, and focus previously spent on gambling.

We can support you to:

- Identify activities that match your interests and goals.
- Explore new hobbies and opportunities.
- Build confidence in trying new experiences.
- Develop a balanced weekly routine.
- Understand links between boredom, loneliness, and gambling urges.
- Connect with LGBTQ+ affirming activities and communities.
- Create positive habits that support recovery.
- Build a lifestyle that promotes wellbeing, purpose, and resilience.

Our coaching is person-centred, LGBTQ+ affirming, and focused on helping you create a fulfilling life beyond gambling. We can work alongside you to incorporate meaningful activities into your recovery journey, understand the benefits they bring, and build sustainable habits that support long-term change.

Over time, keeping busy becomes more than simply filling time. It becomes an opportunity to rediscover interests, build confidence, strengthen connections, and create a future that feels rewarding, meaningful, and free from gambling-related harm.

Refer for support here:
www.switchboard.org.uk/service/recover-with-pride/referral/

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