Recover with Pride

LGBTQ+ GAMBLING HARM SUPPORT

Understanding LGBTQ+ Stigma and Gambling Recovery

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REFRAME COACHING

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What Is LGBTQ+ Stigma?

LGBTQ+ stigma refers to the negative attitudes, beliefs, stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination that LGBTQ+ people may experience because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or intersex status.

Stigma can occur in many forms. It may come from society, communities, workplaces, families, faith settings, healthcare services, or social groups. Sometimes stigma can also become internalised, where a person begins to believe negative messages about themselves as a result of repeated exposure to prejudice or discrimination.

For many LGBTQ+ people, stigma can have a significant impact on mental health, confidence, relationships, and overall wellbeing. Feelings of shame, loneliness, rejection, or not belonging can become overwhelming, and some people may turn to gambling as a way of coping, escaping difficult emotions, or finding temporary relief.

Understanding and challenging the impact of stigma can be an important step towards both self-acceptance and recovery from gambling-related harm.

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How to Use This Tool

This tool is designed to help you recognise how stigma may have affected your life and identify healthier ways of responding to those experiences.

You may find it helpful to:

- Reflect on messages you have received about being LGBTQ+.
- Explore how experiences of discrimination or prejudice have affected your self-esteem.
- Identify situations where stigma continues to impact your wellbeing.
- Notice any links between experiences of stigma and gambling urges.
- Challenge negative beliefs about yourself.
- Develop self-compassion and self-acceptance.
- Connect with affirming people, communities, and support networks.

The goal is not to ignore or minimise difficult experiences. Instead, it is about understanding their impact and finding healthier ways to move forward.

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How This Can Aid Recovery From Gambling Harm

Many people gamble to escape difficult emotions or experiences. When stigma leads to feelings of shame, rejection, anxiety, loneliness, or low self-worth, gambling can sometimes become a coping mechanism.

By exploring the impact of LGBTQ+ stigma, you can:

- Understand some of the underlying factors contributing to gambling behaviours.
- Reduce feelings of shame and self-blame.
- Build self-esteem and confidence.
- Strengthen emotional resilience.
- Develop healthier coping strategies.
- Improve your sense of identity and self-worth.
- Increase connection with supportive communities.
- Create a stronger foundation for long-term recovery.

Recovery is about more than stopping gambling. It is about building a life where you feel valued, respected, and able to thrive.

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LGBTQ+ Considerations

The impact of stigma can look different for everyone.

You may have experienced:

- Homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, or intersex discrimination.
- Rejection from family, friends, or community.
- Bullying, harassment, or victimisation.
- Pressure to hide your identity.
- Negative messages about LGBTQ+ people while growing up.
- Fear of judgement or discrimination.
- Challenges accessing understanding and affirming support.

These experiences can contribute to what is often referred to as minority stress, where the cumulative impact of stigma and discrimination affects mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing.

Recognising these experiences can help you understand that many of the challenges you face are the result of external pressures, rather than personal shortcomings.

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Practical Recovery Activities

To support your recovery, consider:

- Writing down negative beliefs you hold about yourself and challenging them with evidence.
- Creating a list of personal strengths and achievements.
- Keeping a self-compassion or gratitude journal.
- Reading positive LGBTQ+ stories and experiences.
- Connecting with LGBTQ+ community groups or peer support.
- Identifying situations that trigger feelings of shame or rejection.
- Developing healthy coping strategies for difficult emotions.
- Celebrating aspects of your identity that make you proud.

Recovery often grows through self-acceptance, connection, and recognising your own value.

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How We Can Help

Our Recover With Pride Recovery Coaches understand that stigma, discrimination, and minority stress can have a profound impact on gambling harms and recovery.

We can support you to:

- Explore how LGBTQ+ stigma has affected your wellbeing.
- Understand links between stigma, emotional distress, and gambling behaviours.
- Identify triggers and develop healthier coping mechanisms.
- Build confidence, resilience, and self-esteem.
- Challenge internalised shame and negative self-beliefs.
- Develop positive habits that support long-term recovery.
- Strengthen social connections and support networks.
- Create a recovery plan that reflects your identity, experiences, and goals.

Our coaching approach is LGBTQ+ affirming, person-centred, and trauma-informed. We recognise that recovery is not simply about addressing gambling behaviour. It is also about healing from the experiences that may have contributed to it.

Our Recovery Coaches can work alongside you to help integrate this tool into your daily life, better understand its benefits, build positive recovery habits, and develop greater self-acceptance and confidence. Together, we can help you move beyond stigma and towards a future that is shaped by pride, connection, and recovery.

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

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