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Research highlights impact of gambling on children, partners

A [research](#) study recently published by the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation shows that gambling harm can extend across generations, with adults who were exposed during childhood to their parents' gambling facing increased mental health problems.

Cafs (Child & Family Services, Ballarat) understands how others can be negatively affected by the gambling of a loved one and offers a range of effective treatment and support services to the person who gambles, their partner and children.

John Bradshaw, Cafs Gamblers Help Community Engagement Officer, said the study highlighted differences in the types and degrees of harm experienced by parents who gamble compared to the harms experienced by the children of people who gamble.

Parents commonly report financial effects and lower incidences of harm, whereas children report higher incidences of harm and mainly focus on the psychosocial effects of their parents' gambling.

'These effects may be experienced as a perceived lack of love, hope or competent parenting and limit the child's ability to function as a healthy member of their family or community,' John said.

The research also found that while many people are aware that gambling can lead to difficulties such as financial stress or physical and mental health issues, the complex ways in which gambling harms can affect others is less well understood.

'Nobody who gambles sets out to hurt themselves or others, but gambling products are risky and designed to keep people spending more time and more money on them.

'The new research suggests that many people who gamble are aware that they may experience harm, but their understanding of the impact on their kids' health and wellbeing is not well developed.

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'Gambling harm doesn't discriminate – it can affect anybody. Which is why every day we provide support to people who are experiencing negative consequences from gambling – not people who gamble, but their friends and family'.

Anyone concerned about their own or someone else's gambling can access free, confidential advice, support and referral by calling:

- Cafs - freecall [1800 692 237](tel:1800692237)
- the 24/7 [Gambler's Help](tel:1800858858) line on 1800 858 858
- the 24/7 Youthline on 1800 262 376.

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