



Life After Gambling Harm

Finding Hope, Meaning and
Stability Again



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Finding Hope, Meaning and Stability Again

When gambling harm affects your life, it can sometimes feel as though everything becomes focused on the gambling.

There may have been periods where you were:

- Constantly worried.
- Managing crises.
- Trying to protect finances.
- Supporting someone else's recovery.
- Carrying the emotional impact in silence.

For many affected others, gambling harm can take up so much space that it becomes difficult to imagine what life might look like beyond it.

At Recover with Pride, we often hear people ask:

- Will things ever feel normal again?
- Can I be happy again?
- Will I ever stop worrying?
- Can relationships recover?
- Can I trust myself again?

The answer is that whilst gambling harm may become part of your story, it does not have to define your future.

Recovery Is About More Than Survival

Many affected others spend months or years in survival mode.

You may have become focused on:

- Getting through each day.
- Managing immediate problems.
- Responding to crises.
- Protecting other people.

Once the immediate harm begins to reduce, some people find themselves wondering: "What now?"

This can be an unfamiliar and sometimes uncomfortable stage.

Many affected others have spent so long managing difficult situations that they have not had time to focus on themselves.

Life May Look Different

It is important to acknowledge that gambling harm can change people and relationships. Life after gambling harm may not look exactly the same as it did before.

You may have:

- New boundaries.
- Different expectations.
- Greater awareness of wellbeing.
- A different relationship with money.
- A stronger understanding of your own needs.

This does not necessarily mean life is worse.
Sometimes it simply means life has changed.

Reclaiming Your Identity

Many affected others lose sight of themselves.

For a period of time, you may have become:

- The person holding everything together.
- The problem solver.
- The supporter.
- The person everyone depended on.

As recovery progresses, it can be helpful to reconnect with parts of yourself that may have been neglected.

Consider:

- What brings me joy?
- What matters to me?
- What are my goals?
- What have I put on hold?
- What do I want my future to look like?

You are more than somebody else's gambling harm.

Learning to Trust Yourself Again

Many affected others lose confidence in their own judgement.

You may have wondered:

- How did I not see this?
- Why didn't I trust my instincts?
- Could it happen again?

Over time, recovery often includes rebuilding trust in yourself.

This may involve recognising:

- You responded to information you had at the time.
- Gambling harm is often hidden.
- You are not responsible for another person's actions.
- Your instincts and experiences remain valid.

Rebuilding self-trust can be an important part of healing.

Making Sense of What Happened

Many people spend time reflecting on their experiences.

You may find yourself trying to understand:

- The impact gambling had on your life.
- What you learned.
- How you have changed.
- What you want moving forward.

This process can sometimes help people find meaning and perspective.

However, you do not need to have all the answers.

Healing is not dependent on fully understanding everything that happened.

Relationships After Gambling Harm

Every relationship is different.

Some relationships become stronger.

Some remain changed.

Some end.

All of these outcomes are valid.

What matters most is that relationships moving forward are:

- Respectful.
- Honest.
- Safe.
- Healthy.
- Supportive.

Life after gambling harm may involve creating new ways of relating to one another.

Letting Go of Constant Vigilance

Many affected others become used to being on high alert.

You may have spent years:

- Watching for warning signs.
- Monitoring finances.
- Expecting bad news.
- Preparing for future crises.

Over time, some people find it difficult to switch this off, even when circumstances improve.

Learning to feel safe again can take time.

Be patient with yourself.

You have been adapting to difficult circumstances for a long time.

Rediscovering Joy

One aspect of recovery that often gets overlooked is joy.

When life has been dominated by worry and stress, people sometimes forget what it feels like to enjoy themselves without guilt.

Recovery may include:

- Spending time with friends.
- Reconnecting with hobbies.
- Exploring new interests.
- Travelling.
- Celebrating milestones.
- Laughing again.

These moments matter.

Healing is not only about reducing harm.

It is also about increasing wellbeing.

LGBTQ+ Communities, Connection and Belonging

For LGBTQ+ affected others, recovery may also involve reconnecting with community and belonging.

Some people discover that gambling harm led them to withdraw from:

- LGBTQ+ spaces.
- Community events.
- Friendships.
- Chosen family networks.

As wellbeing improves, many people find comfort in reconnecting with supportive and affirming communities.

Connection can be a powerful part of healing.

Recovery Is Not Linear

Even years later, there may be times when difficult feelings return.

Certain events, conversations, financial worries, or reminders of the past may trigger:

- Anxiety.
- Sadness.
- Anger.
- Fear.

This is normal.

Experiencing difficult emotions does not mean you are moving backwards.

Recovery is rarely a straight line.

Progress can exist alongside occasional setbacks.

Celebrating How Far You've Come

Affected others often underestimate their own resilience.

Take a moment to recognise:

- What you have survived.
- What you have learned.
- The challenges you have faced.
- The strength it took to keep going.

You do not need to be fully healed to acknowledge progress.

Every step forward matters.

Looking Towards the Future

Recovery creates opportunities to think about the future again.

You may begin to focus on:

- Personal goals.
- Relationships.
- Family.
- Health and wellbeing.
- Career aspirations.
- Community involvement.
- New experiences.

Life after gambling harm is not defined by what has happened.

It is shaped by what comes next.

Hope Is Realistic

Hope is sometimes misunderstood.

Hope is not pretending everything is perfect.

Hope is recognising that positive change is possible.

Hope is believing:

- You can heal.
- Trust can grow.
- Relationships can improve.
- Confidence can return.
- Joy can exist again.

Hope does not erase the past.

It helps us move forward from it.

How Recover with Pride Can Help

At Recover with Pride, we understand that recovery continues long after the immediate crisis has passed.

We support affected others to:

- Rebuild confidence and wellbeing.
- Explore legacy harms.
- Strengthen boundaries.
- Improve resilience.
- Reconnect with themselves and others.
- Develop hope for the future.

Recovery is not simply about surviving gambling harm.

It is about creating a life that feels meaningful, authentic, and fulfilling.



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Key Takeaway

Life after gambling harm may look different, but different does not mean worse.

You can heal from the impact of gambling harm. You can rebuild trust in yourself. You can strengthen relationships, reconnect with your identity, and create a future that is not defined by somebody else's gambling.

Your life is bigger than the harm you have experienced. Recovery is not only about what you leave behind. It is also about what you choose to build moving forward.

Key Message

Gambling harm may be part of your story, but it does not have to define your future. Healing, growth, connection, and hope remain possible, and your wellbeing deserves to be part of that journey.

Refer for support here:

www.switchboard.org.uk/service/recover-with-pride/referral/



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Support for Affected Others



Aila

Aila is a website for women in Scotland experiencing or affected by gambling harm, developed by women with lived and living experience. If you are being harmed by someone else's gambling, Aila brings together emotional support, financial and debt advice, and practical guidance on navigating conversations and setting boundaries, helping you find the right service at the right time. Our monthly Living Room offers a welcoming in-person and online space for women affected by their own or someone else's gambling, and the Lived and Living Library shares stories from women across Scotland. You are not alone.

Links

Website

aila-scotland.co.uk/explore-available-support/support-for-affected-others/

aila-scotland.co.uk/explore-available-support/are-you-supporting-someone-else/

aila-scotland.co.uk

Contact

hello@aila-scotland.co.uk



Ara

Ara provides free support for people across the South West affected by someone else's gambling, including partners, family members, friends and colleagues. Support includes one-to-one counselling delivered face-to-face, by telephone or online by professionally accredited, CBT-qualified counsellors. Sessions focus on emotional wellbeing, coping strategies, recovery and rebuilding confidence.

Ara also offers specialist relationship counselling support, where gambling has impacted trust, communication, finances or family life, helping people to rebuild relationships and move forward together. In addition, our easy access workshops provide practical advice, digital safety support, understanding gambling-related harms, and action planning for those seeking support at the earliest opportunity.

Links

Website

www.recovery4all.co.uk/

Refer for support here:

www.switchboard.org.uk/service/recover-with-pride/referral/



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Support for Affected Others



Betknowmore UK

Behind every person experiencing gambling harm, an estimated 6-10 other people may be affected.

A partner losing sleep. A parent caught between worry and responsibility. A young person living with tension in their home. A friend who wants to help but doesn't know how. A colleague covering up mistakes at work.

If this is you, Betknowmore UK is right behind you.

We offer digital peer support service for anyone aged 18 and above. Our Peer Supporters have City and Guilds assured training and lived experience of gambling harms. They understand what you are going through.

Supporting you through shared lived experience

As part of the statutory levy, Betknowmore UK is funded to provide 1:1 and group support to affected others in England and Scotland.

This support aims to ensure that through peer-led engagement and intervention, people are offered the most appropriate support to address their specific needs.

Links

Website

www.betknowmoreuk.org/affected-other

Breakeven

Breakeven

Breakeven offers counselling support for partners, family members and friends affected by someone else's gambling. Gambling harm can put pressure on relationships, finances and the wider household, and support is available for you too.

You can receive support even if the person who gambles is not ready to seek help. Breakeven works with affected family members and friends to help them understand their experiences and find ways to cope with the impact.

Its family and friends resources also offer guidance on looking after yourself, understanding gambling harms and having supportive, non-judgemental conversations.

Links

Website

www.breakeven.org.uk/family-and-friends

Refer for support here:

www.switchboard.org.uk/service/recover-with-pride/referral/



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Support for Affected Others



Chances

As part of Cyrenians' homelessness prevention strategy – Chances offers person-centred, non-judgemental, and non-time limited support to anyone aged 16+ in Scotland who is impacted by gambling harm. For affected others - the service adopts a Community Reinforcement & Family Training approach focused on their recovery and not the person gambling and supports with:

- Promoting self-care, general wellbeing, independence, and boundary setting
- Understanding gambling behaviour and a loved one's triggers
- Improving communication with the person gambling through positive reinforcement techniques
- Guidance & tools to encourage the person gambling to reduce the harms experienced

Online and phone options are offered Scotland wide and in-person in Edinburgh, the Lothians and Falkirk. Organisational and self-referrals are welcome via email or phone on **07983 137239**. Alternatively, a referral form can be completed (available upon request).

Links

Website

[Chances: Gambling Support](#)

Contact

[07983 137239](tel:07983137239)

chances@cyrenians.scot



Gambling Recovery Therapy

Founded by Lorraine Perrons and Claire Jones, Gambling Recovery for All CIC and Gambling Recovery Therapy Limited combine family experience of gambling harm with specialist professional training.

The CIC's Rebuild & Rise: Reclaim Your Life is a fully funded, trauma-informed 12-week online programme for eligible women across the UK affected by someone else's gambling. It focuses on emotional wellbeing, financial resilience, boundaries, confidence and rebuilding a sense of choice and control. Women can seek support whether or not the person who gambles has stopped or sought help.

Gambling Recovery Therapy Limited also offers private paid one-to-one therapy for people experiencing gambling harm and those affected by someone else's gambling, with a complimentary 30-minute introductory conversation.

Links

Website

www.gamblingrecoverytherapy.com/affected-other

forms.gle/aMA4fJbgDMSpgoTb9

www.gamblingrecoverytherapy.com/brochure

Contact

contact@gamblingrecoverytherapy.com

Refer for support here:

www.switchboard.org.uk/service/recover-with-pride/referral/



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Support for Affected Others



Recover Together

Recover Together provides a safe and supportive space for people affected by gambling harm, including family members, partners, friends and others impacted by someone else's gambling. Reaching out can feel difficult, and people may not always know what support they need or where to start. We're here to listen and walk alongside them, helping them find a way forward that feels right for them. Our approach is shaped by lived experience of gambling harm and recovery, and we meet people with empathy, honesty and no judgement, providing support, understanding and connection.

Links

Website

recoverttogether.org/what-we-do/affected-others/



Shiltons' Silverlining

Shiltons' Silverlining supports partners, family members, friends and loved ones affected by someone else's gambling. Its Affected Others service offers a confidential space to talk, be heard and feel understood.

The charity recognises that someone else's gambling can bring anxiety, financial pressure, relationship difficulties and isolation. It offers emotional support, guidance and information to help people cope with the impact and find a way forward.

Built on lived experience, the service recognises that affected family members and friends need support for their own mental health, wellbeing and relationships too.

Links

Website

shiltonssilverlining.org/affected-others/

Refer for support here:

www.switchboard.org.uk/service/recover-with-pride/referral/



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