



Parents of LGBTQ+ People Experiencing Gambling Harm When Your Child Is Struggling



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When Your Child Is Struggling

Few things are more painful than watching your child struggle.

Whether your child is 18, 38, or 58, the instinct to protect them never really disappears. When gambling harm enters their life, many parents describe feelings of fear, confusion, helplessness, and overwhelming worry.

You may find yourself asking:

- How did this happen?
- Did I miss the signs?
- How can I help them?
- What should I do?
- What if they won't accept help?
- How do I protect myself without abandoning them?

At Recover with Pride, we recognise that parents often carry a significant emotional burden. Many become so focused on supporting their child that they forget about their own wellbeing.

This guidance is for parents, carers, and parental figures supporting an LGBTQ+ person affected by gambling harm.

You Are Not Alone

Many parents tell us that when they first discover gambling harm, they feel completely alone.

You may know other parents whose children have struggled with drugs, alcohol, or mental health concerns, but gambling harm is often talked about less openly.

This can create feelings of:

- Isolation.
- Shame.
- Confusion.
- Self-blame.
- Fear of judgement.

It is important to remember that gambling harm affects people from all backgrounds and all families.

You are not alone, and you are not the only parent navigating these challenges.

Your Child May Be an Adult, But You Are Still Their Parent

One of the challenges many parents face is balancing support with their child's independence.

You may feel pulled in different directions.

Part of you wants to:

- Protect them.
- Solve the problem.
- Keep them safe.
- Remove the consequences.

Another part of you recognises:

- They are an adult.
- They make their own decisions.
- Recovery belongs to them.

Finding this balance is rarely easy.

Common Emotions Experienced by Parents

Parents often experience a mixture of emotions.

Worry

You may constantly wonder:

- Are they gambling again?
- Are they okay?
- Are they coping financially?
- What happens next?

Guilt

Many parents ask themselves:

- Did I do something wrong?
- Could I have prevented this?
- Did I miss the warning signs?

Common Emotions Experienced by Parents

Anger

You may feel angry about:

- The harm gambling has caused.
- Financial losses.
- Dishonesty.
- Broken trust.

Sadness

Many parents grieve for:

- Missed opportunities.
- Family stress.
- Lost trust.
- The difficulties their child is experiencing.

All of these feelings are valid.

Understanding Gambling Harm

One of the most helpful things a parent can do is learn about gambling harm.

Understanding:

- Why people continue gambling.
- Why secrecy develops.
- Why promises to stop sometimes fail.
- How recovery works.

Can help families make sense of behaviour that otherwise feels impossible to understand.

Understanding does not mean accepting harmful behaviour.

It simply helps provide context.

Supporting Without Rescuing

Parents are often natural problem-solvers.

Many tell us they have:

- Paid debts.
- Covered living costs.
- Repaired financial damage.
- Solved crises repeatedly.

Whilst these actions come from love and care, there is a difference between supporting and rescuing.

Supporting Without Rescuing

Support might look like:

- Encouraging support.
- Listening without judgement.
- Helping somebody explore options.
- Offering emotional support.

Rescuing may involve:

- Repeatedly removing consequences.
- Taking responsibility for recovery.
- Solving every problem for them.

Recovery belongs to the individual.

Setting Boundaries as a Parent

Many parents feel guilty setting boundaries.

You may worry that boundaries mean you care less.

In reality, healthy boundaries can protect both you and your child.

Examples might include:

- Not lending money.
- Being clear about financial expectations.
- Protecting savings.
- Being honest about your limits.
- Prioritising your own wellbeing.

Boundaries are not punishment.

They are protection.

When Your Child Doesn't Want Help

This can be one of the most painful situations for parents.

You may see the harm clearly whilst your child:

- Denies the problem.
- Minimises concerns.
- Refuses support.
- Avoids conversations.

Remember:

You cannot force somebody into recovery.

You can:

- Express concern.
- Share information.
- Keep communication open.
- Look after yourself.

Recovery can only happen when somebody is ready to engage with change.

LGBTQ+ Considerations

Every LGBTQ+ person's experience is different.

Some have supportive families and strong community connections.

Others may have experienced:

- Rejection.
- Bullying.
- Discrimination.
- Isolation.
- Mental health challenges.

For some LGBTQ+ people, gambling may have become a coping mechanism for dealing with difficult experiences.

Understanding these pressures can help parents better understand the wider context of their child's life.

If Your Relationship Has Been Difficult

Not every parent-child relationship is straightforward.

There may already be:

- Past disagreements.
- Challenges around coming out.
- Struggles around acceptance.
- Family tensions.

If gambling harm is present alongside these experiences, emotions can become even more complicated.

It is never too late to improve communication, rebuild understanding, and move towards a healthier relationship.

Looking After Yourself

Many parents become consumed by worry.

You may spend:

- Hours thinking about their gambling.
- Sleepless nights worrying.
- Significant time trying to help.

Ask yourself:

- Who is supporting me?
- What do I need?
- Am I looking after my own wellbeing?
- Have I spoken to anyone about how I feel?

Your wellbeing matters too.

You Deserve Support

Parents often feel that support should be reserved for their child.
In reality, parents frequently experience significant impacts themselves.

Support can help you:

- Understand gambling harm.
- Reduce feelings of isolation.
- Manage anxiety and stress.
- Develop healthy boundaries.
- Build confidence.
- Focus on your own wellbeing.

You do not need to wait until things reach crisis point.

Recovery Is Possible

Many parents tell us they struggle to hold onto hope.

The reality is that recovery from gambling harm is possible.

Recovery may involve:

- Honest conversations.
- Better boundaries.
- Improved communication.
- Increased understanding.
- Rebuilding trust.
- Accessing support.

Recovery is often a gradual process, but positive change can happen.

How Recover with Pride Can Help

At Recover with Pride, we understand the unique challenges faced by parents supporting LGBTQ+ loved ones affected by gambling harm.

We provide a safe, inclusive and non-judgemental space where parents can:

- Explore their experiences.
- Better understand gambling harm.
- Develop healthy boundaries.
- Reduce isolation.
- Build confidence and resilience.
- Focus on their own wellbeing and recovery.

You do not have to carry this alone.



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Key Takeaway

Being the parent of someone experiencing gambling harm can be heartbreaking, exhausting, and isolating.

You may want to protect them from every consequence, but recovery ultimately belongs to them.

What you can do is continue to care, maintain healthy boundaries, seek support, and look after your own wellbeing.

You can be a loving parent without carrying responsibility for your child's gambling. Your wellbeing matters too, and support is available for both of you.

Key Message

You never stop being a parent, no matter how old your child is. But supporting them does not mean carrying their gambling harm alone. You deserve support, understanding, and compassion too.

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/aMA4fJbgDMSpg0Tb9

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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