Recover with Pride

LGBTQ+ GAMBLING HARM SUPPORT

LGBTQ+ Social Isolation and Gambling Recovery

switchboard

REFRAME COACHING

University of Brighton

LGBTQ+ Social Isolation and Gambling Recovery

What Is LGBTQ+ Social Isolation?

Social isolation is the experience of feeling disconnected from other people, lacking meaningful social support, or struggling to find a sense of belonging. While anyone can experience isolation, LGBTQ+ people can be at greater risk due to experiences such as discrimination, family rejection, identity concealment, bullying, stigma, relocation, or difficulties finding affirming communities.

Social isolation is not simply about being alone. It is about feeling disconnected, unseen, or unsupported. Some people may be surrounded by others but still experience profound loneliness.

For individuals experiencing gambling-related harm, social isolation can become both a contributing factor and a consequence of gambling. Gambling may be used as a way to fill time, escape loneliness, or provide a sense of connection. At the same time, gambling can lead to withdrawal from relationships, secrecy, and further isolation.

Building meaningful social connections can play a vital role in both wellbeing and long-term recovery.

LGBTQ+ Social Isolation and Gambling Recovery

How to Use This Tool

This resource is designed to help you understand the impact social isolation may be having on your life and identify practical ways to strengthen your support networks.

You may find it helpful to:

- Reflect on your current social connections and support systems.
- Consider when you feel most connected and when you feel most isolated.
- Identify barriers that prevent you from engaging with others.
- Explore opportunities to connect with LGBTQ+ communities and peer support.
- Recognise links between loneliness and gambling urges.
- Develop a plan to increase meaningful social interaction.
- Set small and achievable goals around connection and community involvement.

Building connections takes time. Small steps can often be more effective and sustainable than trying to make major changes all at once.

LGBTQ+ Social Isolation and Gambling Recovery

How This Can Aid Recovery From Gambling Harm

Loneliness and isolation can have a significant impact on emotional wellbeing. When people feel disconnected from others, they may be more likely to experience stress, anxiety, low mood, boredom, or a sense of hopelessness.

For some individuals, gambling becomes a way to:

- Escape feelings of loneliness.
- Pass time when feeling disconnected.
- Avoid difficult emotions.
- Create a temporary sense of excitement or engagement.
- Cope with low self-esteem or lack of belonging.

Addressing social isolation can support recovery by helping you to:

- Reduce feelings of loneliness.
- Build meaningful and supportive relationships.
- Increase accountability within recovery.
- Improve emotional wellbeing.
- Develop healthier coping strategies.
- Increase confidence and self-worth.
- Create opportunities for enjoyment that do not involve gambling.
- Strengthen resilience during challenging periods.

Recovery is often easier when you do not have to face it alone.

LGBTQ+ Social Isolation and Gambling Recovery

LGBTQ+ Considerations

Many LGBTQ+ people experience social isolation in ways that are directly connected to their identity and life experiences.

You may have experienced:

- Rejection from family members or friends.
- Feeling unable to be yourself in social settings.
- Difficulty finding LGBTQ+ affirming spaces.
- Experiences of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, or discrimination.
- Relocating away from supportive communities.
- Loss of relationships following coming out.
- Feeling disconnected from both LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ communities.
- Concerns about safety, acceptance, or belonging.

For some LGBTQ+ people, gambling environments may have initially felt like places of escape, distraction, or connection. Understanding these experiences can help identify healthier and more sustainable ways of meeting social and emotional needs.

Everyone deserves to feel accepted, valued, and connected.

LGBTQ+ Social Isolation and Gambling Recovery

Practical Recovery Activities

To reduce social isolation and strengthen recovery, consider:

- Reaching out to a trusted friend, family member, or colleague.
- Joining an LGBTQ+ community group, activity, or event.
- Attending peer support or recovery groups.
- Exploring volunteering opportunities.
- Scheduling regular social activities into your weekly routine.
- Reconnecting with hobbies and interests you enjoy.
- Setting small goals to build confidence in social situations.
- Keeping a journal about positive social interactions and experiences.

Even a single meaningful connection can have a significant positive impact on recovery and wellbeing.

LGBTQ+ Social Isolation and Gambling Recovery

How We Can Help

Our Recover With Pride Recovery Coaches understand that loneliness and isolation can be powerful drivers of gambling harm, particularly for LGBTQ+ people who may have experienced exclusion, rejection, or difficulties finding safe and affirming spaces.

We can support you to:

- Explore how social isolation may be affecting your gambling recovery.
- Understand emotional triggers linked to loneliness and disconnection.
- Build confidence in developing new connections.
- Identify supportive LGBTQ+ and recovery communities.
- Create realistic goals around social engagement.
- Develop healthier coping strategies for loneliness.
- Establish positive routines that encourage connection and wellbeing.
- Build a recovery plan that focuses on belonging, purpose, and meaningful relationships.

Our coaching is person-centred, trauma-informed, and LGBTQ+ affirming. We recognise that recovery is not just about stopping gambling. It is about building a life that feels connected, fulfilling, and meaningful.

Our Recovery Coaches can work with you to incorporate this tool into your recovery journey, helping you understand its benefits, create positive habits, and develop practical steps towards greater connection and wellbeing. Together, we can help you move from isolation towards community, belonging, and lasting recovery.

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

switchboard

REFRAME COACHING

University of Brighton

Recover with Pride
LGBTQ+ GAMBLING HARM SUPPORT