



Rebuilding Trust After Gambling Harm

Moving Forward When Trust Has
Been Broken



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Moving Forward When Trust Has Been Broken

One of the most common and painful impacts of gambling harm is the loss of trust. Many affected others tell us that whilst financial losses, debt, and practical problems were difficult, the loss of trust was often the hardest part to recover from.

Trust may have been affected by:

- Hidden gambling.
- Secrecy.
- Lies.
- Broken promises.
- Hidden debts.
- Financial deception.
- Theft or fraud.
- Repeated assurances that everything was under control.

If this sounds familiar, you are not alone.

At Recover with Pride, we often hear affected others say:

"I don't know if I can trust them again."

Or:

"Part of me wants to believe them, but part of me is still waiting for it to happen again."

These feelings are normal and understandable.

Trust Is More Than Honesty

When gambling harm occurs, trust is often damaged in multiple ways.

You may no longer trust:

- What someone tells you.
- Their decisions around money.
- Their ability to keep promises.
- Their commitment to change.
- Your own judgement.

Many affected others describe losing trust in themselves as well as the person who gambled.

You may wonder:

- How did I not see this?
- Why didn't I notice sooner?
- Can I trust my instincts?

These reactions are common after experiences involving secrecy and deception.

Trust Is Not Rebuilt Overnight

Many people hope that once gambling stops, trust will quickly return.

Unfortunately, trust rarely works that way.

Trust is often lost quickly but rebuilt slowly.

Even where somebody is making positive changes, affected others may still feel:

- Anxious.
- Uncertain.
- Sceptical.
- Hypervigilant.
- Fearful of being hurt again.

This does not mean you are being unreasonable.

It means your mind and body are trying to protect you from future harm.

It Is Okay If You Are Not Ready

Some affected others feel pressure to forgive quickly.

You may hear messages such as:

- "You need to move on."
- "They've changed."
- "You should trust them now."
- "The gambling has stopped."

The reality is that rebuilding trust happens at your pace.

You do not owe anybody immediate trust simply because gambling has stopped.

Trust is earned through consistent actions over time.

What Helps Rebuild Trust?

Every relationship is different, but trust is often rebuilt through:

Honesty

Open and honest communication is essential.

This may include:

- Discussing gambling openly.
- Being honest about challenges.
- Acknowledging past harm.
- Being transparent about finances.

Consistency

People often say:

"I need to see it, not just hear it."

Consistency means actions repeatedly matching words over time.

What Helps Rebuild Trust?

Accountability

Taking responsibility for harm caused can be an important part of rebuilding trust.

This means recognising:

- The impact on others.
- The consequences of gambling.
- The need for ongoing change.

Patience

Trust often takes far longer to rebuild than many people expect.

Patience is needed from everyone involved.

Rebuilding Financial Trust

Money is often one of the biggest areas of concern for affected others.

You may feel anxious about:

- Shared accounts.
- Household finances.
- Debts.
- Financial decisions.
- Future security.

Rebuilding financial trust may involve:

- Greater transparency.
- Shared discussions about finances.
- Clear boundaries.
- Financial safeguards.
- Independent financial advice where appropriate.

There is no shame in putting practical measures in place to help rebuild confidence.

When Crime Has Been Part of the Story

For some affected others, trust has been damaged by:

- Theft.
- Fraud.
- Financial abuse.
- Criminal justice involvement.

In these situations, rebuilding trust can feel even more difficult.

You may continue to experience:

- Fear.
- Anger.
- Betrayal.
- Uncertainty.

It is important to remember that forgiveness and trust are not the same thing.

Trust often needs to be rebuilt gradually and through sustained change.

You are entitled to take the time you need.

Trust Yourself Too

An often-overlooked aspect of recovery is rebuilding trust in yourself.

After discovering gambling harm, some people begin to question:

- Their judgement.
- Their instincts.
- Their ability to spot problems.

You may feel embarrassed that you did not see what was happening.

Please remember:

People experiencing gambling harm often become very skilled at hiding it.

The fact that you did not know everything is not a failure on your part.

Part of recovery can involve rebuilding confidence in your own judgement and decision-making.

When Relationships Change

Some relationships recover and become stronger.

Others remain different.

Some relationships end.

All of these outcomes are valid.

Recovery is not measured by whether a relationship survives.

Recovery is measured by whether people can move forward in healthier and safer ways.

LGBTQ+ Relationships and Trust

LGBTQ+ relationships can face additional pressures such as:

- Experiences of discrimination.
- Limited family support.
- Smaller support networks.
- Minority stress.

When trust is damaged by gambling harm, these existing pressures can sometimes make recovery more complex.

This is why supportive, affirming, and inclusive spaces can be so important.

Trust is not only rebuilt through individual actions but also through feeling safe, respected, and supported.

What If Trust Never Fully Returns?

This can be a difficult question to consider.

For some people, trust returns gradually.

For others, trust returns in certain areas but not others.

Some affected others never regain the same level of trust they had before gambling harm occurred.

This does not mean you have failed.

Recovery is not about forcing yourself to feel something you do not feel.

It is about being honest about your experiences and needs.

Looking After Yourself During the Process

Whilst someone may be working on their recovery, it is important to focus on your own wellbeing too.

Ask yourself:

- What do I need to feel safe?
- What boundaries are important?
- What support do I need?
- Am I giving myself permission to heal?

Rebuilding trust should never come at the expense of your wellbeing.

Recovery Is a Journey for Everyone

Trust is one of the last things to return after gambling harm. That can be frustrating, painful, and exhausting.

However, many affected others tell us that over time they were able to develop:

- Greater confidence.
- Stronger boundaries.
- Better communication.
- A healthier understanding of trust.

Recovery is not about returning to the relationship exactly as it was before. It is about creating something healthier moving forward.

How Recover with Pride Can Help

At Recover with Pride, we understand how difficult it can be to rebuild trust after gambling harm.

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

- Explore feelings of betrayal and hurt.
- Reflect on trust and relationships.
- Develop healthy boundaries.
- Rebuild confidence.
- Process legacy harms.
- Focus on their own wellbeing and recovery.

You do not need to navigate this journey alone.



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Key Takeaway

Trust is often one of the deepest harms caused by gambling.

Rebuilding trust takes time, patience, honesty, accountability, and consistent actions.

Most importantly, trust should be rebuilt at a pace that feels safe for you.

You are not obligated to "get over it" quickly. Healing takes time, and your feelings about trust are valid.

Key Message

Trust can be broken in moments but rebuilt only through consistent actions over time. Whether trust is beginning to return or still feels a long way off, your experiences are valid, and support is available.

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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