



**You Don't Need a Formal
Relationship to Be Affected**

**Gambling Harm Doesn't Just
Affect Families**



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Gambling Harm Doesn't Just Affect Families

When people think about affected others, they often think about partners, parents, children, or siblings.

Whilst these relationships are commonly affected by gambling harm, they are far from the only people impacted.

Many people experience harm because of somebody else's gambling despite having no formal family relationship.

You might be:

- A friend.
- A former partner.
- A flatmate or housemate.
- A work colleague.
- A teammate.
- A community member.
- A mentor.
- A chosen family member.

If somebody's gambling has affected your life, wellbeing, finances, relationships, or sense of security, your experiences are valid.

At Recover with Pride, we believe support should be available to anyone affected by gambling harm, regardless of how they know the person involved.

"I Don't Think I Count"

One of the most common things we hear from affected others is:

"I don't think I count."

People often minimise their experiences because they compare themselves to a spouse, parent, or child.

You may think:

- "We're only friends."
- "We aren't related."
- "We're not together anymore."
- "It's not really my place."

However, gambling harm is not measured by the title of your relationship.

It is measured by the impact it has had on you.

If someone's gambling has caused you stress, worry, financial difficulties, emotional distress, or affected your wellbeing, then your experiences matter.

Friends Can Be Deeply Affected

Friends are often among the first people to notice when something is wrong.

You may notice:

- Changes in behaviour.
- Social withdrawal.
- Financial difficulties.
- Mood changes.
- Secrecy.
- Requests for money.

Many friendships involve significant emotional support, trust, and connection.

When gambling harm affects a friend, it can leave you feeling:

- Worried.
- Frustrated.
- Helpless.
- Angry.
- Sad.
- Exhausted.

These feelings are completely understandable.

When You're the Person They Turn To

Sometimes friends become the main source of support.

You may find yourself:

- Taking calls late at night.
- Helping somebody through crises.
- Providing emotional support.
- Listening to difficult disclosures.
- Supporting recovery efforts.

Whilst this can be meaningful, it can also become emotionally draining.

Supporting somebody should not mean carrying the entire burden alone.

You deserve support too.

Former Partners Can Still Be Affected

Ending a relationship does not always end the impact of gambling harm.

Former partners may continue to experience:

- Emotional distress.
- Financial consequences.
- Shared parenting concerns.
- Ongoing care and concern.
- Difficulties rebuilding trust.

Some people continue supporting someone after a relationship has ended, whilst others find the emotional impact remains long after contact has stopped.

Your experiences remain valid regardless of your current relationship status.

Housemates and Flatmates

Living with somebody experiencing gambling harm can create practical and emotional challenges.

You may be concerned about:

- Rent payments.
- Household bills.
- Financial stability.
- Shared responsibilities.
- Tension within the home.

Many housemates tell us they feel uncertain whether they have the right to seek support because they are not related to the person.

The reality is that if someone's gambling is affecting your living environment, sense of safety, or financial security, support may be beneficial.

Colleagues and Workplace Relationships

Workplace relationships can also be affected by gambling harm.

You may notice:

- Changes in behaviour.
- Increased stress.
- Financial difficulties.
- Frequent borrowing.
- Emotional distress.

You might also feel unsure about how to respond.

Whilst it is not your responsibility to solve somebody else's problems, expressing concern and signposting support can be helpful.

Sometimes a simple conversation can make a significant difference.

Teammates and Community Connections

People can also be affected through sports clubs, LGBTQ+ groups, community organisations, social circles, and other shared spaces.

You may feel concerned about somebody you know through:

- Volunteering.
- Community groups.
- Social events.
- Faith communities.
- Sporting activities.

You do not need to be somebody's family member to care about their wellbeing.

"Is It My Place to Say Something?"

Many people struggle with this question.

You may worry:

- What if I'm wrong?
- What if I offend them?
- What if they get angry?
- What if it's none of my business?

There is no perfect answer.

However, expressing concern from a place of care is often better than saying nothing because you are afraid.

You do not need to accuse, diagnose, or provide solutions.

Sometimes simply saying:

"I've noticed you don't seem yourself recently and wanted to check how you're doing."

Can open an important conversation.

LGBTQ+ Communities and Informal Support Networks

Within LGBTQ+ communities, support networks often extend beyond traditional family structures.

Many people rely on:

- Chosen family.
- Friendship groups.
- Community networks.
- Former partners.
- LGBTQ+ peers.

These relationships can be incredibly significant and may provide support that biological families cannot.

As a result, gambling harm within these networks can have a profound impact.

When You Feel Responsible

People in informal support roles can sometimes feel responsible for fixing everything.

You may find yourself:

- Constantly checking on somebody.
- Managing crises.
- Lending money.
- Trying to prevent gambling.
- Putting your own needs second.

Remember:

You can support someone without taking responsibility for them.

You can care deeply without carrying everything.

You cannot recover on somebody else's behalf.

Healthy support includes healthy boundaries.

Your Wellbeing Matters

It is common for people in informal relationships to dismiss their own experiences.

You might tell yourself:

- "I'm sure other people have it worse."
- "I should just get on with it."
- "It's not really affecting me."

Take a moment to ask yourself:

- Am I worried about this person's gambling?
- Is it affecting my wellbeing?
- Am I feeling stressed or overwhelmed?
- Have I changed my own behaviour because of it?

If the answer is yes, support may help.

You Are Allowed to Seek Support

You do not need permission to access support.

You do not need to prove your relationship is important.

You do not need to justify why somebody's gambling has affected you.

If you have been impacted, you deserve support.

Simple as that.



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How Recover with Pride Can Help

At Recover with Pride, we recognise that gambling harm affects a wide range of relationships and support networks.

We welcome:

- Friends.
- Former partners.
- Housemates.
- Colleagues.
- Chosen family members.
- Community members.
- Anyone affected by somebody else's gambling.

You do not need a formal title or family connection to access support.

Your experiences matter.



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Key Takeaway

Gambling harm is not limited to families, partners, or spouses.

If someone's gambling has affected your wellbeing, finances, relationships, confidence, or emotional health, you may be an affected other, regardless of your relationship to them.

You do not need a formal role in someone's life to be affected by gambling harm. Caring about somebody is enough. And if you have been affected, support is available for you too.

Key Message

You don't need to be a parent, partner, sibling, or spouse to be affected by gambling harm. Friends, chosen family, housemates, ex-partners, colleagues, and community members can all experience harm too, and all deserve support.

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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