



Trauma and Gambling-Related Harms Toolkit for Professionals Summary



Trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as harmful or life threatening. The experience of trauma can cause lasting adverse effects, limiting the ability to function and achieve mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual well-being. Adverse childhood Experiences (ACEs) are highly stressful or traumatic events that occur during childhood. Research shows that experiencing ACEs can impact brain development and that consequently there is a relationship between ACEs and the development of poor physical, mental and behavioural health



Gambling-related harms are serious and widespread, causing health and mental health issues and suicidal ideation.

Gambling now consists of fast-paced electronic products that are heavily promoted. The most harmful forms of gambling are those that are quickest, easiest to access and designed to be immersive.

Anyone can be harmed by gambling, although the health harms can be felt disproportionately such as on those who have experienced ACE's and trauma. Research estimates that 50% of people in the UK have experienced one or more ACE and between 9-12% of the population have experienced 4 or more ACEs



Understanding the links between trauma and gambling is essential for effective intervention as the experience of trauma can increase the risk of gambling harm.

People who have experienced trauma and ACEs may use gambling as a way to cope with emotional pain. People who have experienced trauma/ACEs may have had brain development negatively impacted, increasing risk of harm caused by addictive gambling products and practices.

There are six established principles of trauma-informed care which will help organisations and services to create a positive environment with policies and practices that minimise the chance of re-traumatisation and support people to access the services.

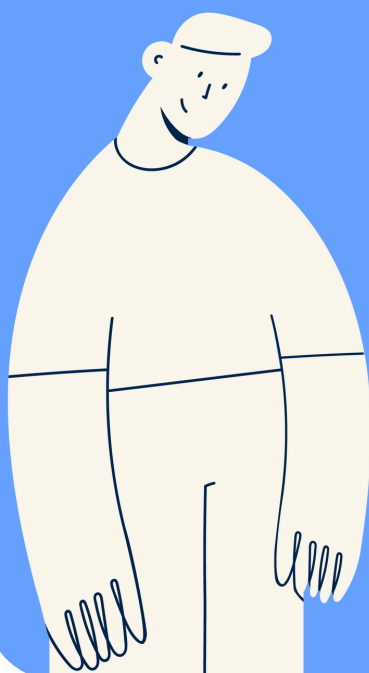


The gambling harms and trauma toolkit has been developed to provide professionals in Manchester with the knowledge, skills and resources to support the people they work with who may be experiencing gambling-related harms in a trauma-informed way. The toolkit aims to improve understanding of trauma and its impact, the causes and effects of gambling-related harms, the relationship between the two, and how to support someone affected.



If someone isn't ready for treatment or further support there are materials and downloadable and printable resources on the [Chapter One](#) website that provide information and self reflection exercises.

Ian's story



Background: Ian, a 52-year-old man, experienced sexual abuse during his childhood. As an adult, this led to severe mental health harms.

Gambling as an Escape: Ian began gambling as a way to cope with his pain. The dopamine hit from gambling provided temporary relief from his emotional pain.

Cycle of Harm: Over time, Ian's gambling escalated, leading to further emotional distress and social impacts. His addiction to gambling and the need for a coping mechanism created a harmful cycle that was difficult to break.

Intervention: A trauma and gambling informed counsellor helped Ian understand the link between trauma and gambling, the addictive nature of gambling and the impact on the brain. They counsellor provided information and referred Ian to specialist support.

See [full toolkit](#) for further information on how to support someone access specialist treatment.