



Self-Care for Affected Others

**Looking After Yourself Whilst
Supporting Someone Affected by
Gambling Harm**



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Looking After Yourself Whilst Supporting Someone Affected by Gambling Harm

When someone you care about is experiencing gambling harm, it is natural to focus your attention on them.

You may spend time worrying about their wellbeing, trying to solve problems, supporting them through crises, managing finances, or helping them access support. Over time, it can become easy to forget about your own needs.

Many affected others tell us they spent months or even years looking after someone else before stopping to consider the impact gambling was having on them.

At Recover with Pride, we believe self-care is not selfish. It is an essential part of protecting your wellbeing, maintaining your resilience, and supporting your own recovery journey.



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What Is Self-Care?

Self-care is anything that helps protect and maintain your physical, emotional, mental, and social wellbeing.

Self-care is not about ignoring problems or pretending everything is okay.

It is about recognising that your needs, feelings, and wellbeing matter too.

Self-care can include:

- Resting when you need rest.
- Talking to supportive people.
- Setting healthy boundaries.
- Managing stress.
- Looking after your physical health.
- Making time for things you enjoy.
- Seeking support when needed.

Why Self-Care Matters

Many affected others operate in survival mode for long periods.

You may find yourself:

- Constantly worrying.
- Staying alert for signs of gambling.
- Managing financial concerns.
- Supporting family members.
- Trying to prevent further harm.

Over time, this can become exhausting.

Why Self-Care Matters

Without adequate support and self-care, people may experience:

- Burnout.
- Anxiety.
- Depression.
- Sleep difficulties.
- Relationship strain.
- Physical health issues.
- Emotional exhaustion.

Looking after yourself is not a luxury.

It is an important part of maintaining your wellbeing.

Recognising the Warning Signs

Sometimes affected others become so focused on somebody else's needs that they fail to notice their own wellbeing deteriorating.

Signs that you may need additional support include:

- Feeling constantly tired.
- Irritability or frustration.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Increased anxiety.
- Poor sleep.
- Feeling overwhelmed.
- Withdrawal from friends and family.
- Low mood.
- Feeling hopeless.

Recognising these signs early can help prevent things from becoming more difficult.

Give Yourself Permission to Put Yourself First Sometimes

Many affected others struggle with guilt.

You may tell yourself:

- "They need help more than I do."
- "I should be able to cope."
- "I can't think about myself right now."
- "I need to stay strong."

Whilst these thoughts are understandable, constantly ignoring your own needs is rarely sustainable.

Supporting somebody else should not mean abandoning yourself.

You are allowed to:

- Take breaks.
- Say no.
- Prioritise your wellbeing.
- Have needs of your own.
- Ask for help.

Looking After Your Emotional Wellbeing

Living alongside gambling harm can create a range of emotions including:

- Anger.
- Sadness.
- Anxiety.
- Fear.
- Frustration.
- Grief.
- Confusion.

Rather than suppressing these feelings, try to acknowledge them.

Some people find it helpful to:

- Journal.
- Talk to trusted friends.
- Access support services.
- Practice mindfulness.
- Spend time outdoors.
- Engage in creative activities.

There is no single "right" way to care for your emotional wellbeing.

The most important thing is finding what works for you.

Staying Connected

Isolation is a common experience for affected others.

You may have withdrawn from social activities or lost touch with people whilst focusing on someone else's needs.

Maintaining connection is an important part of self-care.

Consider:

- Spending time with supportive people.
- Reconnecting with friends.
- Attending community activities.
- Engaging in peer support.
- Participating in hobbies or interests.

Connection can help reduce stress and remind you that you are more than the challenges you are currently facing.

Looking After Your Physical Health

Stress often affects the body as well as the mind.

Where possible, try to focus on:

- Getting enough sleep.
- Eating regular meals.
- Staying hydrated.
- Moving your body in ways that feel comfortable.
- Attending healthcare appointments.
- Taking breaks when needed.

You do not need a perfect routine.

Small acts of self-care can make a significant difference over time.

Maintaining Your Identity

Gambling harm can sometimes consume so much of a person's life that they begin to lose sight of themselves.

Ask yourself:

- What brings me joy?
- What matters to me?
- What are my strengths?
- What parts of my identity have been neglected?

You are more than someone's partner, parent, friend, or supporter.

Maintaining your own interests, goals, relationships, and sense of identity is an important part of wellbeing.

Managing Guilt

Guilt is one of the most common emotions reported by affected others.

You may feel guilty for:

- Saying no.
- Setting boundaries.
- Taking time for yourself.
- Feeling angry.
- Not being able to fix the situation.

It can help to remember:

You did not cause the gambling.

You cannot control the gambling.

You cannot recover on somebody else's behalf.

Looking after yourself is not a selfish act.

Self-Care During a Crisis

There may be times when gambling harm feels overwhelming.

This might include:

- Discovery of significant debts.
- Relationship breakdown.
- Criminal justice involvement.
- Family conflict.
- Relapse after a period of recovery.

During difficult periods, focus on the basics:

- Get support.
- Stay connected to trusted people.
- Maintain routines where possible.
- Avoid making major decisions in moments of crisis.
- Be kind to yourself.

You do not have to manage everything perfectly.

LGBTQ+ Self-Care Considerations

LGBTQ+ people may already be navigating additional pressures such as:

- Minority stress.
- Discrimination.
- Family rejection.
- Isolation.
- Mental health challenges.

When gambling harm is added to these experiences, the emotional burden can feel particularly heavy.

Self-care may involve:

- Connecting with LGBTQ+ affirming spaces.
- Engaging with supportive communities.
- Accessing inclusive services.
- Spending time with chosen family.
- Seeking support from people who understand your experiences.

Chosen Family and Self-Care

Many people in LGBTQ+ communities provide significant support to friends and chosen family members.

Because these relationships are so important, it can sometimes feel difficult to step back.

Remember:

Supporting someone and protecting your wellbeing are not mutually exclusive.

You can care deeply about somebody and still recognise your limits.

Creating Your Personal Self-Care Plan

It can be helpful to ask yourself:

What helps me recharge?

Who can I talk to?

What activities make me feel calm or connected?

What boundaries support my wellbeing?

What signs tell me I need support?

Having a plan can make it easier to respond when life feels particularly challenging.

Recovery Matters for Affected Others Too

Many people think recovery only applies to the person who gambles.

In reality, affected others often need time, support, and space to heal as well.

Recovery may involve:

- Rebuilding confidence.
- Developing healthy boundaries.
- Restoring trust.
- Improving wellbeing.
- Reconnecting with yourself.
- Finding hope again.

Your recovery journey deserves recognition too.

How Recover with Pride Can Help

At Recover with Pride, we understand that affected others often spend so much time caring for others that they forget to care for themselves.

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

- Reflect on your experiences.
- Prioritise your wellbeing.
- Build confidence and resilience.
- Reduce isolation.
- Develop healthy coping strategies.
- Access support and information.

You deserve support too.



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Key Takeaway

Self-care is not about choosing yourself instead of someone else.

It is about recognising that your wellbeing matters and that you cannot pour from an empty cup.

Whether you are a parent, partner, friend, chosen family member, or supporter, you deserve the same compassion, care, and understanding that you offer to others.

Key Message

You matter too. Looking after your wellbeing is not selfish, it is an essential part of navigating the impact of gambling harm and supporting your own recovery 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/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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