



## You and your relationships

If you want to maintain a relationship with someone struggling with gambling, it will help for you to understand the triggers that led them to act as they have.

Many people can gamble without any problems developing but for some, it can develop into a compulsion or an addiction. This can happen for several reasons. Circumstances can change, and this might lead someone to turn to gambling as an escape from trauma, stress, loneliness or poor mental health. It may even be as simple as someone having more free time, if they've entered retirement or a period of unemployment. For others, a trigger might be that it is a common activity amongst their friends, so there are increased opportunities to gamble. Some people who have problems with gamblers may also have a problem with alcohol or drugs.

**If you want to support someone, you'll need to support yourself first.** Being in a stable mindset will make the process more manageable for everyone.

Whether you are supporting the person whose gambling problem has affected you, or they are not in your life, building (or re-building) friendships and relationship with people around you is a key part of moving forward.

Do you have key relationships that should be positive, but have been damaged? What do you need to do to work on these relationships? How can you rebuild or strengthen them? Or, if you are honest, is it time to walk away?

## Getting help and support

The National Gambling HelpLine, provided by GamCare, is available every day from 8am - Midnight. You can talk to our Advisers on Freephone **0808 8020 133** or live chat via **www.gamcare.org.uk** whenever you need some advice and support, or even just to talk.

The team can talk you through all of the options available for support over the phone, online or in your local area.

You can also connect with others in similar situations through the GamCare online Forum and our daily chatrooms at **www.gamcare.org.uk**.

### Gam-Anon

Support for friends and families affected by gambling.

[www.gamanon.org.uk](http://www.gamanon.org.uk)

### Samaritans

Confidential, emotional support for anyone in crisis.

116 123

[www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

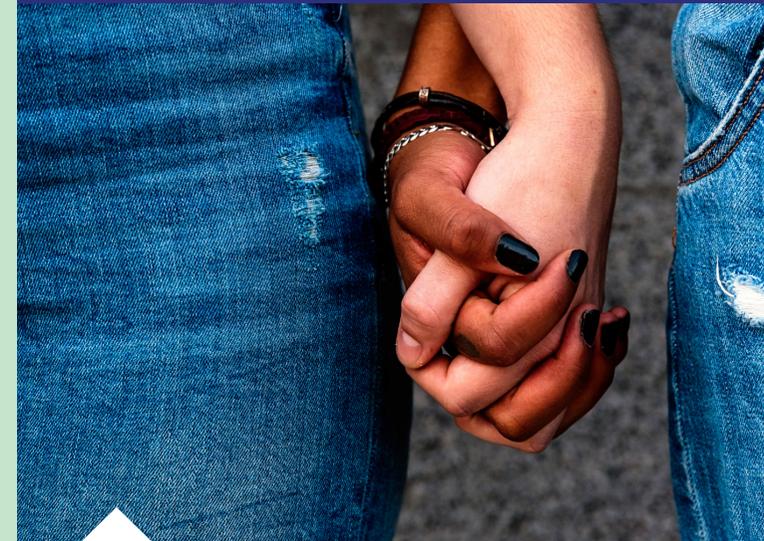
National Gambling HelpLine

Call Free: **0800 8020 133**

Live chat via [www.gamcare.org.uk](http://www.gamcare.org.uk)

# Problem Gambling: Support for family and friends

Practical information, ideas  
and support



— David Lloyd —  
**Police and Crime  
Commissioner**  
for Hertfordshire

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## If you are, or have been, affected by someone else's gambling or gambling-related crime, this leaflet is for you.

You may be in a position where you want to support the individual whose gambling is affecting you and need practical and emotional support to do so. Perhaps they are no longer in your life and you just need support for yourself. It is important to know that there is a plenty of help and support available for you.

Understanding why the person who has affected you acted in the way that they did can help you move forward. Problem gambling is a compulsive-behaviour disorder. That means that the person who is gambling has, in the severe cases, lost control of their actions and are acting compulsively. Lying, manipulation, and theft are unfortunately common when someone has issues with gambling. Their actions are not a reflection of their feelings toward you; their actions are separate from you and your relationship.

Understanding this will help you to support that person, if that is what you would like to do, or help you to understand why they acted the way that they did.

Although people often start out gambling because it is fun and there is a chance to win some money, the enjoyment can soon be replaced by other motivations, which are called cognitive distortions. These are thought processes that replace logical and rational thinking which leads to gambling behaviour progress from a social and entertaining activity to more of a problem.

Gambling is not a way to make money, so losing is inevitable. People begin to chase the money that they have lost, which only worsens the gambling behaviour. Poor mental health, rising debts, and rocky relationships might make gambling feel like the answer to their problems.



### Impacts of problem gambling

People who have a gambling problem often experience negative consequences because of their actions. This can include financial struggles, mental health problems and/or relationship breakdown.

As somebody who has been affected by another person's gambling problem, you might have experienced similar gambling-related harms.

Perhaps it was your money that was used to gamble with, or to pay off debts. This could have been with your permission or behind your back. Maybe you are feeling stressed, anxious, angry or betrayed – or all of the above. Often family and friends have to deal with the aftermath of someone else's gambling problem.

We hear from many people who feel guilty, ashamed and isolated because there is still a lot of stigma surrounding gambling problems. It is important to know that you are not alone in this.

There is a range of support available to you. Whether or not you are in touch with the person whose gambling has affected you, whether or not you want to support them, or even if you are not sure yet, GamCare can help you.

We can help you understand why people gamble despite the negative consequences, as well as helping you work through your thoughts and feelings about your own situation.

Problem gambling is complicated, but getting support doesn't have to be. By making sense of it yourself, you'll be in a better position to move forward.

**Call the National Gambling HelpLine on Freephone 0808 8020 133 or live chat with one of our Advisers at [GamCare.org.uk](https://www.gamcare.org.uk)**



### You and your resources

Many people who have had a problem with gambling have some debt. When you are impacted by someone else's gambling, debt is likely to have impacted you too. It's important that you tackle your finances, as this will help you regain some control. Facing up to how much you owe is the first step to getting out of debt, so calculate what you owe however overwhelming this may feel.

If you are worried, call the National Gambling HelpLine and our Advisers can talk you through the specialist organisations who can help you with your debt:

#### Citizens Advice

Free, independent and confidential advice and information.  
[citizensadvice.org.uk](https://citizensadvice.org.uk)

#### StepChange

Free, independent debt advice and support.  
**0800 138 1111**  
[stepchange.org](https://stepchange.org)

#### Money Advice Service

Free and impartial advice on money and financial decisions.  
**0300 500 5000**  
[moneyadviceservice.org.uk](https://moneyadviceservice.org.uk)

#### National Debtline

Free, independent and confidential advice on money and debt problems.  
**0808 808 4000**  
[nationaldebtline.org](https://nationaldebtline.org)

#### PayPlan

Free confidential advice on debt solutions.  
**0800 280 2816**  
[payplan.com](https://payplan.com)

If you are still in contact with the person whose gambling is affecting you, it is important to stop lending them money. This might not feel like the right thing to do, but by lending them money you are enabling them, not helping them.

Encourage them to call the National Gambling Helpline, or to contact the places listed above for support on how they can manage their debts and manage their money going forward.