



Preventing Gambling Harm for Women

What strategies work and what needs to change

Gambling harm in women is often hidden and shaped by a range of social, environmental, and commercial factors. This research with 15 key informants from research, policy, prevention and treatment services, and 5 women with lived experience of gambling harm highlights the need for targeted, gender-responsive strategies that move beyond individual responsibility and address the broader systems influencing women's gambling.

1 Gaps in current responses

What the research shows:

- Limited focus on women in public health strategies
- Assumptions about who is at risk (often focused on older women)
- Younger women are not well recognised in prevention or support systems
- Public health campaigns often target men, reinforcing gendered assumptions

These gaps may reduce women's ability to recognise harm or seek support.

3 Key Prevention Strategies

Create alternative social spaces:

- Safe, non-gambling environments that are accessible outside standard hours and support social connection without gambling

Strengthen policy and regulation:

- Reduce availability of gambling products and restrict advertising
- Remove inducements and incentives and implement structural changes beyond education

Rethink public education:

- Move beyond 'responsible gambling' to provide clear information about product risks
- Challenge myths about gambling and ensure campaigns reflect women's experiences

Co-design with women:

- Work with women to develop strategies and include lived experience in campaign design
- Ensure messages resonate with different groups of women

Use new communication approaches:

- Use social media and digital platforms.
- Create engaging, visual content and tailor messages for younger audiences

2 What needs to change

Move beyond individual responsibility

- Current approaches focus on personal choice
- Limited attention to environments, products, and industry practices
- Need for a broader public health response

Focus on de-normalisation

- Reduce the visibility and acceptance of gambling
- Challenge the idea that gambling is harmless entertainment
- Address how gambling is embedded in everyday environments

Develop gender-responsive strategies

- Recognise women's different experiences across the life course
- Address stigma and barriers to help-seeking
- Tailor approaches to different groups of women

4 Addressing stigma

Why address stigma:

- Stigma prevents women from speaking out
- Fear of judgement shapes help-seeking
- Gender roles affect how gambling is perceived

How to address stigma:

- Sharing lived experience
- Creating safe ways to speak out
- Providing anonymous pathways for advocacy



The one size fits all gambling help promotions means that they don't actually resonate with any particular group



Key message

Effective prevention requires more than education. It requires structural change, gender-responsive strategies, and approaches that reflect women's lived experiences.

Prevention must address environments, norms, and industry influence - not just individual behaviour.



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