

1. GAMBLING

Economic / financial abuse is domestic abuse and problem gambling requires substantial amounts of money to maintain the addiction. **There is an increased risk of domestic abuse where gambling addiction is also present.** Hing, N et al (2021) define this as economic exploitation and economic control.

Hing, N et al (2021) also discuss how domestic abuse can lead to victims turning to gambling as a harmful coping mechanism for the abuse experienced and as such offering physical or psychological escape.

2. WHY IT MATTERS?

A recently published Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) in Liverpool, LDHR21 'Mary', identified the perpetrator's gambling and subsequent failure to contribute to household bills, was a significant factor which combined with other indicators pointed towards financial abuse and controlling and coercive behaviour.

A Learning Event delivered to professionals following publication of this DHR identified that not all professionals were aware of the interconnected risk factors between gambling and domestic abuse.



July 2024

Liverpool
Domestic
Homicide
Review
Steering
Group

3. GAMBLING AND DOMESTIC ABUSE

Economic Exploitation and Economic Control in the context of domestic abuse can include (but is not limited to):

Using a partner's bank card without consent

Restricting access to money

Building debts in the victim's name

Coercing into criminal activity to gain money for gambling

Coercing or threatening to get loans

Sabotaging employment

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

Beacon Counselling Trust are Liverpool based offering specialist services for gambling related harms.

GamCare offers support and information for the partners, friends, and relatives of people with gambling problems.

BetKnowMore UK are a charity offering a range of support options to those effected by gambling.

National Gambling Helpline
0808 8020 1333

MPACT support families affected by gambling
Liza.Mcgee@forwardtrust.org.uk

6. BARRIERS TO LEAVING

The victim being unable to afford to leave the relationship due to: Serious financial hardship and lack of funds to establish their lives independent of the perpetrator.

Impact on credit rating to be able to find a new property.

Restricting access to earn money resulting in unemployment.

Threats of escalation in physical abuse.

Victim blaming.

Perpetrator making threats of suicide.

Fear of criminalising by threatening to report what they were coerced into doing, e.g. being untruthful on loan applications.

5. RESEARCH

The University of Nebraska Medical School researched people admitted to emergency rooms due to domestic abuse and concluded that **when the partner of the victim has a gambling addiction, the likelihood of intimate partner violence increased by 10.5 times.**

In addition, research by the University of Toledo concluded that intimate partner violence occurred in more than 60% of families where gambling harms were present.

Victims of domestic abuse can also engage in problem gambling which can be used as a psychological escape from the abuse, a means of clawing back money that could also be used to escape the abuse, gain money to placate the perpetrator and prevent further abuse.

4. WHAT RESEARCH TELLS US

Research shows that men who gamble are more likely to act violently towards others – with the most addicted gamblers, the most prone to serious violence. The study found that gambling in any capacity: pathological, problem, or so-called 'casual gambling', related to significantly increased risk of violence, including domestic abuse.

The researchers found a statistically significant link between gambling and violent behaviour: the more severe the gambling habit, the greater chance of violence. Just over half of pathological gamblers, 45 per cent of problem gamblers, and 28 per cent of 'casual gamblers', reported some form of physical fight in the past five years.

The study also found that **pathological and problem gamblers are more likely to have hit a child:** with almost 10% of pathological gamblers and just over 6% of problem gamblers admitting to such behaviour.

Those with likely pathological gambling problems also had increased odds of committing violent behaviour against a partner.

<https://www.lincoln.ac.uk/news/2016/09/1262.asp>



https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353729646_Problem_gambling_and_economic_abuse_against_women_An_adaptive_grounded_theory_analysis

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gambling-related-harms-evidence-review/gambling-related-harms-evidence-review-summary-2>

<https://maryhaven.com/gamblers-families-risk/>