

# Let's **talk** about **gambling**



Having a **conversation** about  
**gambling-related harm**



Nottingham  
City Council

## What are gambling-related harms?

Gambling-related harms are the problems that gambling can cause in someone's life. These can affect their health, mood, money, relationships, education or job. It's not just the person gambling who can be affected – family and friends can be too.

### Signs someone might be struggling with gambling:

- ✓ Thinking about gambling a lot or finding it hard to focus
- ✓ Avoiding people or social events to gamble
- ✓ Trying to win back money they've already lost
- ✓ Hiding how much time or money they spend gambling
- ✓ Feeling low, stressed, or having mood swings
- ✓ Trouble sleeping
- ✓ Money going missing or struggling to pay for things
- ✓ Gambling becoming more important than work, relationships or other responsibilities

## Who can be affected?

Gambling harms can affect anyone – men, women, young people, and children. It doesn't matter what someone's background, job, or religion is.

### Important to know:

Even if someone doesn't gamble often or spend a lot of money, gambling can still cause harm to their mental and physical health, relationships, and finances.

## Why gambling harms can be hard to spot

It's not always easy to tell when someone is being harmed by gambling – especially if they gamble online. People might hide it well, and they may feel too embarrassed or ashamed to ask for help.

Some people think gambling problems are just down to bad choices or weak character. But that's not true. Gambling can change how the brain works – just like alcohol or drugs. Over time, it can take more and more gambling to feel the same “buzz,” and that's when it can become an addiction.

It's also important to know that gambling companies design their games and apps to keep people playing. They spend a lot of money on adverts that make gambling look fun and harmless, and they often talk about “responsible gambling” in ways that put the blame on the person.

These messages can make people feel guilty, ashamed, or like they've failed – which can stop them from asking for help. This can make things worse.



### Let's talk about gambling harms with kindness

The words we use matter. If we talk about gambling harms in a kind and understanding way, we can help people feel safe to speak up and get support. No one should feel judged or blamed.

## Starting a conversation about gambling

If you think that gambling is harming someone you support professionally or the people around them:

- ✓ Encourage them to talk to someone they trust if they are worried that their gambling is beginning to cause themselves or others harm. Help is available. It is never too early or too late to seek help for gambling.
- ✓ You can signpost them to help, advice, and support on the ASKLiON Gambling Support page.
- ✓ Remember the best way to avoid harm is to stop gambling, and that support is available to help people to do that.

### Conversation starters

Starting sentences with “I...” instead of “You...” can reduce feelings of blame or accusations.

Using “I” statements can also help reinforce that you want to play a role in helping the other person.

Tell them what you’ve noticed about their gambling and how you see it impacting them.

“What’s been going on for you? Is there anything I can do to help?”

“I’ve noticed you’ve been a little down lately. Are you okay?”

“I’ve noticed you gambling a lot recently. It’s really starting to make me worry.”

“I’m worried about the way gambling is affecting other areas of your life. If you want, we could look at what advice and support is out there together?”



### Things to consider:

- ✓ Think about the timing of your conversation. Are they going to be in a position to talk freely? Create a safe space where a conversation about gambling can be encouraged.
- ✓ Provide information and resources about the harms of gambling. The Chapter One training will be useful if you would like to know more about gambling in order to help others ([www.chapter-one.org](http://www.chapter-one.org)).
- ✓ Listen to what they say and repeat it back to them in your own words to show your understanding.
- ✓ Be open, honest, and clear in your communication.
- ✓ Reassure them that they are not alone and that it’s never too late to ask for support.
- ✓ Encourage them to seek help.
- ✓ Many services are free and confidential. Letting people know this can make a difference as to whether they seek support or not.



CHAPTER ONE

## Language guide

When we're talking with people who face health inequalities, it's important to use language that's positive, respectful and empowering. We should steer clear of anything that might come across as negative or make people feel judged.

Instead of...	We try to use...	Because...
Problem gambler or gambling addict	Person experiencing gambling harms Person being harmed by gambling Person with a gambling problem Person living with (or in recovery from) gambling addiction	The person being harmed by gambling is more than just their experience with gambling and using terms like these reduces someone to their behaviour. We remove the label to avoid being stigmatising
Problem gambling Harmful gambling	Harmful gambling products Gambling at risky / harmful levels	We avoid making it seem like the person gambling is at fault. It is the products' design and marketing that makes and keeps people addicted to gambling
Safe or unsafe gambling Responsible or irresponsible gambling	Different gambling activities carry different risk. There is no 'safe' level of gambling	Suggesting that some people can gamble at a safe level and others can't contributes to stigma. There is not a consistent definition of what defines 'safe' gambling. All gambling carries risk

## Support is available

A wide range of free and confidential gambling support, treatment, and recovery services is available for people in Nottingham affected by gambling harm. These services offer practical help, emotional support, and pathways to recovery, tailored to meet individual needs and circumstances.

You can find out more about the help and support available by visiting:

[www.asklion.co.uk/gamblingsupport](http://www.asklion.co.uk/gamblingsupport)



OR [nottalone.org.uk/yp/gambling-related-harm](http://nottalone.org.uk/yp/gambling-related-harm) if you are supporting a child or young person

**NottAlone**



## **If someone you are supporting needs help right away:**

**Nottingham Mental Health Crisis Line 0808 196 3779 (24/7)**

**Samaritans 116 123 (24/7)**

**999** if you need immediate help and can't keep yourself/others safe or have already harmed yourself, or visit your nearest A&E.

**111 (option 2)** to speak to a trained mental health professional and access crisis mental health support.

**Find out more:  
[asklion.co.uk/gamblingsupport](https://asklion.co.uk/gamblingsupport)**

