



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

Gambling Recovery Groups

Gambling recovery groups come in two forms. Clinician-led treatment groups use structured CBT and motivational approaches to help you stop gambling, address the patterns that drive it, and build a sustainable recovery. Peer mutual aid, most prominently Gamblers Anonymous, offers ongoing 12-Step community. For many, combining the two works best. Gambling disorder is the one behavioral addiction recognized in the DSM-5 and overlaps with substance use in craving and loss of control. Its consequences are often severe, and shame and concealment are common, which makes peer connection especially important.

WHO IT'S FOR, AND WHO IT'S NOT

- CBT groups suit people ready for homework and cognitive work.
- Peer mutual aid works at any stage and as ongoing aftercare.
- Severe financial crisis or gambling-related suicidality needs clinical support. Call or text 988.

What it's for

People with gambling disorder or problem gambling who want to stop and reduce harm.

Clinician-led groups suit active treatment; peer groups fit any stage and aftercare.

Gam-Anon supports affected family and friends.

WHAT TO EXPECT

1 CBT groups: 60 to 90 minutes over 8 to 12 weeks, with urge logs and thought records.

2 Work targets triggers and gambling beliefs: illusion of control, gambler's fallacy.

3 GA follows the 12-Step format. Financial counseling is often recommended alongside.

Psychological treatment for gambling disorder is well established.

- A 2023 meta-analysis of 29 trials found psychological treatment improved **gambling severity, frequency, and finances**, with CBT strongest.¹
- Peer mutual aid is less studied here, but the broader literature supports **peer support and shared accountability**.²

MAKING THE MOST OF IT

Address the money too. Financial counseling alongside the group matters.

Name your triggers. The situations and beliefs you can plan around.

Lean on the fellowship. A new social network can replace the old one.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU JOIN

- 1** Is it a clinician-led CBT group, Gamblers Anonymous, or SMART?
- 2** How many sessions, and what does it cost?
- 3** Is financial counseling available alongside it?

Ready to find a group?

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If you're in crisis, call or text 988.

The Group Guide is a directory, not a clinic. This handout is general education, not medical or mental health advice. Listings are written by group leaders and are not endorsements. Confirm details, cost, and fit with any group you contact. Sources on page 2.



Sources

Gambling Recovery Groups · references keyed to the numbers on page 1.

- 1 Eriksen, J. W., Fiskaali, A., Zachariae, R., et al. Psychological intervention for gambling disorder: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions* (2023), 12(3), 613–630.
- 2 Pistrang, N., Barker, C., & Humphreys, K. Mutual help groups for mental health problems: a review of effectiveness studies. *American Journal of Community Psychology* (2008), 42(1–2), 110–121.

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