



# Families and gambling: A resource toolkit for working with families affected by gambling.

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# Introduction

## Adfam

Adfam is the national charity supporting families affected by addiction. We work with families, friends, carers, frontline practitioners, and decision-makers.

We want anyone affected by someone else's addiction to have the chance to benefit from healthy relationships and enjoy mental and physical wellbeing. We know that prejudice and stigma are barriers to recovery and cause harm. We want to see a society free from stigma towards addicts and their families.

In 2019 Adfam was commissioned by GambleAware to develop training for practitioners working with gamblers and their families based on the 5-step model. This validated model has shown promise in achieving positive outcomes through research studies. Outcomes include:

- The family member is calmer, less tolerant and more assertive.
- There is support for both the family member and the gambler.
- There are clear joint goals and plans.
- Conflict is handled in a safer environment.
- The family member has greater knowledge of how the disorder affects the gambler.
- Communication and mutual understanding are improved.
- There is greater realisation that children are also affected.

A survey of family members affected by gambling, carried out by Adfam,<sup>1</sup> found that less than half of respondents had received any support for themselves. This was despite identifying problems with their mental and physical health, finances, future plans and daily life which were a result of another's gambling.

Of those who did seek help, almost half used a general counselling service or relied on support from family and friends. Individuals who had accessed gambling specific resources found this more helpful than those who had sessions with a non gambling-specific service. Those who used these services highlighted the lack of understanding of addiction and the daily reality for family members as reasons for not finding the support beneficial. Respondents also stated that being listened to and feeling understood was what helped them the most.

In this survey, family members also stated that both listening support and practical advice would be helpful. Further, two thirds agreed that it would be useful to receive peer to peer support from someone else who had been affected by a loved one's gambling problem.

In a subsequent survey,<sup>2</sup> exploring the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on family life around a gambler, all respondents agreed that they would benefit from greater availability of support for families. They also highlighted the need for more information and awareness of gambling harms for themselves, the wider family and frontline professionals.

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<sup>1</sup> Adfam (2021) Families affected by problem gambling, online survey

<sup>2</sup> Adfam (2021) Online survey – the impact of Covid-19 on families and friends of people negatively affected by gambling.

## Gambling Disorders

Disordered gambling affects approximately 2.3% of the population<sup>3</sup> and on average 6-10 people will be affected by an individual's gambling<sup>4</sup>. Research by Adfam in 2021 estimated that one million adults were currently negatively affected by the gambling of a family member or friend in Great Britain<sup>5</sup>. Once disordered gambling behavior begins, the family of the person who gambles may start to experience adverse effects. These can include problems with mental and physical health, relationship conflict, there can be an impact on children's health and development and there could be financial consequences.

The strain of caring for a loved one with a gambling disorder on family members can be enormous. Research shows that, when well-supported, family members can demonstrate great resilience and also be a great resource for recovery for someone with a gambling disorder. Family support doesn't necessarily mean working with a whole family unit. It can be about supporting individual family members in their own right to meet their own needs whilst they support a partner, parent, child, sibling or friend.

However, those who seek help are likely to be the tip of the iceberg and anyone working with people affected by a gambling disorder can help by actively encouraging clients to talk to family members and by offering services that can support family members.

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<sup>3</sup> Kourgiantakis et al, 2013, Problem gambling and families: A systematic review. *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions*

<sup>4</sup> Klevan, T. and Weimand, B., 2019, Powerless yet powerful: The duality of everyday life of partners of persons with gambling problems, *Journal of Gambling Issues*

<sup>5</sup> Adfam/YouGov, 2021, [Overlooked: why we should be doing more to support families affected by drinking, drug use or gambling.](#)

# Supporting Families

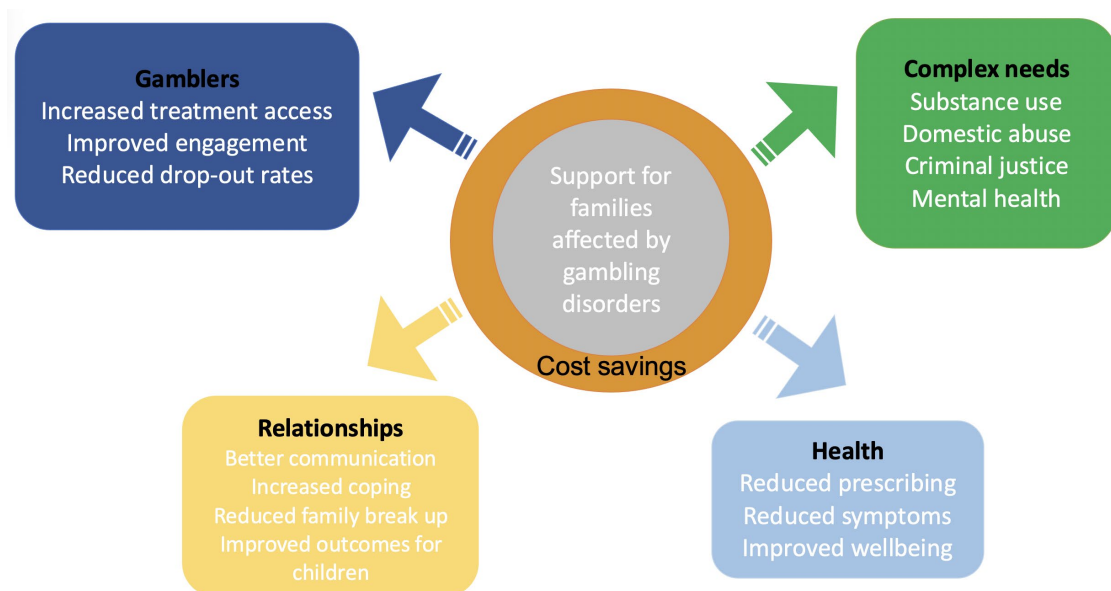
“ It’s been really isolating for me; my friends don’t understand at all. ”

Interview with a family member

Investment in family support can reduce costs for services as well as improving outcomes for individuals, families and people who gamble. <sup>6</sup>

Family involvement in care planning can improve both engagement and outcomes. Supporting family members can alter family interactions, encourage change and reduce harms. As such, family support should not be considered an ‘add-on’ or a ‘nice to have’ – it is central to engagement, motivation and support. Although many family members presenting at gambling services are looking for support for their loved one, it is important to remember that they have their own needs and deserve support in their own right.

Although research has identified that families seek both gambler-orientated and family-orientated support,<sup>7</sup> this toolkit focuses on support for the family member in their own right. However, there is evidence that working with family members can have impacts on the whole family and act as an indirect intervention with the person who gambles. This can also be a positive way of improving the family’s overall ability to meet their needs.



<sup>6</sup> Kourgiantakis et al, 2013, Problem gambling and families: A systematic review. *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions*

<sup>7</sup> Rodda et al, (2020) Treatment for Family Members of People Experiencing Gambling Problems: Family Members Want Both Gambler-Focused and Family-Focused Options, *International Journal of Mental Health and Addictions*

When faced with a loved one with a gambling disorder, relatives display similar levels of stress symptoms to family members of people with other substance use problems. Some of the most common problems that they report include:

- Loss of household or personal money.
- Arguments, anger, and violence.
- Lies and deception.
- Neglect of family
- Negatively affected relationships
- Poor Communication.
- Confusion of family roles and responsibilities.
- The development of gambling problems or other addictions within the family<sup>8</sup>.

## The Toolkit

This toolkit has been produced by Adfam for practitioners working with families affected by gambling. It contains a selection of resources - some for practitioners to use with their clients and others for practitioners to hand out to clients. Some of the resources are based on components of the 5-Step Method whilst others have been used with affected family members to support individual or group work. Whether working with clients informally, over a short period of time, or for more lengthy interventions, these resources are intended as a supplement to individual and group work, aimed at supporting the families of people with gambling problems. References have been included for materials that are available in the public domain and the reader can access these publications for further information if necessary. Practitioners are free to use the following materials in their work with clients and may copy and distribute the tools as required.

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<sup>8</sup> Kalischuk, R. G., Kowatzki, N., Cardwell, K. Klein, K. and Solowoniuk, J. (2006) Problem gambling and its impact on families: A literature review. *International Gambling Studies*, Vol. 6, Issue, 1, pp. 31-60

## SECTION 1: BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE FIVE-STEP METHOD

*(Sections and some of the illustrations included based on the 5-Step Method are based on previously published work in particular: Copello, A., Templeton, L., Orford, J. and Velleman, R. (2010) The 5-Step Method: Principles and Practice. Drugs Education Prevention and Policy, 17 S1, 86-89 as well as Copello, A. and Walsh, K. (2016) Families, friends and addiction: Impacts, psychological models and interventions, in Addiction Psychology and Treatment, Davis, P., Patton, R., and Jackson, S. (EDS), BPS Textbooks in Psychology).*

One way to attempt to reduce the harm caused by gambling problems to others affected involves the provision of direct psychological support and help to those who are affected, irrespective of whether the relative with the gambling problem is in treatment or considering help at all. An example of such an approach is the development and evaluation of the 5-Step Method to help family members in their own right (Copello et al. 2010). Some of the resources included in this toolkit are based on this method.

The 5-Step Method is based on the Stress-Strain-Coping Support (SSCS) model of addiction impacts and the family (for further detailed information on the SSCS the reader is referred to: Orford, J., et al., (2013) Addiction in the family is a major but neglected contributor to the global burden of adult ill-health. *Soc Sci Med.*;78:70-7. doi:0.1016/j.socscimed.2012.11.036)

Whilst the elements of the approach are not novel per se and are part of good psychological support techniques and practice, the theoretical framework allows those delivering the method to follow a structured approach discussing and eliciting from the affected family member their experiences of stress, need for information, coping behaviours, social support and their hopes and expectations for the future. Use of this model with families of people who gamble has shown to improve health and coping mechanisms.<sup>9</sup>

For context a brief figure below summarises the 5 steps of the model alongside the SSCS components.

### The contents of the 5-steps mapped onto the Stress-strain-coping-support model

The Steps	The Components of SSCS model
Step 1- Listen, reassure, and explore concerns. Elicit the family member’s story and experiences. Active listening.	Exploring <b>‘Stress and Strain’</b> .
Step 2 – Provide specific targeted and relevant information for the family member.	Family member’s need for <b>‘understanding’</b> and increased knowledge.
Step 3 – Explore coping responses by eliciting advantages and disadvantages of various coping responses as perceived by family member.	<b>Coping responses.</b>

<sup>9</sup> Orford, J., Cousins, J., Smith, N. and Bowden-Jones, H. (2017) Stress, strain, coping and social support for affected family members attending the National Problem Gambling Clinic, London; *International Gambling Studies*, Vol 17, Issue 2, pp. 259-275.

Step 4 – Establish current support and ways of enhancing support for family member.	Need for <b>Social Support</b> .
Step 5 – Discuss further needs for family member, the using relative and or the rest of the family.	Additional needs.

Based on this understanding, the method of delivery should be supportive, ‘non-judgmental’ and avoid some of the more unhelpful language often used in this field e.g. ‘enabling’, ‘collusion’ and similar terms. These terms are commonly used to describe family members’ responses and are often experienced as critical by family members. Equally helpful is to avoid labelling language based on diagnoses that may not apply to all e.g. ‘pathology’, ‘disorder’. It is best to aim to understand experiences thoroughly rather than label problems. This toolkit is not intended to be a substitute for training in the 5-Step Method. Some of the tools included can be used to support your work with family members. Any practitioner intending to deliver 5-Step with clients is advised to undertake further training and supervision in the model.



## SECTION 2: TOOLS FOR PRACTITIONERS

### Based on Step 1 – ‘Hearing the story from the family member’s perspective’

“ Living with the constant lying, cheating, moving money around behind my back caused me a lot of stress. ” “ You just need someone to talk to and somewhere to go. ”

Interview with a family member

A key element of the 5-Step Method is the exploration of the experience of being an affected family member. This is a central focus when aiming to support family members. Below are a few guides and resources to support this exploration.

Some of the resources allow you to focus on various aspects of the family member’s experiences quite broadly and therefore are included within this pack.

Listening to the family member requires that we focus on getting to know them and their concerns and help to identify their stresses and strains (as opposed to gathering details of their partner/relative’s gambling and their behavior). Family member concerns usually follow a common pattern (irrespective of cultures, class, and gender) and may include for example:

- ✓ The relative with a gambling problem being difficult and unpleasant to live with.
- ✓ The family member is concerned about the gambler’s health/performance/behavior.
- ✓ They may be in the dark about the extent of the gambling problem.
- ✓ Experience financial problems and have anxieties about these, trying to regain financial control.
- ✓ It can have an impact on the whole family and home.
- ✓ Keeping the problem a secret for fear of others becoming involved.
- ✓ The gambler disappearing from home for prolonged periods.
- ✓ Family social life affected
- ✓ Feeling angry, commonly experiencing mixed feelings.

It is then important to communicate to the family member that these problems and concerns are **common and normal** and that they are not unusual, ‘ill’ or ‘dysfunctional’. Next, convey the idea that changes and improvements are attainable, that the family member has the power to make changes for themselves and their family even if the relative with the gambling problem does not change. It is helpful for you to stress that these changes will impact on the person with the gambling problem and may contribute towards them making changes, but that this cannot be guaranteed and should not be the main purpose of making the changes (i.e. the family member’s stresses and needs are central here, not those of the relative with the gambling problem).

Identify the needs of the relative; let them describe in detail their situation and its effects on them and their family. You can start by asking your client to consider the specific sources of stress – not the gambling as a whole, but which aspects are of particular concern.

<b>Step 1 Self-reflection questions for family members:</b>
What behaviour on the part of my relative causes me stress? (e.g. he does not talk to me about his gambling but I know he is doing it)
How do I feel about it? (e.g. angry, frustrated)
What I am thinking in relation to this? (e.g. I am worried he is going to get the family into debt)
What are the signs that I feel stressed? (e.g. I cannot stop thinking about it)
What problems arise from this for me? (e.g. I feel exhausted, I cannot concentrate at work)
What is my greatest fear? (e.g. We will end up financially ruined)
How does the rest of my family seem to feel about it? (e.g. They do not know, I am not sure how much they care)
How do other family members seem to respond? (e.g. Nobody talks about it)

The impact worksheet below is a great homework activity for clients to consider the full impact of the gambling problem on different aspects of their life. Families are often so concerned about the needs of the gambler that they fail to digest the impact on their own lives. By using this activity between sessions, the client has the opportunity to reflect on

different occasions or experiences throughout the week that the gambler's actions or problem have affected. You can try completing a couple of the quadrants with the family member to make sure they know how to approach the homework activity.

THE IMPACT OF GAMBLING ON FAMILY LIFE	
HEALTH	SOCIAL
EMOTIONAL	FINANCIAL
RELATIONSHIPS	SPIRITUAL

## Signs of Stress

By the time clients seek help for the effects of someone’s gambling, they are often experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety but may have become habituated to these and not recognize that these are symptoms of the strain they are under. Alternatively, they may think that the stress is their problem and unrelated to the gambling impacts. This checklist helps clients to explore the range of symptoms they may be experiencing and to aid a discussion.

You can explore each of their positive answers more deeply by questioning what behaviours or situations trigger these symptoms and how they respond. This is useful to use alongside the **self-care assessment** and **coping questionnaire**.

<b>Checklist of symptoms of chronic stress:</b>		
1	Restlessness and nervousness	
2	Insomnia/oversleeping	
3	Feeling anxious and ‘wound up’	
4	No appetite or eating too much	
5	Poor memory	
6	Exhaustion	
7	Difficulties in concentrating	
8	Cannot stop worrying about the future	
9	Panic attacks	
10	Intrusive thoughts about something terrible happening	
11	Mood swings or constant crying	
12	Irrational fears	
13	Feelings of low self-esteem and low self-worth	
14	Focusing on or ruminating about negative experiences	
15	Constant worry about my relative with the gambling problem	

**The Self-care tips** and **Five Ways to Wellbeing** handouts can be given to clients on completion of this checklist.

## Wellness Assessment

The purpose of this tool is to help clients to explore areas in which they feel they are coping well with life and areas that could benefit from improvement. It can also be used as an introductory activity for each session with your client so that you can map together how their responses change during your time with them.

**Respond to the following statements with the past week in mind:**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I've felt happy					
I've been able to cope well with my stressors					
I've felt good about myself					
I've felt relaxed					
I've been sleeping well					
I've been satisfied with my relationships					
I've had healthy habits					
I've been able to focus					
I've made good decisions					
I've been able to fulfill my obligations					

Source: Therapistaid.com

## Self-Care Assessment

When exploring the client's experience, it can be useful to look at how well they are able to take care of themselves and meet their own health and happiness needs. This worksheet is very useful when helping clients to identify where their current strengths are and where they may be experiencing difficulties. It can be used to help clients to start to talk about the impact that their loved one's gambling is having on them.

This worksheet can also be used if clients are unsure what self-care is. The Oxford English Dictionary definition of self-care includes:

*'The practice of taking an active role in protecting one's own well-being and happiness, particularly during periods of stress.'*

Asking a client to identify a self-care activity from each of the topics, that they enjoy or would like to take part in, will help them to think about

With this worksheet the focus is firmly on the client not on the relative with the gambling problem

**1 = I do this poorly**

**2 = I do this OK**

**3 = I do this well**

**X = I would like to improve at this**

**I do this rarely or not at all**

**I do this sometimes**

**I do this often**

**I would like to do this more frequently**

1	2	3	X	
				<b>Physical self-care:</b>
				Eat healthy foods
				Take care of personal hygiene
				Exercise
				Wear clothes that make me feel good about myself
				Eat regularly
				Participate in fun activities
				Get enough sleep
				Go to preventative medical appointment (e.g. check ups)
				Rest when tired
				Overall physical self-care
				<b>Psychological/Emotional Self-care:</b>
				Take time off when necessary
				Participate in hobbies and pastimes
				Get away from distractions (e.g. phone, email)
				Learn new things
				Express feelings in a healthy way
				Recognise own strengths and achievements
				Do something comforting (e.g. watch a favorite film, take a bath)
				Find reasons to laugh
				Talk about problems*
				Overall psychological self-care
				<b>Social Self-care:</b>
				Spend time with people I like
				Make contact with friends and family who are far away*
				Have stimulating conversations
				Meet new people
				Spend time alone with romantic partner
				Do enjoyable activities with other people*
				Ask for help from friends and family*
				Keep in touch with old friends*
				Overall social self-care
				<b>Spiritual Self-care:</b>
				Spend time in nature
				Meditate
				Pray
				Recognise the things that give meaning to your life
				Act in accordance with your morals and values
				Set aside time for thought and reflection
				Participate in a cause that is important to you
				Appreciate art that is impactful to you (e.g. music, film, literature)
				Enjoy other spiritual practices/rituals that make you feel fulfilled
				Overall spiritual self-care
				<b>Professional Self-care:</b>
				Improve your professional skills
				Say 'no' to excessive new responsibilities

				Take on projects that are interesting or rewarding
				Learn new things relating to work
				Make time to talk to and build relationships with colleagues*
				Take breaks during work
				Maintain a balance between professional and personal life
				Advocate for yourself in the workplace
				Overall professional self-care

Adapted from Therapistaid.com materials

\*The answer to these questions will be useful information when looking at untapped sources of social support for your client.

## Based on Step 2 – Helping the family member with relevant information:

*“ Practical support about finances when leaving someone would be really helpful. You also need support in dealing with things like the financial control that they have, the coercion and gas lighting. ”*

Interview with a family member

A contributing factor in family members’ stress is inaccurate information about gambling problems or sometimes lack of knowledge about things that create uncertainty. Family members may believe myths about gambling or need information about additional help and support, commonly in the case of gambling problems financial or legal difficulties.

Leaflets and information sheets can be useful at this point, but they are no substitute for face-to-face discussion. Being presented with information can be somewhat overwhelming and you can help by supporting the family member decide what is useful or important for them to know and what may be less relevant and best perhaps not to focus on.

Provide accurate, relevant information to dispel myths and raise awareness and discuss sources of further information and help.

<b>Step 2 - Self-reflection questions for family members:</b>
What am I curious about? What would I like to know that may help me feel less worried/confused/uncertain?
What do I not understand?
Knowing what would help me right now?
How will information help me?



During your first session with a client, it may be helpful to them to know what support they may be able to access through your service and what they may need to seek elsewhere. You could also include a list of organisations that you can signpost or refer clients to for further help.

Use the checklist to identify what may be available for them within your service:

<b>Checklist of things your service may be able to offer:</b>		
<b>Practical support:</b>		
1	Debt and benefits advice	
2	Distribute opening times and addresses of local Citizen's Advice Bureau	
3	A mediation service	
4	A volunteer 'buddy' to offer support and advocacy	
5	Meditation or mindfulness training	
6	Referral to other services	
7	Deliver a conflict resolution session	
8	Safety planning advice	
<b>Information:</b>		
9	Posters advertising online gambling awareness information	
10	Leaflets about the impact of gambling	
11	Leaflets about local gambling recovery services	
12	Leaflet on the Cycle of Change	
13	Posters defining domestic abuse	
14	Leaflets on local domestic abuse services	
15	Leaflets/signposting to information about gambling and the law	
<b>Listening:</b>		
16	Coffee mornings	
17	Social groups	
18	Structured peer support group	
19	Drop-in peer support group	
20	Wellbeing and pampering activities (e.g. craft mornings, massage)	
21	Signposting to local therapeutic support (e.g. counselling, mindfulness courses, yoga, etc.)	
22	Day trips and outings	
23	Other?	

When discussing what support is available to clients, don't forget the use of apps, websites, Instagram accounts and helplines that may be able to support their more holistic needs.

## Based on Step 3 – How family members interact and respond in the face of gambling:

*“ There needs to be a focus on you as a family member, how you can cope and deal with the things that come from problem gambling. ”*

*“ You need help with your self-esteem, learning how to detach, and support for if you do need to walk away. ”*

Interview with a family member

Within the 5-Step intervention the exploration of family member responses in the face of their relative's gambling is central. Care must be taken when introducing the area of responding or coping as family members may perceive this discussion as an indication that they are not coping adequately. This cannot be furthest away from the truth. Any response can be understood considering the unique family member circumstances and available resources and support at that specific point in time. One helpful way to think about this is that 'any response is the right response for that family at that particular time' and your work is to help family members explore alternative viable options, not prescribe, or suggest. It is best not to carry out this work unless you have had a chance to developed rapport with the family member.

Responding can be seen as any action, feeling or expressed attitude that relatives adopt in response to the relative with the gambling problem. How family members respond can be complex but based on research we can suggests that there are 3 broad ways of responding used by family members:

**'Standing up to it' (Engaged)** – actively involved with the gambling relative and focusing on dealing with the problem. The family member can feel responsible, able to change them, keep a close eye on them etc.

Possible Positives – relative feels they are doing something helpful

Possible Negatives – very stressful for the relative and the gambler may feel resentful

Key emotions: angry, hurt, responsible.

**'Putting up with it' (Tolerant)** – sometimes involves actions to help, other times inaction. The main result is that there is a removal of negative consequences for the gambling relative e.g. gives money, covers up for them with employers, family and friends.

Possible Positives – avoids conflict

Possible Negatives – Relative feels taken advantage of

Key emotions: Powerless, guilty.

**'Distancing from' (Withdrawal)** – attempts to put distance between relative and the gambling relative as a way of looking after oneself or to deal with the uncertainty of the situation. Avoid the gambling relative as much as possible

Possible Positives – Relative prevented from becoming over-involved  
 Possible Negatives – Feel they are rejecting/not helping the gambling relative  
 Key emotions: self-reliant, alone, hurt.

Both positive and negative outcomes can result from any one way of responding. This generates a state of ambivalence and uncertainty in the relative about which one to adopt. The 5-Step Method is based on the premise that all behaviours and responses can be ultimately understood as dilemmas and a clear exploration of the advantages and disadvantages of each coping behavior (or dilemma) can lead to a more considered and informed response by the family member.

It is also based on the assumption that each family is unique and as such, there is no universally 'right' or 'wrong' response, given that each action will lead to impacts on a range of outcomes for different family members including the person with the gambling problem, the family member and where relevant the rest of the family.

The aim when helping family members is to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the family member's current responding style as perceived by the family member and to raise awareness of alternatives and their advantages/disadvantages. The goal of this step is to empower family members by enabling them to see and to think through alternative ways of responding to their circumstances. This should be done in a supportive, exploratory, and non-judgmental style.

Discuss the relative's present way of responding and the advantages and disadvantages  
 Discuss alternatives and the advantages and disadvantages of alternatives

<b>Responding: Self-reflection questions for family members.</b>
What am I responding to?
How do I tend to respond to the above situation?
What is helpful and useful about the way that I respond?  For me:  For the rest of the family:  For my relative with the gambling problem:
What may be not so helpful and perhaps ineffective?

For me:  For the rest of the family:  For my relative with the gambling problem:
What could I try next time that might be more effective?
What may be helpful and useful about this alternative way to respond?
What may be not so helpful?

The Coping Questionnaire below is a useful tool that can help with your discussion with the affected family member:

- ✓ Demonstrating that different coping behaviours are common
- ✓ Allowing clients to identify their favored/preferred coping response style
- ✓ Exploring with clients which are their 'go to' responses and why
- ✓ Letting them explore what they would like to change

The Coping Questionnaire has been developed specifically from research data on the experiences of family members affected by relatives with alcohol and drug problems, however later versions have also been used with those with gambling problems. The questionnaire has been published although it has been recently further studied for its psychometric properties (e.g. Horvath, Z., Orford, J. et al. (2019) Measuring Coping Among Family Members with Substance-Misusing Relatives: Testing Competing Factor Structures of the Coping Questionnaire (CQ) in England and Italy. *Substance Use and Misuse*, ;55(3):469-480.) We have included the questionnaire items here as a practical tool and not suggesting the items to be scored either as a questionnaire total or subscale scores.

<b>The Coping Questionnaire</b>		No	Once/ twice	Some- times	Often
<i>Adapted from: Jim Orford, Lorna Templeton, Richard Velleman, Alex Copello; A set of standardized questionnaires for assessing stress, coping and strain, for completion by family members of relatives with alcohol, drug and gambling problems</i>					
<b>Have you recently (in the last 3 months):</b>					
1	Refused to lend them money or to help them out financially in other ways?				
2	Put the interests of other members of the family before theirs?				
3	Put yourself out for them, e.g. by clearing up problems after they had been gambling?				
4	Given them money even when you thought it would be spent on gambling?				
5	Sat down together with them and talked frankly about what could be done about their gambling?				
6	Started an argument with them about their gambling?				
7	Pleaded with them about their gambling?				
8	When they were preoccupied by gambling, left them alone to look after themselves or kept out of their way?				
9	Made it quite clear to them that their gambling was causing you upset and that it had got to change?				
10	Felt too frightened to do anything?				
11	Tried to limit their gambling by making a rule about it, e.g. forbidding gambling in the home, or stopping them bringing gambling friends home?				
12	Pursued your own interests or looked for new interests or occupation for yourself, or got more involved in a political/church/sports/other organisation?				
13	Encouraged them to take an oath or promise not to gamble?				
14	Felt too hopeless to do anything?				
15	Avoided them as much as possible because of their gambling?				
16	Got moody or emotional with them?				
17	Watched their every move or checked up on them or kept a close eye on them?				
18	Got on with your own things or acted as if they weren't there?				
19	Made it clear that you won't accept their reasons for gambling or cover it up for them?				
20	Made threats that you didn't really mean to carry out?				
21	Made it clear to them your expectations of what they should do to contribute to the family?				
22	Stuck up for them or stood by them when others were criticising them?				
23	Got in a state where you didn't or couldn't make any decision?				
24	Accepted the situation as part of life that couldn't be changed?				
25	Accused them of not loving you, or of letting you down?				
26	Sat down with them to help them sort out the financial situation?				
27	When things have happened as a result of their gambling, made excuses for them, covered up for them or taken the blame yourself?				
28	Searched for evidence of their gambling?				
29	Sometimes put yourself first by looking after yourself or giving yourself treats?				
30	Tried to keep things looking normal, pretended all was well when it wasn't or hidden the extent of their gambling?				

Accessed at: <https://scales.arabpsychology.com/s/coping-questionnaire/>

Copyright: Alcohol, Drugs, Gambling and Addiction Research Group, School of Psychology, The University of Birmingham. Developed by Orford, Velleman, Templeton & Copello

## Based on Step 4 – Enhancing Available Social Support

*“ [what helped was] ...telling my friends and family and receiving their love, advice, and support. ”*

Survey respondent

The level of social support available for family members can have a significant impact on their ability to cope and their stress levels. Often family members of people with gambling problems feel unsupported by other members of the wider family e.g. disagreements about scale of the problem, what to do, blame, criticism etc.

When aiming to understand and possibly enhance social support available it is key to explore the following:

- Current supports – who helps and how? who doesn't?
- Sources of potential support - what would help, what are blocks to receiving this support
- New avenues of support that the family member may not be aware of.

Once you identify who is in the family member’s social network move on to make plans for building a stronger support network, which may mean involving supportive others in meetings to formally set this up. A supportive other can be seen as someone who is aware of all the issues, is available to listen and at times offer practical help, is non-judgmental and does not give orders or advice, does not take sides and is sensitive in knowing when to back off (quite a tall order!)

It is important to remember that we get different types of support from different people. So we may receive practical support from someone (e.g. helping me understand the information on the website) yet emotional support from someone else in our network (e.g. listening to me when I need to talk and express my feelings about the problem). This is common and the best way to maximize our available support is to identify a range of sources and what can each source provide.

Explore current, potential and new avenues of support  
 Discuss what helps and does not help  
 Make real plans for building stronger support networks.

<b>Social Support - Self-reflection questions for family members</b>
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Of my current sources of support what helps and what doesn't?
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What have I considered but not tried yet?
---

Who might be willing to support me? How?
What other sources of support might be available to me?
What are the barriers to other sources of support?

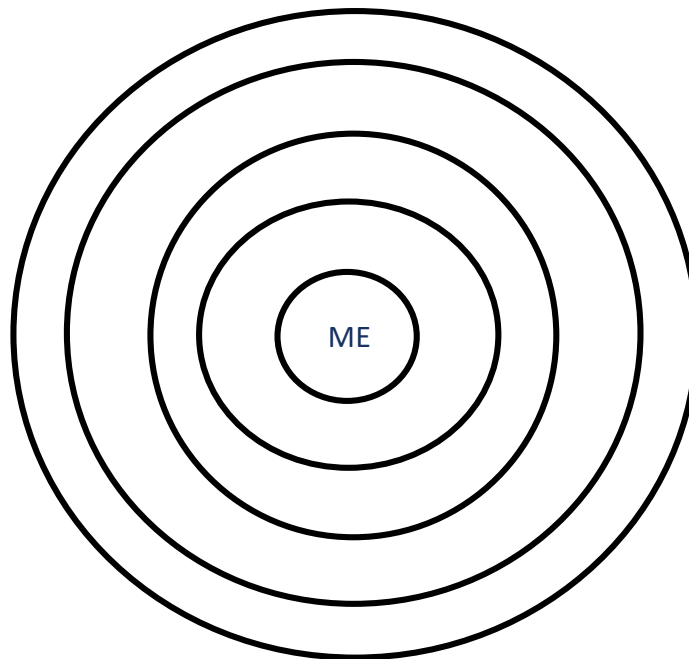
There are several tools below that can help you with this work. Use whatever you feel the family member can relate to and make use of. Sometimes a simple drawing on a piece of paper with the person at the centre and various other members of the social network around can work well. You can use whichever tool you have agreed upon and return to it in future sessions for example to review how perhaps actions agreed about enhancing support can be understood by reference to the social network represented and what impact these actions have made.

Below are various tools you can use.

### **Social Support Circles:**

Draw concentric circles on a sheet of paper and write the name of your client in the middle. Ask your client to identify friends and family members who may be able to offer support. Use buttons, stones, lego figures etc. to represent each individual and ask your client to place each one on one of the circles. They can move the tokens towards or away from the middle depending on how close they are to the person or how helpful they think this person will be.

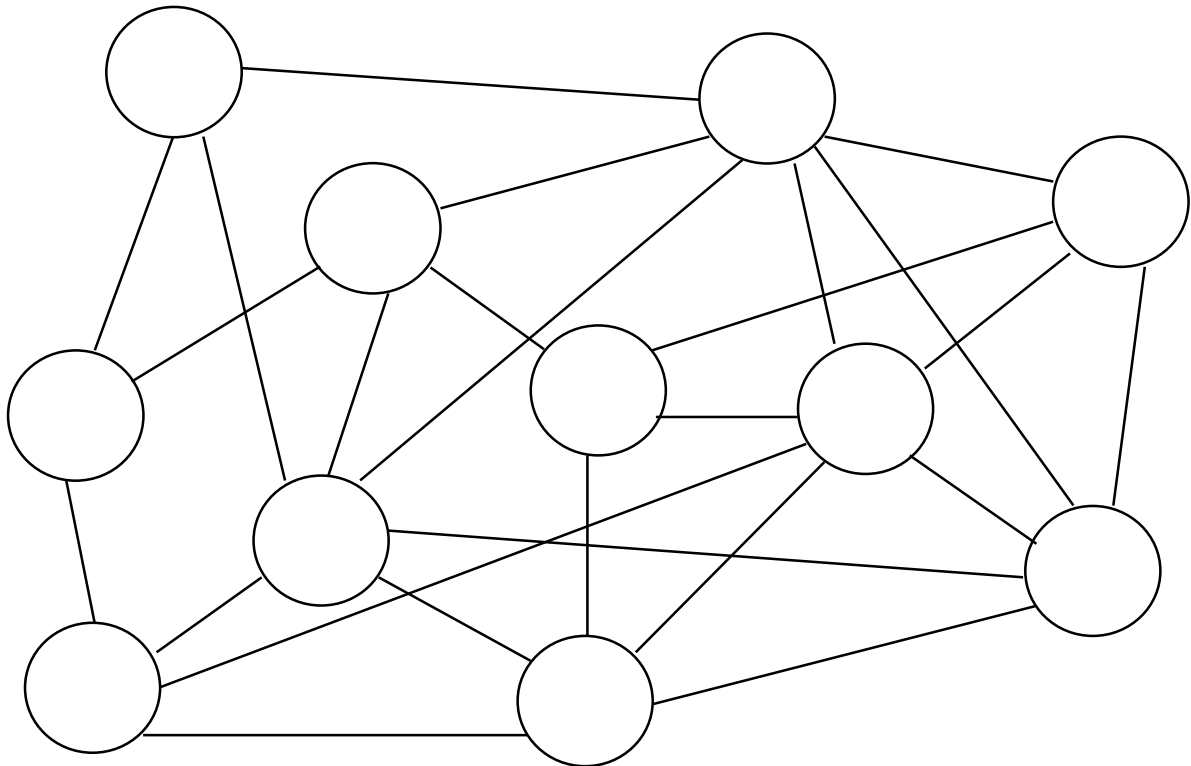
This is an opportunity for clients to explore who in their social and family circle may be able to offer support. Ask the client to identify what help they may be able to offer e.g. pick the kids up from school, someone to talk to, an advocate.





### Social Network Diagram:

Ask your client to write down the people (family and friends) that they're connected to and talk about who they might be able to talk to and who might be supportive.



**Checklist of self-support:**

Here are a few things that you can do to manage your own health and wellbeing. Tick the ones you'd like to try and note down whether they are helping

Download a supportive app or find a supportive website and use it regularly	
Set and maintain boundaries with your loved one	
Practice mindfulness or meditation (try one of the free mobile phone apps)	
Talk to a trusted friend or family member about how you're feeling	
Keep a journal	
Make sure you have regular social contact	
Allow yourself some 'me time' and plan in activities that you enjoy	
Be realistic about the level and type of help you can offer to your loved one	
Watch your own mental and physical health and take a break if you need to	
Join a peer support group	
Make sure that you eat regularly and well	
Visit your GP if you have symptoms of ill health or for a referral to a counsellor	
Establish clear house rules if the person lives with you	
Talk to your loved one about your needs and theirs	
Talk to other family members about their role in supporting your loved one	
Get some form of regular exercise	
Take up a new hobby or pastime	
Educate yourself about gambling and its impact	

## Based on Step 5 – Ending and discussing need for further help:

*“ I have previously looked for articles, blogs, online support etc about parents with long-term gambling addictions but I struggle to find any that are similar to my situation. I would like to be able to speak/read to people who have a loved-one with a long-term addiction. I also would like to be able to speak/read about people who have discovered a loved-one’s addiction and had not been known throughout the relationship. I think, in particular, I would like to be able to hear about children with parents who are gamblers.*

”

Survey respondent

Brief interventions are often effective in working with relatives. Occasionally the need for more in-depth or ongoing work may be necessary. This may especially be the case when the impact on the family member has been so great as to affect parenting/childcare and general mental health. This may then mean that further sessions are needed that focus on these other areas. It may mean:

- Further help for the family member
- Further help for the relative with the gambling problem
- Sessions for the family as a whole
- Sessions for other family members
- Onward referral to other agencies

Identify what further help and support is needed for the client or other family members, including the relative with the gambling problem

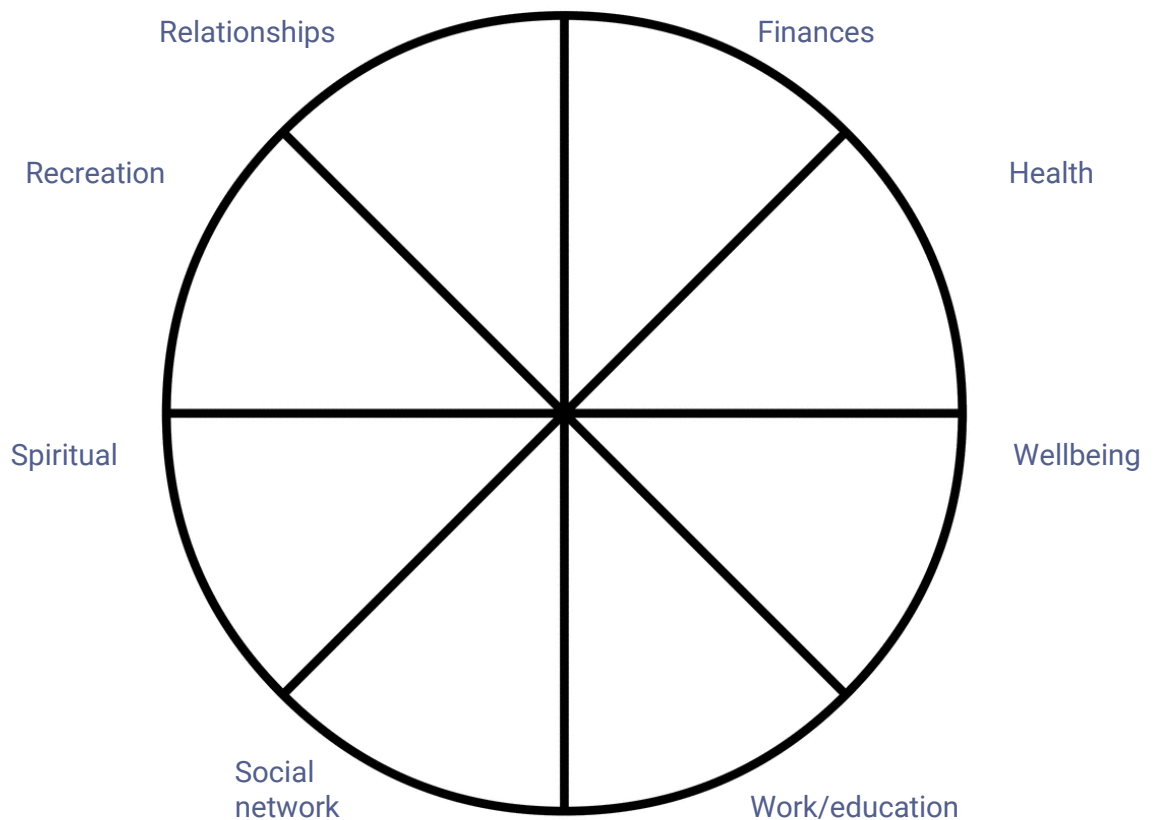
<b>Future Needs - Self-reflection questions for family members:</b>
What further support do I need?
What support do others in my family need?

What agencies/individuals may be able to help?

The resources on the following pages are to help clients to identify what they may need in order to move forward. These may be self-directed activities or outside support. As well as signposting client to other services you can support their self-efficacy by encouraging them to complete some of the worksheets or working through them together.

### Wheel of life:

Think about how happy you are with each of the areas of your life in the wheel below and give each triangle a score out of 10. Now decide which of these scores you'd like to raise and use the prompts below to decide what you're going to do to increase your score.



I would most like to work on...

Things I can do...

1. \_\_\_\_\_

A

B

C

D

2. \_\_\_\_\_

A

B

C

D

### Five Ways to Wellbeing:

Evidence suggests that building the following five actions into our day-to-day lives is important for well-being. Each evening tick off one of the boxes if you have done something that fits in to one of the five ways. For example, you could tick **Connect**, if you stopped for a chat with an acquaintance whilst out shopping. You don't need to actively try to complete all the boxes, just reflect on your day and notice when you have completed an action for one of the five ways. See how this builds week on week, just by the act of noticing.

		Days of the week:						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Connect</b>	With the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbors. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.							
<b>Be Active</b>	Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness.							
<b>Take Notice</b>	Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savor the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.							
<b>Keep Learning</b>	Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.							
<b>Give</b>	Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.							

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### My Self-Care Chart

It's important to take care of your own wellbeing and have something to look forward to. Fill in the chart with enjoyable activities that you would like to do. Start with the small, today activities and work your way through to the larger things.

Things I can do:	Today	This week	This month	This year
For free				
That cost a little				
That cost a lot				
That I'll have to save for				

My self-care statement is:

## Setting up a support group for families

Peer support groups provide an opportunity for families to meet others in similar situations and receive support and find a way forward in a safe, supportive environment. Benefits of group support include helping families to realise that they are not alone; rather they receive shared support and the opportunity to talk with other people with lived experience who can understand their situation.

- Support groups can take a number of styles and formats, either formal and structured (ie focusing in depth on issues such as harm reduction and PTSD), or informal and flexible (ie over a coffee and more focused on sharing experiences), or a combination of the two.
- Support groups could include a combination of drop-in/ open type support with more structured content.
- In addition to face-to-face meetings, support groups can be delivered via online/ video platforms such as Zoom or Skype.
- Support groups can be facilitated by a peer volunteer, either someone who has lived experience or with a specific understanding of what it's like to be a family affected by gambling. Group facilitators are required to receive support group facilitation training by the Family Support Worker or another pre-approved trained professional. If availability allows, support groups can be facilitated by two people.
- Adfam could provide support group facilitation training, giving facilitators the skills to set up a group, set its aims and objectives, plan and administer its delivery, understand the roles and responsibilities of a facilitator, and learn skills such as managing dynamics, active listening, giving feedback, and identifying and dealing with challenges.
- Support group organisers determine the frequency of the meetings and length of time for each group session, as well as the practical issues such as meeting location and room access.
- Support groups require a confidentiality agreement to be signed by all participating clients to ensure they can engage with each other comfortably whilst protecting their privacy. It is also best practice for each group to have governance rules in place to ensure the smooth and safe running of sessions, and a safeguarding policy in place for organisers to refer to.
- Group activities and respite opportunities, such as weekends away, are also a positive support group method if made available. For more information about the intricacies of starting a support group – see Adfam's guide to setting up a support group (pdf).



## SECTION 3: RESOURCES

### National and local gambling support

Please note any useful information about support in your local area below.

GamCare <a href="http://www.gamcare.org.uk">www.gamcare.org.uk</a>	The leading UK provider of free information, advice and support for anyone harmed by gambling.
Aquarius <a href="http://aquarius.org.uk">aquarius.org.uk</a>	GamCare partner provider offering gambling support for adults across the Midlands, as well as a gambling service for young people in Birmingham and training to professionals.
ARA (Recovery for All) <a href="http://recovery4all.co.uk">recovery4all.co.uk</a>	GamCare partner provider offering gambling support in Wales, Gloucestershire, Bristol, Newport, Bath, Cornwall and surrounding areas.
Beacon Counselling Trust <a href="http://beaconcounsellingtrust.co.uk">beaconcounsellingtrust.co.uk</a>	GamCare provider offering gambling support in Liverpool, Wigan, the North West, Greater Manchester, Cumbria and surrounding areas.
Betknowmore UK <a href="http://betknowmoreuk.org">betknowmoreuk.org</a>	UK charity and a leading provider of gambling support and training services.
Breakeven <a href="http://breakeven.org.uk">breakeven.org.uk</a>	GamCare partner provider offering gambling support in Kent, Sussex, Essex, Cambridge, Norfolk, and Suffolk.
Derman <a href="http://derman.org.uk">derman.org.uk</a>	Work in partnership with GamCare to provide gambling support to the Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot communities in London.
GamAnon <a href="http://gamanon.org.uk">gamanon.org.uk</a>	Runs local support groups for friends and family of someone with a gambling problem that use the same 12-step approach to recovery from addiction as Alcoholics Anonymous.
GamFam <a href="http://gamfam.org.uk">gamfam.org.uk</a>	A charity set up by those who have experienced first-hand the devastating effects that gambling can have on family and friends.
Gordon Moody <a href="http://gordonmoody.org.uk">gordonmoody.org.uk</a>	Leading UK charity dedicated to providing support and treatment for gambling addiction.
Krysallis <a href="http://krysallis.org.uk">krysallis.org.uk</a>	GamCare partner provider offering gambling support in Harrogate, Bradford, Hull, and East Yorkshire.
NECA (North East Council on Addictions) <a href="http://neca.co.uk">neca.co.uk</a>	GamCare partner provider offering gambling support in the North East, as well as York, Scarborough and Whitby.
NHS National Problem Gambling Clinic <a href="http://www.cnwl.nhs.uk/services/mental-health-services/addictions-and-substance-misuse/national-problem-gambling-clinic">www.cnwl.nhs.uk/services/mental-health-services/addictions-and-substance-misuse/national-problem-gambling-clinic</a>	London-based clinic offering gambling support to those living in England and Wales aged 16 and over as well as partners and family members.
NHS Northern Gambling Service <a href="http://www.leedsandyorkpft.nhs.uk/our-services/northern-gambling-service">www.leedsandyorkpft.nhs.uk/our-services/northern-gambling-service</a>	Provides specialist addiction therapy and recovery to people affected by gambling addiction, as well as those with mental health problems and help to family, partners, and carers. Clinics available in Leeds, Sunderland and Manchester

RCA Trust <a href="http://rcatrust.org.uk">rcatrust.org.uk</a>	GamCare partner provider offering gambling support in Scotland areas Paisley, Dundee, Aberdeen, Inverness and the borders.
YGAM <a href="http://ygam.org">ygam.org</a>	Charity that works to inform, educate, safeguard young people against gaming and gambling harms.

Here is a selection of further support organisations you may find helpful. Most of the telephone numbers provided are available during normal office hours. However, some of the larger charities are available during some night hours as well as during the day. Adfam cannot guarantee the service of these organisations, but it does give an idea of what help is available.

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy <a href="http://www.bacp.co.uk">www.bacp.co.uk</a>	Training for therapists and a register of professional practitioners across the country
Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) <a href="http://www.thecalmzone.net">www.thecalmzone.net</a>	Support for men experiencing suicidal thoughts
Carers UK <a href="http://www.carersuk.org">www.carersuk.org</a>	Information, advice and support for carers
Mind Helpline <a href="http://www.mind.org.uk">www.mind.org.uk</a>	Helpline providing advice and support for anyone experiencing a mental health problem
National Debtline <a href="http://www.stepchange.org">www.stepchange.org</a>	Free telephone debt advice service
National Domestic Violence Helpline <a href="http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk">www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk</a>	Provides a free, fast emergency injunction service to survivors of domestic violence regardless of their financial circumstances, race, gender or sexual orientation
Relate <a href="http://www.relate.co.uk">www.relate.co.uk</a>	Relationship and family counselling
Revolving Door Agency <a href="http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk">www.revolving-doors.org.uk</a>	National charity supporting people affected by mental ill health and the criminal justice system
Samaritans <a href="http://www.samaritans.org">www.samaritans.org</a>	Immediate emotional support for anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope or at risk of suicide.
Shelter <a href="http://www.shelter.org.uk">www.shelter.org.uk</a>	Support for people who are homeless or in housing need

### Additional resources

**We are the evidence too:** The views and evidence of people with lived experience of gambling harms

From: GamLearn and GamFam

**Gambling and impact on the brain:** a summary of how gambling can affect people's mental health and how it links to the brain.

From: The Mental Health Foundation

**Money and Gambling: Practice, Insight, Evidence (MAGPIE):** a programme and partnership between the University of Bristol's Personal Finance Research Centre (PFRC) and GambleAware looking at the potential role of financial services firms – such as banks, building societies, lenders, e-money firms, credit reference agencies – in reducing gambling-related harm.