

GambleAware

Staff briefing sheet

Stigma campaign

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GambleAware is the leading charity working to keep people safe from gambling harms. We offer free, confidential advice, tools and support for anyone worried about how gambling makes them feel.

Our national public health campaign aims to reduce the stigma associated with gambling harms. Stigma is one of the biggest barriers to people identifying that gambling is having a negative impact on them and seeking help. Often they feel worried they'll be judged by others about their experiences.

By empowering people to open up about gambling harms and normalising seeking support, we want to change societal perceptions and understanding of gambling harms, to reduce the stigma surrounding it.

Who are we talking to?

With nearly two thirds of the public (62%) saying that gambling advertising is everywhere, it can feel inescapable and shows that anyone could be at risk of harms from gambling.

Two thirds of the public (67%) acknowledge they feel there is a stigma around gambling harms, and a third of people experiencing gambling harm have not sought support due to feelings of shame or embarrassment. So, we need to start a national conversation around gambling harms to reduce stigma and reach anyone who is experiencing harms directly, or through someone they care about.

The purpose of this briefing

We all have an important role to play in empowering people to open up about gambling and normalising seeking support.

This document can be used to brief staff who may encounter people who are experiencing gambling harms themselves, or indirectly. It can be difficult knowing how to help someone experiencing gambling harms but using the advice and tools in this document could make a big difference to your communities, patients, customers or colleagues who are experiencing harm directly, or as an affected other.

How you can make a difference

There are a number of ways you can support people who are experiencing gambling harms. Below is some helpful advice and guidance, as well as further support, should you, or the person you are speaking to, need it:

Start the conversation

The first step is to start talking.

The best way to start a conversation is to show empathy and reassure them that you're not going to judge them. Try and avoid language or tones that could feel like you're shaming or blaming the person. Our **helpful language guide** provides more advice on what language to use to help the person feel safe and speak openly.

There is also a list of **useful prompts and questions on our website** that can help start a conversation about gambling. General, open-ended questions like the below can work well:

*"I can see you're not happy at the moment.
Is there anything you want to talk about?"*

*"Are you okay, you don't seem like yourself
at the moment?"*

Direct people to the support they need

There are many support services available for people who are experiencing gambling harms.

In the first instance you might like to direct them to **GambleAware's website** where they can find lots of advice, tools and support. There are a number of self help tools that can help people understand how gambling might be affecting them or someone they care about. It only takes a few minutes to complete. All answers provided are anonymous and they'll be provided with free, tailored support, should they want it.

If you think someone requires more urgent support, you can direct them to the **service finder** to access support in their local area. Or they can call the National Gambling Helpline on 0808 8020 133, where they can speak to an advisor 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.