



How Safer/Responsible Gambling Programmes can increase the suicide risk for gamblers and allow the gambling industry to avoid scrutiny

Will Prochaska – CEO

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Gambling with Lives is a charity founded by bereaved families



Jack (age 24)



Chris (age 25)



Daniel (age 20)



Kimberly (age 32)



Fred (age 21)

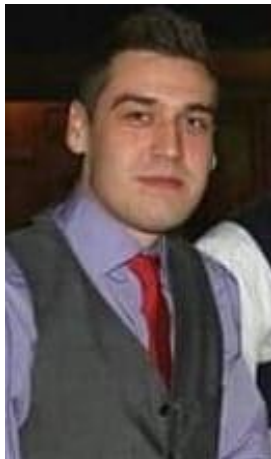
Just some of the
young people
lost by Gambling
with Lives
families



Lewis (age 34)



Daniel (age 35)



Philip (age 29)



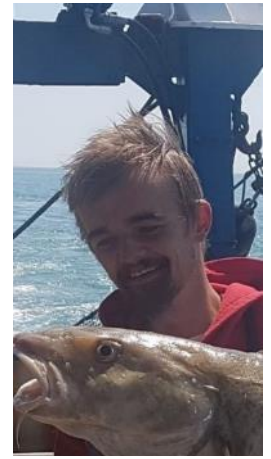
Ryan (age 27)



Joshua (age 23)



Phil (age 30)



Aaron (age 24)

The Gambling Industry has a problem...It's addicted to harm



86% of online gambling profits come from 5% of highest spending (losing) gamblers₉

Which has created a public health crisis that is only deepening because of Covid



- 1 in 4 people who gamble suffer serious harm¹
- Over 20% of the UK population is affected by gambling harms⁴
- Heavy gambling is associated with over 35% increased mortality¹
- Some forms of gambling have 50% addiction rates⁵ in contrast to heroin (20/30% addiction rate)⁶ and tobacco (30% addiction rate)⁷
- 50% of all gambling addiction in the UK is now associated with online casino gambling / slots⁸

To protect its profits the industry has borrowed a range of tactics



The language and mis-information of Responsible Gambling is a powerful tool in distorting the debate



*'We need to balance the protection of the **vulnerable** with the continued enjoyment of the many who gamble responsibly'*

'Only ~1% of adults are Problem Gamblers'

'Sunday School Prohibitionists want to ruin working people's fun'

The Responsible Gambling mantra has been harmful in its own right



Independent academic researchers and lived experience campaigners argue that the Safer/Responsible Gambling model:

1. undermines the international public health approach to the risks of gambling
2. creates stigma and discrimination, which increases the suicide risk
3. deflects away from the role of the industry's marketing practices and product design

The shame and stigma created by Responsible Gambling increases the suicide risk



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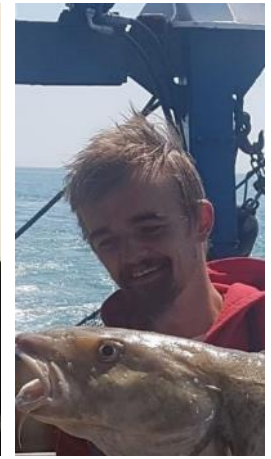
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The industry are clever to co-opt charity partners and academics to push its own agenda



- Gentleman's agreement to donate 0.1% of profit to research, education and treatment (RET) which is delivered through the RET list
- Charities and academics have become dependent on voluntary industry contributions which has ensured their compliance to the responsible gambling mantra

How can you help?

- If you see a safer gambling campaign, think about how you might feel if you were suffering from Gambling Disorder and saw it?
- Question what's influencing a campaign, messaging or intervention before supporting it
- Understand suicide postvention work in the same space as prevention work and create referral routes for support
- Consider how to support front line services to signpost effectively – what information do they need?
- If you're not a gambling specific service – ask the gambling question.

What we offer families



Family Support Service

- We offer a free family support service for families bereaved by gambling related suicide
- We offer therapeutic support via our family therapists
- Individuals can refer themselves or external organisations can refer families into us

References

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2. *Anna Karlsson and Anders Håkansson 2018: 'Gambling disorder, increased mortality, suicidality, and associated comorbidity: A longitudinal nationwide register study'*
3. *Gambling with Lives, 2021, Comorbidity and Gambling, <https://www.gamblingwithlives.org/research>*
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5. *NatCen, 2018: 'Gambling behaviour in Great Britain in 2016: Evidence from England, Scotland and Wales'*
6. *L.A.Warner et al., 1995, 'Prevalence and Correlates of Drug Use and Dependence in the US', Arch Gen Psych, 1995.;52:219-229*
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8. *Gambling with Lives, 2020, Addictive Gambling Products, <https://www.gamblingwithlives.org/research>*
9. *NatCen – Exploring Online Patterns of Play March 2021 - https://www.begambleaware.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/PoP_Interim%20Report_Short_Final.pdf*