



Declaration of Financial Interests or Relationships

I have the following financial interest or relationship to disclose regarding the subject matter of this presentation:

RBE has received research funding (as PI and Co-I) from the Academic Forum for the Study of Gambling (AFSG), Bristol Hub for Gambling Harms Research, Bournemouth University, and GambleAware. He has received honoraria for peer-review of AFSG Exploratory Research Grants (2025), and travel/accommodation expenses covered for Keynote presentation and conference presentation (2024) by Auckland University of Technology (AUT).

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Examining gambling-related harms in **LGBTQIA+** communities

***“I feel like the risks
are quite high, and no
one talks about
them.”***

Dr Reece Bush-Evans

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Overview

Gambling Harms within LGBTQIA+ Communities:

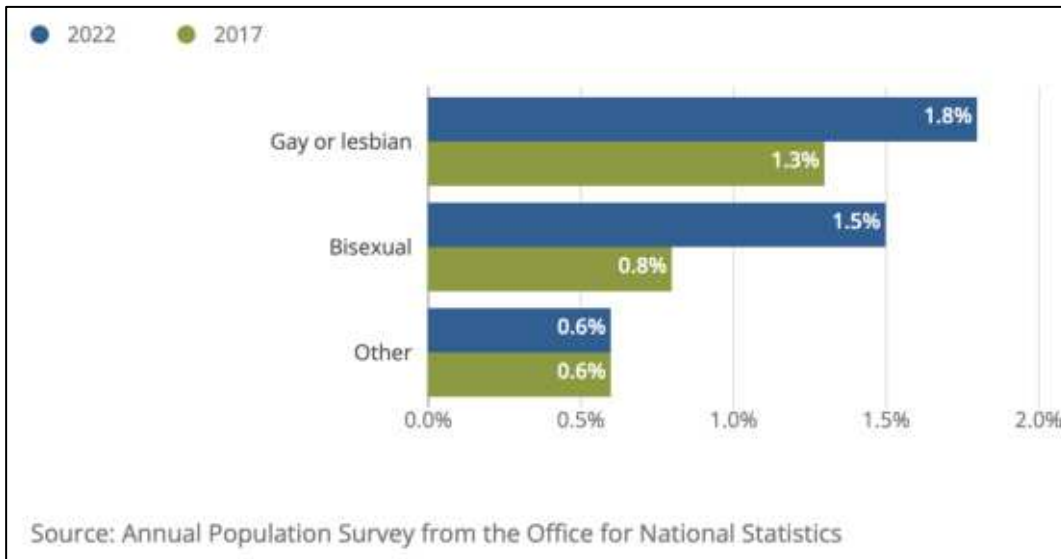
- LGBTQIA+ sample ($n = 1444$)
- Comparison sample ($n = 1472$)
- Importance of an intersectional approach
- Service barriers
- Tailored Treatment
- Recommendations



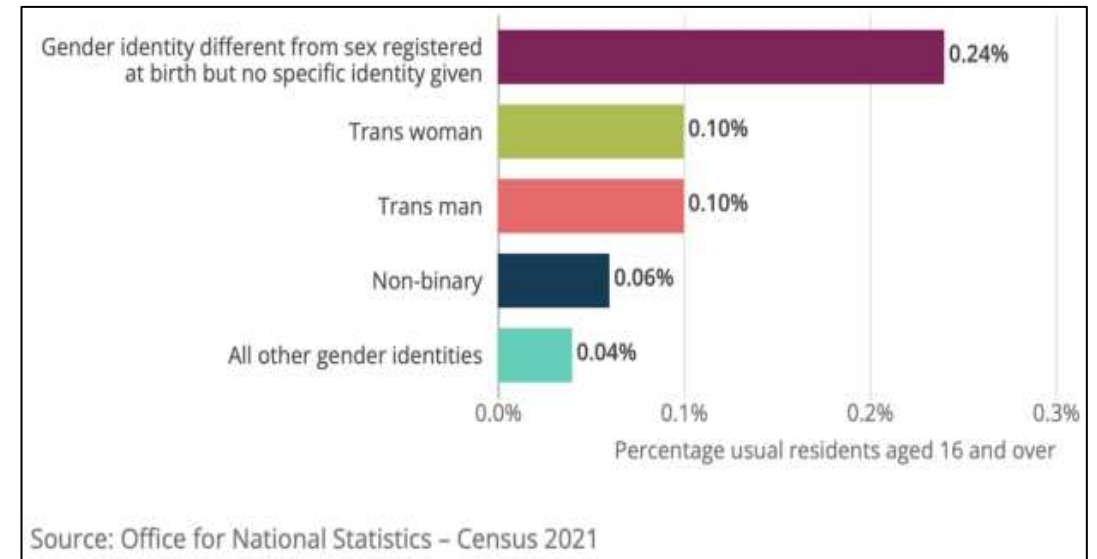
Questions

Landscape

census 2021

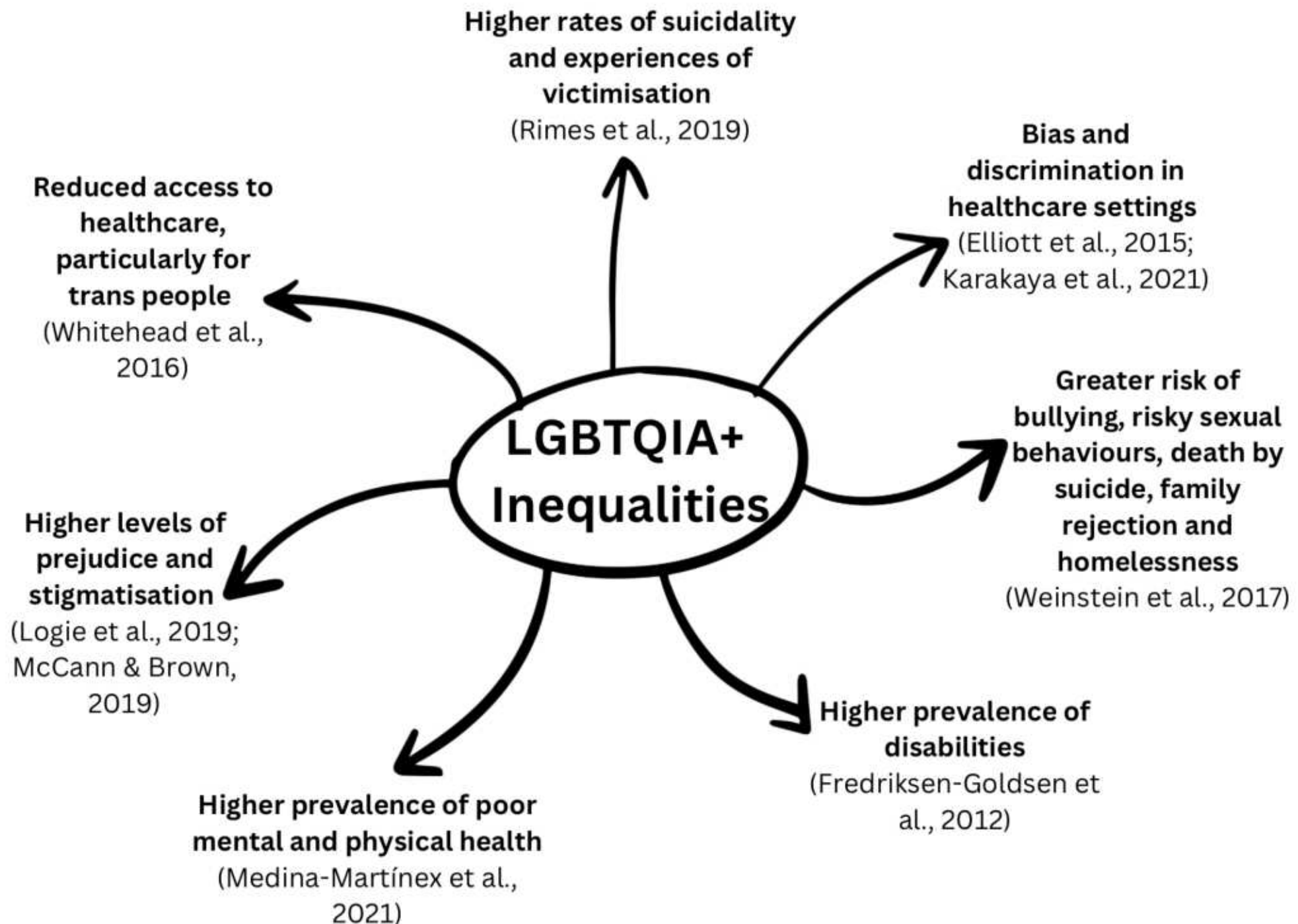


An estimated 1.8 million aged 16+ (3.3% of UK population) identified as LGB in 2022.



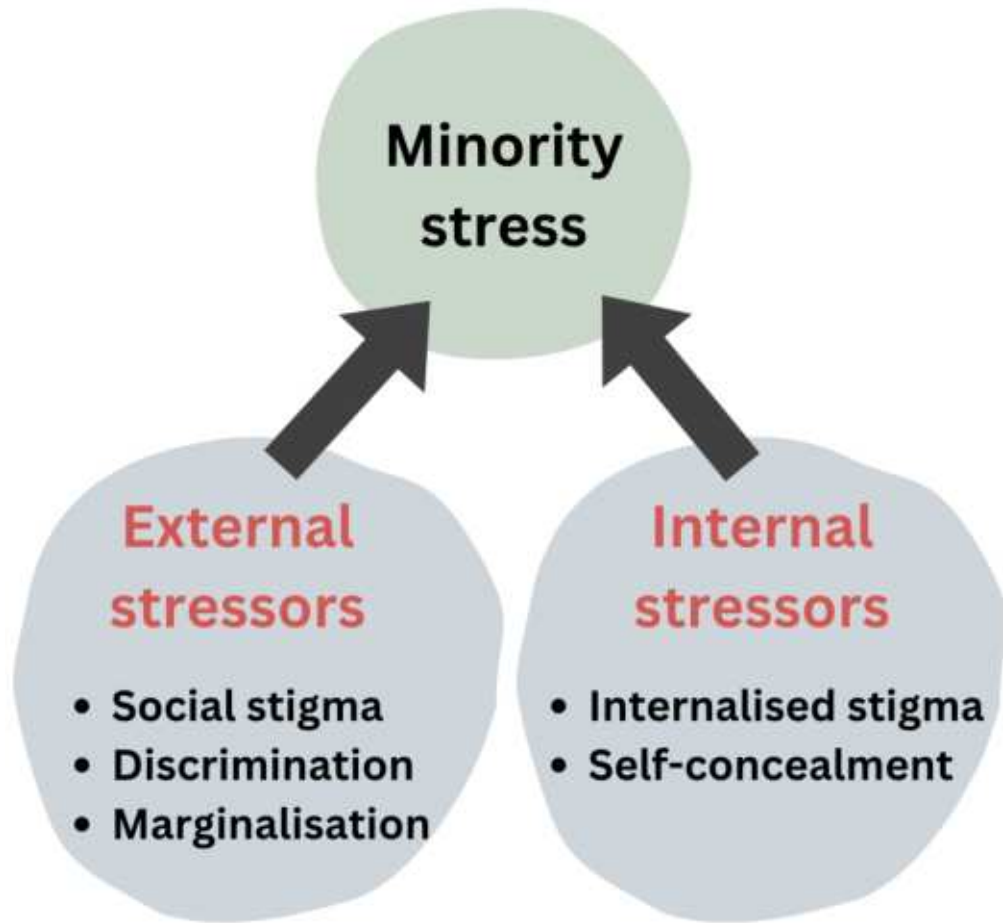
A total of 262,000 people (0.5%) answered “No”, indicating that their gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth.





Minority Stress Theory

(Meyer, 2003)



- Minority groups = **greater risk** of societal stigma and discrimination. This places them at risk for several negative physical and mental health outcomes (Green & Feinstein, 2012; Newcomb et al., 2012).
- **Discrimination** and **stigma** are associated with risky behaviours and addiction (Hatzenbuehler, 2009).
- Gambling may offer avenues to gain acceptance whilst escaping emotional pain.

Very limited empirical evidence thus far...



Prevalence: Higher levels of gambling harms:

- Sexual minority men and LGBTQ+ youth (Bush et al., 2021).
- Trans and gender-diverse people (Rider et al., 2019).

Risk and protective factors:


- **Stigma** may increase severity of gambling harms (Bush et al., 2021).
- **Social support** may be a protective factor (Bush et al., 2020; Bush et al., 2021).

Help-seeking, service barriers, and interventions:

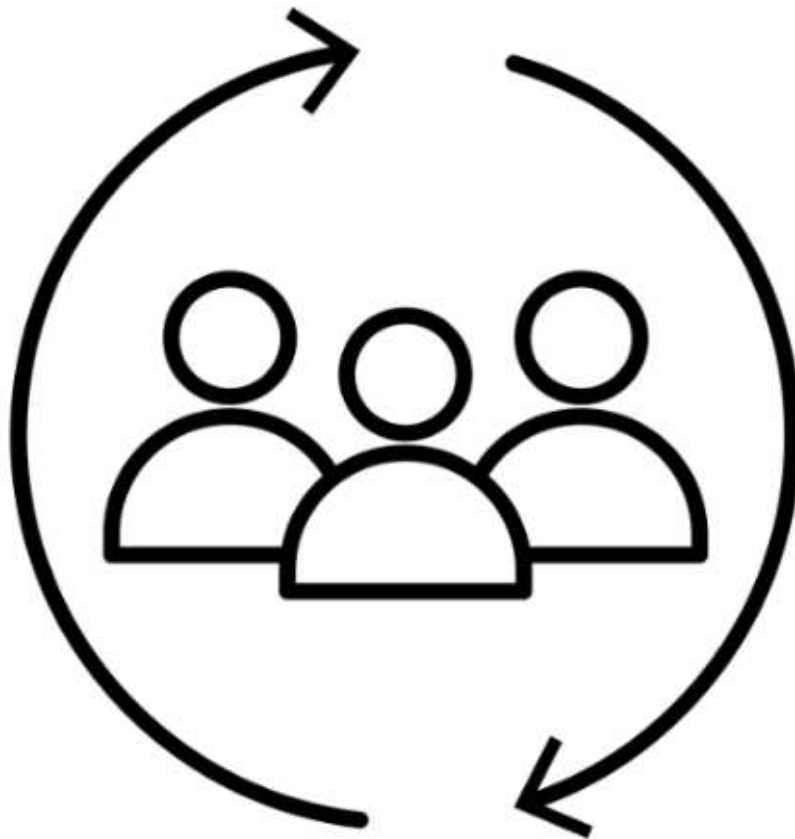
- No studies focused on services or interventions.



RESEARCH AIMS:

- Estimate levels of gambling and gambling-related harms within LGBTQIA+ communities.
 - Explore the relationships between gambling, QoL, mental health, and LGBTQIA+ life stressors.
 - Obtain insight into lived experiences of gambling-related harms within LGBTQIA+ communities.
 - Explore help-seeking behaviours and access/barriers to support for gambling harms.
- 

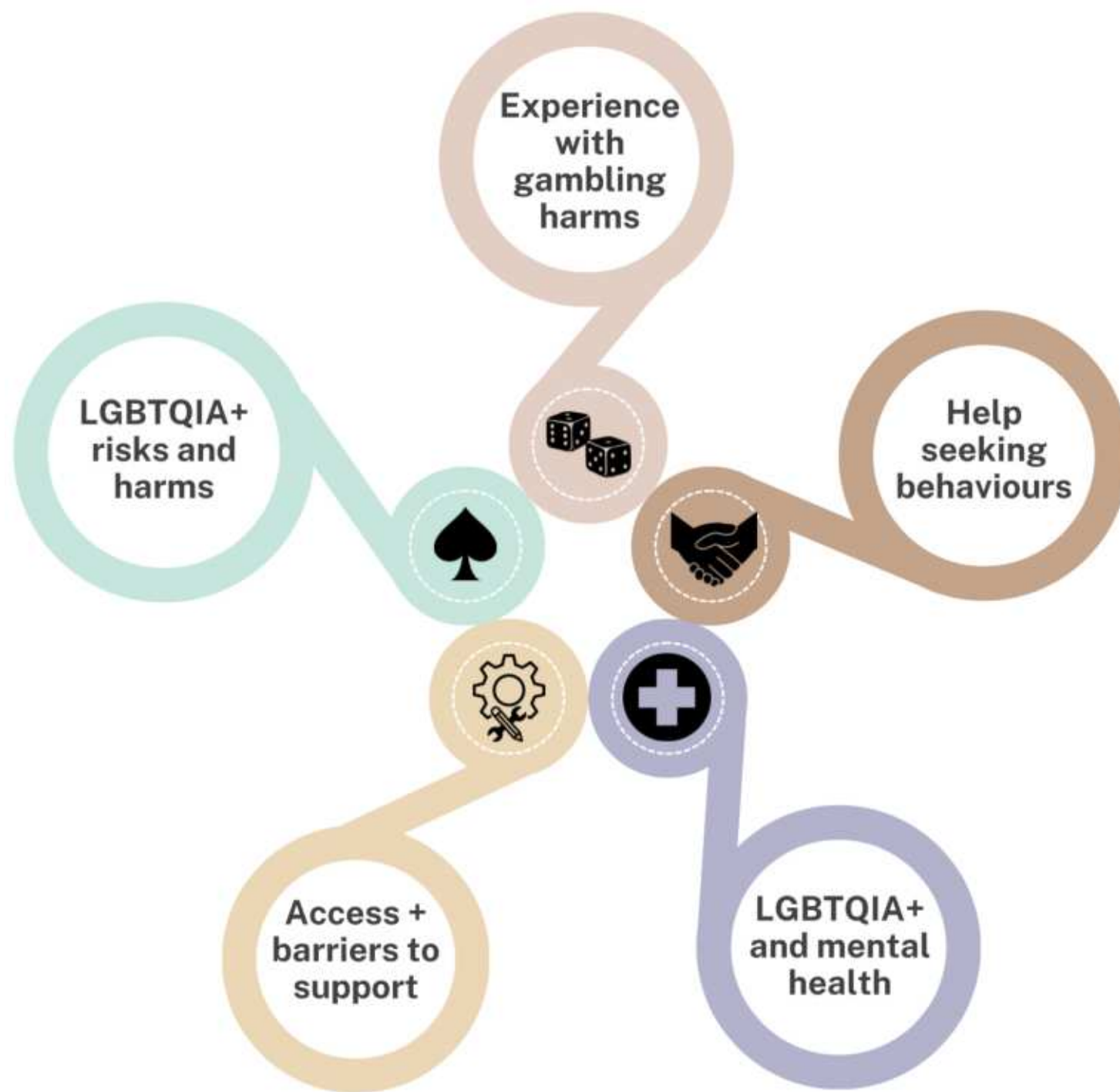
Involvement of Lived Experience



Research Study



- ◆ Problem Gambling Severity (PGSI)
 - ◆ Gambling engagement, types, attitudes, cognitions (GRCS), and motivations (GMQ)
 - ◆ Depression (PHQ-8) and Quality of Life (EUROHIS-QoL)
 - ◆ Social norms around gambling
 - ◆ Daily Heterosexist Experiences (DHEQ)
- +
- ◆ Social Support and Interactions (DSSI)
 - ◆ Gender Minority Stress and Resilience (GMSR)
 - ◆ Minority Stress and Microaggressions Scale (LGBTQ-POC)



LGBTQIA+ Sample

N = 1444

Age: Mean age: 32.39 years
(*SD* = 9.15), range: 18-74

Ethnicity:

- White: *n* = 1243 (86.1%)
- Asian: *n* = 46 (3.2%)
- Black: *n* = 88 (6.1%)
- Mixed ethnicity: *n* = 58 (4.0%)
- Other ethnicity: *n* = 8 (.7%)

Frequency of Gambling:

- Daily: *n* = 121 (8.4%)
- Weekly: *n* = 561 (38.9%)
- Monthly: *n* = 762 (52.8%)

>30

Different combination of terms
to describe their gender identity

◆ Gender Fluid 2%

◆ Man 33%

◆ Non-binary 5%

◆ Transgender 6%

◆ Woman 56%

>50

Different combination of terms to
describe their sexual orientation

◆ Asexual 4%

◆ Bisexual 50%

◆ Gay / Lesbian 33%

◆ Pansexual 12%

◆ Queer 8%

Stressors

65% of LGBTQIA+ individuals experience some form of discrimination or harassment.

51% of LGBTQIA+ individuals experience problems disclosing their gender identity.

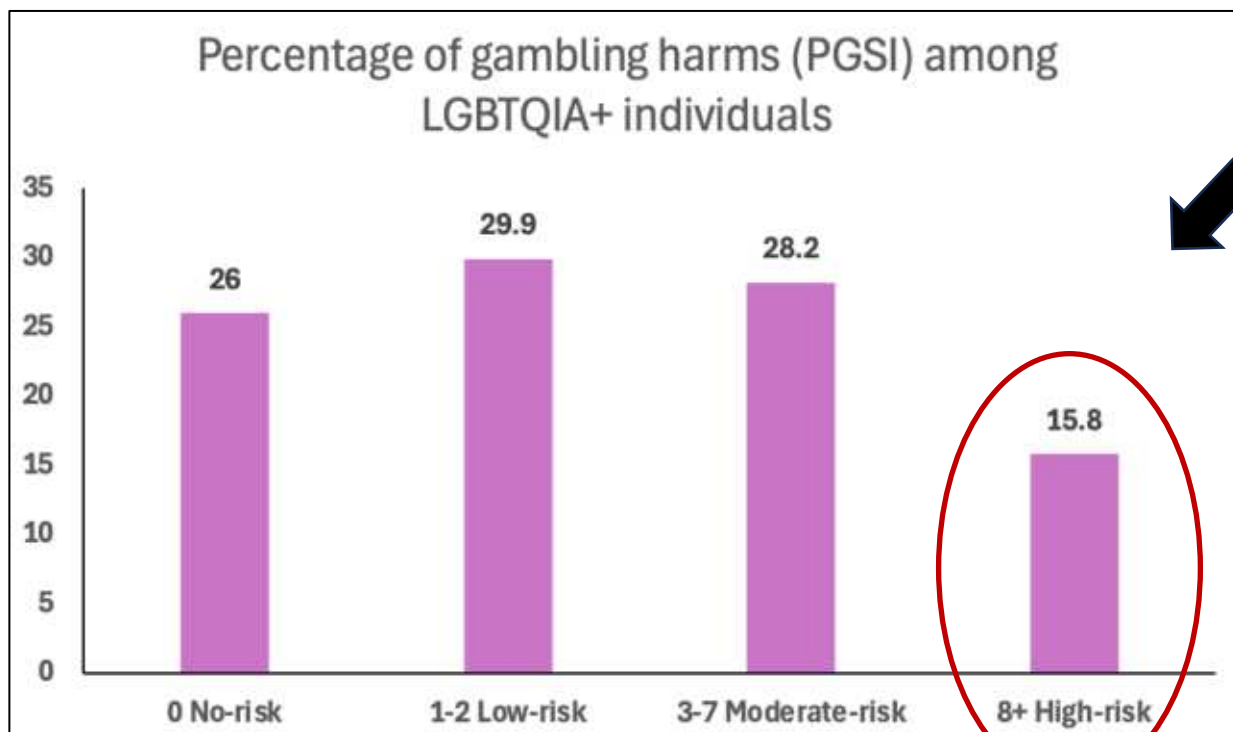
90% of LGBTQIA+ individuals experience some form of isolation.

56% of LGBTQIA+ individuals experience rejection from family members due to their identity.

13% of LGBTQIA+ individuals are directly affected by hate crimes and anti-LGBTQIA+ victimization.

97% of LGBTQIA+ individuals are indirectly affected by hate crimes against the LGBTQIA+ community.

Gambling Harms



15.8% of LGBTQIA+ individuals score 8+ on the PGSI

39%

Feel that they should cut down on their gambling

46%

Lose more money than expected, potentially impacting on affordability

50%

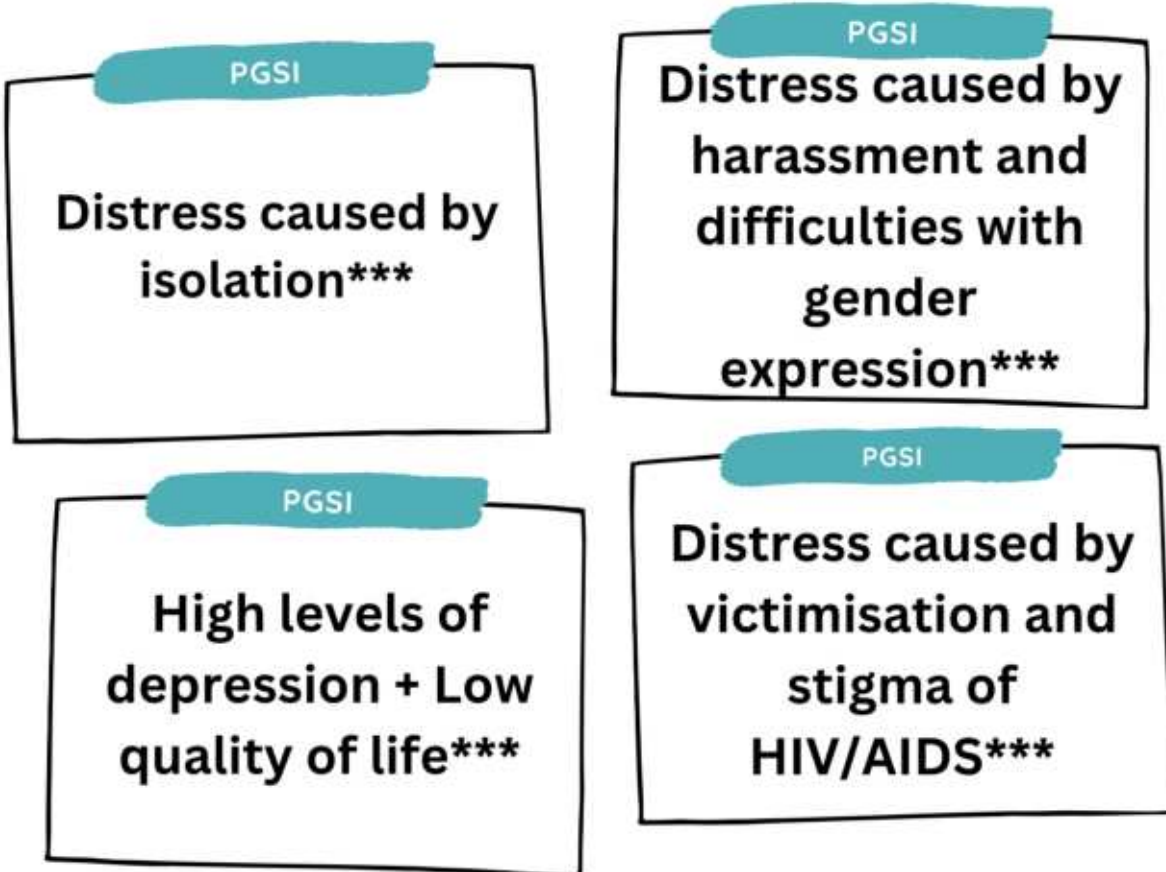
Feel regret after gambling

36%

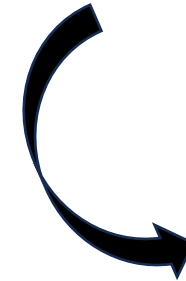
Hide their gambling from friends and loved ones

Gambling Harms

Statistically significant relationships between distress caused by life stressors and higher scores on the PGSI.



Statistically significant relationships between distress caused by life stressors and turning to gamble as a coping mechanism.



*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

Gambling Harms

"Being gay made me feel bad about myself and I would turn to slots for a serotonin boost"

"There's a link between all the problems that I had with my sexuality when I was younger and the reasons why I chose to gamble at that time"



"If I have been harassed or humiliated, I gambled to make me feel better"

"If you're in the closet and you just want to escape from reality, it [gambling] is a route to escape"

"Because I'm struggling with my sexuality, I've been depressed for a long time. And it just led me to all sorts of things, like being addicted to gambling. I just became very isolated and I pushed people away. Gambling was the only consistent thing left"

Comparative Sample

Cisgendered Heterosexual Sample (non-LGBTQIA+) N = 1472

Gender:

- Man: $n = 827$ (56.2%)
- Woman: $n = 645$ (43.8%)

Age:

- Mean age: 40.75 years
($SD = 12.25$), range: 18-88



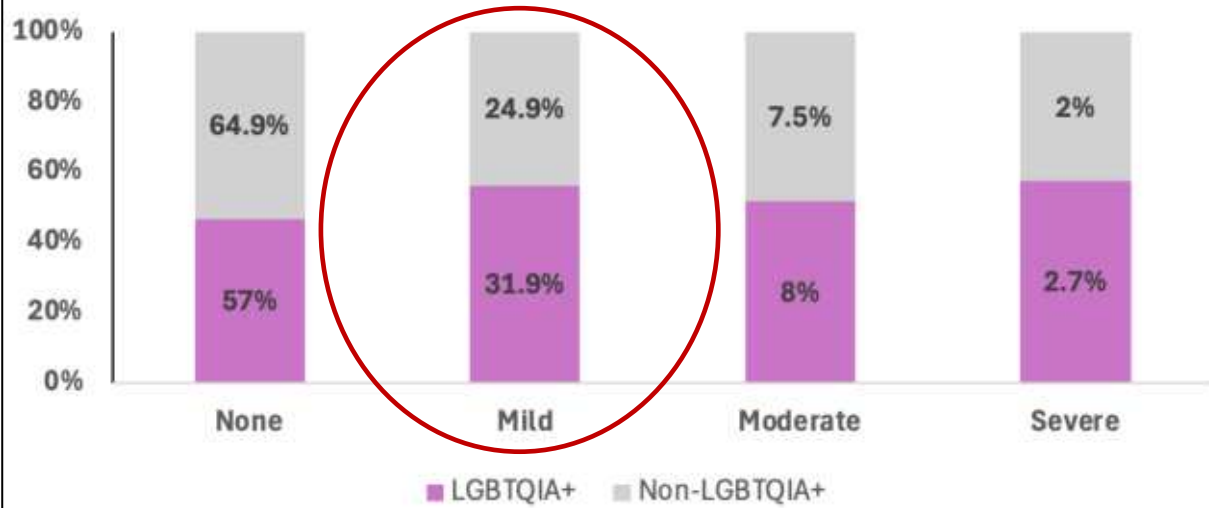
Ethnicity:

- White: $n = 1294$ (87.9%)
- Asian: $n = 68$ (4.6%)
- Black: $n = 56$ (3.8%)
- Mixed ethnicity: $n = 45$ (3.1%)

Frequency of Gambling:

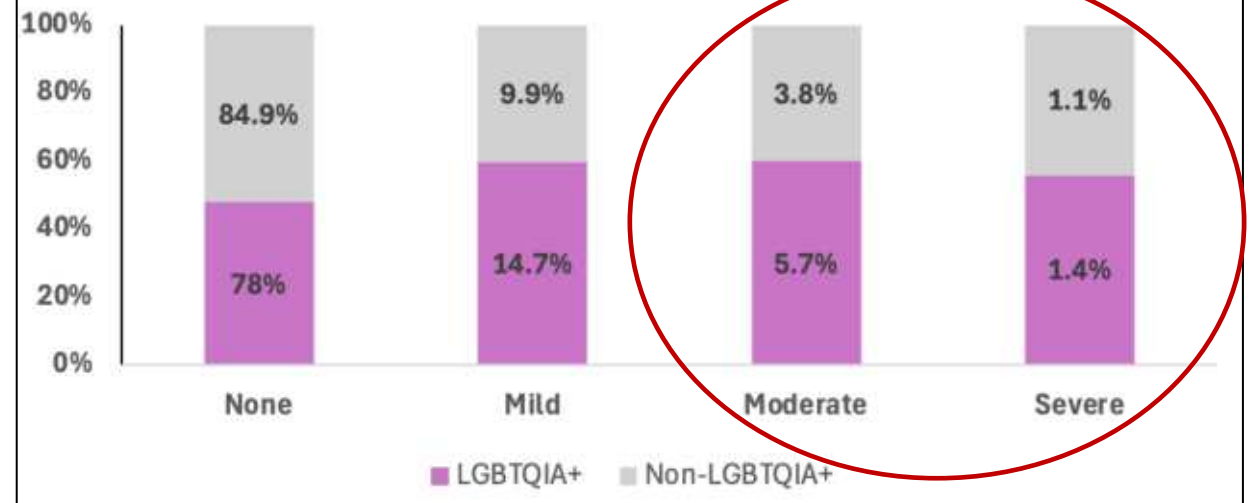
- Daily: $n = 151$ (10.3%)
- Weekly: $n = 774$ (52.6%)
- Monthly: $n = 547$ (37.2%)

Percentage of LGBTQIA+ and non-LGBTQIA+ gamblers who experienced emotional distress in the last month due to gambling



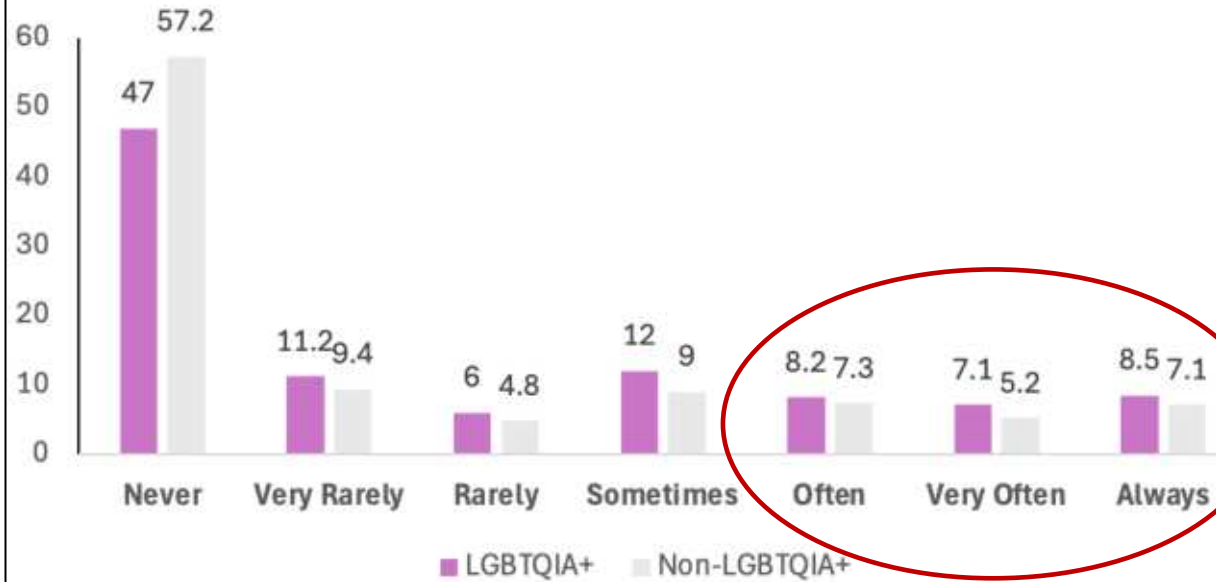
LGBTQIA+ gamblers: Increased experience of personal troubles (e.g., relationship, legal, health) due to gambling

Percentage of LGBTQIA+ and non-LGBTQIA+ gamblers who experienced personal trouble in the last month due to gambling



LGBTQIA+ gamblers: Increased experience of emotional distress (e.g., shame, guilt, anguish) due to gambling

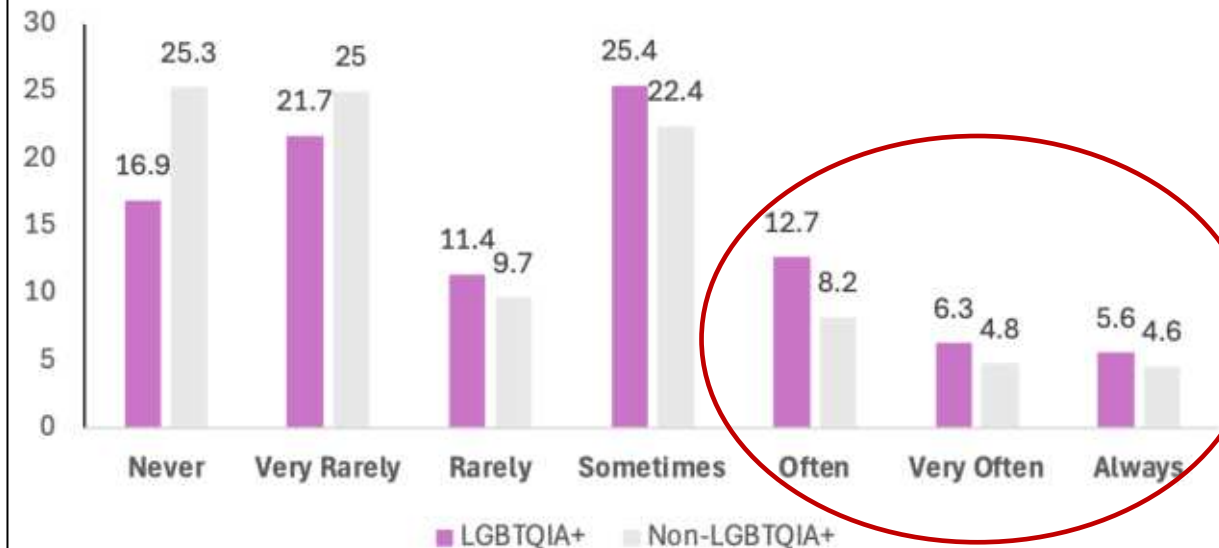
Percentage of LGBTQIA+ and non-LGBTQIA+ gamblers who hide their gambling from others



LGBTQIA+ gamblers: Increased experience of hiding gambling activities from friends and loved ones

LGBTQIA+ gamblers: Increased experience of feeling regret after gambling

Percentage of LGBTQIA+ and non-LGBTQIA+ gamblers who feel regret after gambling



Comparison: Main variables

	LGBTQIA+ <i>n</i> = 1444		Non-LGBTQIA+ <i>n</i> = 1472				
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	Sig.
PGSI	3.71	4.65	2.92	4.47	2914	4.66	<.001
Support	16.18	3.67	17.52	3.37	2914	10.30	<.001
Coping	1.58	.63	1.51	.59	2914	3.11	<.001
Depression	8.75	6.24	5.98	5.63	2914	12.58	<.001
Quality of Life	22.51	8.10	26.02	8.17	2914	11.64	<.001

LGBTQIA+

Significantly higher scores:

- Gambling-related harms (PGSI)
- Gambling as a coping strategy
- Depression

Significantly lower scores:

- Social Support
- Quality of Life



Intersectional Approach

The causes of disadvantage and discrimination do not exist independently but intersect and overlap. Importance of capturing unique experiences of individuals and their multiple **intersecting identities** (Collins, 1998; Crenshaw, 1989).



Through an intersectional lens, we can begin to understand the **complex underpinnings of inequality** and **develop solutions to combat social and health disparities**.

Transgender individuals

N = 82

Age: Mean age: 30.21 years
(*SD* = 8.24); range: 18-61

Ethnicity:

- White: $n = 64$ (78.0%)
- Black: $n = 14$ (17.1%)
- Mixed ethnicity: $n = 3$ (3.7%)
- Other ethnicity: $n = 1$ (1.2%)

Frequency of Gambling:

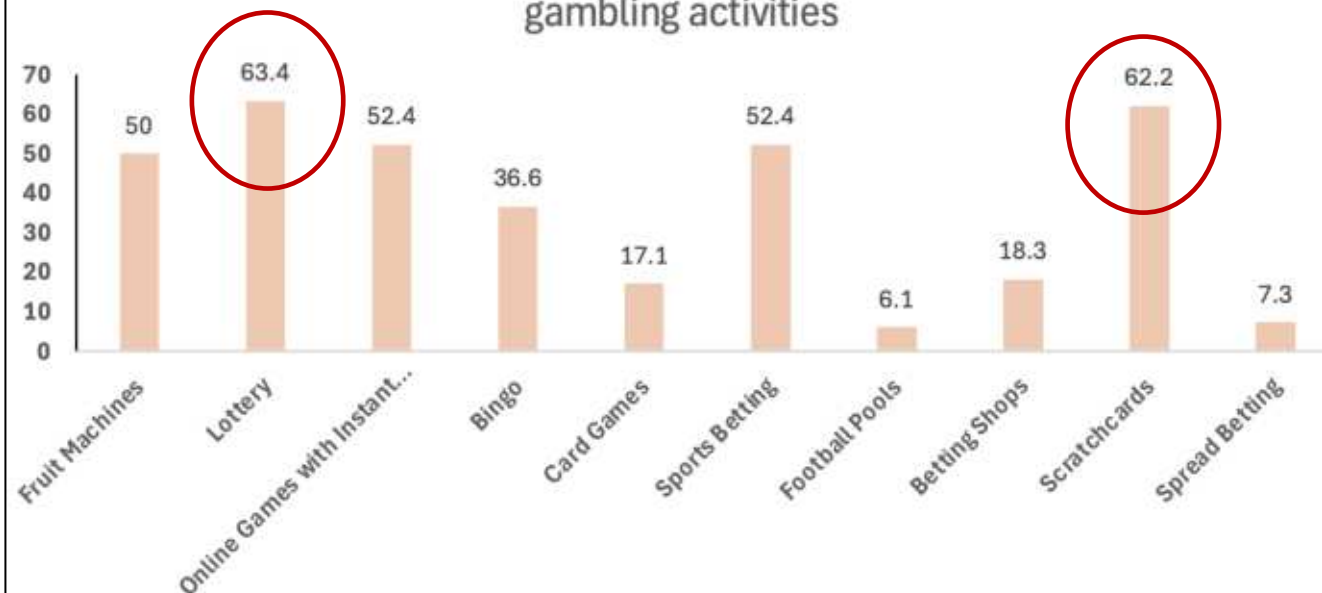
- Daily: $n = 16$ (19.5%)
- Weekly: $n = 24$ (29.3%)
- Monthly: $n = 42$ (51.2%)

Percentage of transgender individuals that have used safer gambling tools



■ Yes ■ No

Percentage of transgender individuals among different types of gambling activities



Stressors: Transgender Individuals

	Occurrence	Distress	
	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gender-Related Discrimination		.59	.47
Difficulty getting medical/mental health treatment due to my gender identity.	54.9	.76	.78
Because of my gender identity, I have had difficulty finding a bathroom to use when out in public.	54.9	.82	.83
Difficulty in getting identity documents that match my gender identity.	59.8	.78	.74
Difficulty finding housing or staying in housing due to my gender identity.	17.1	.17	.38
Difficulty finding employment or denied promotion due to my gender identity.	37.8	.41	.57
Gender-Related Rejection		.49	.39
Difficulty finding someone to date due to my gender identity.	53.7	.66	.69
I have been rejected or made to feel unwelcome by a religious community due to my gender identity.	34.1	.38	.56
I have been rejected or made to feel unwelcome in my ethnic community due to my gender identity.	23.2	.26	.49
I have been rejected or distanced from friends due to my gender identity.	45.1	.49	.57
I have been rejected at school or work due to my gender identity.	46.3	.50	.57
I have been rejected or distanced from family due to my gender identity.	53.7	.63	.68
Gender-Related Victimization		.44	.40
I have been verbally harassed or teased due to my gender identity.	62.2	.82	.74
I have been threatened with being outed or black-mailed due to my gender identity.	37.8	.39	.51
I have had my personal property damaged due to my gender identity.	26.8	.27	.45
I have been threatened with physical harm due to my gender identity.	42.7	.52	.67
I have been pushed, shoved, hit, or had something thrown at me due to my gender identity.	28.0	.33	.57
I have had sexual contact with someone against my will due to my gender identity.	26.8	.32	.56
I have heard negative statements about transgender or gender-non-conforming people.	91.5	1.46	.62

54% of transgender individuals experience difficulty getting medical or mental health treatment due to their gender identity/expression.

53% of transgender individuals have been rejected by family members due to their gender identity/expression.

62% of transgender individuals have been verbally harassed or teased due to their gender identity/expression.

Stressors: Transgender Individuals

	Distress	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Internalised Transphobia	1.49	.93
I resent my gender identity or expression.	1.20	1.17
My gender identity or expression makes me feel like a freak.	1.43	1.18
I get depressed when I think of my gender identity or expression.	1.33	1.08
When I think of my gender identity or expression, I feel unhappy.	1.24	1.13
I feel like an outcast because of my gender expression.	1.82	1.23
I often ask myself: Why can't my gender identity be normal?	1.76	1.30
I envy people who do not have a gender identity or expression like me.	1.77	1.16
I feel that my gender identity or expression is embarrassing.	1.41	1.21

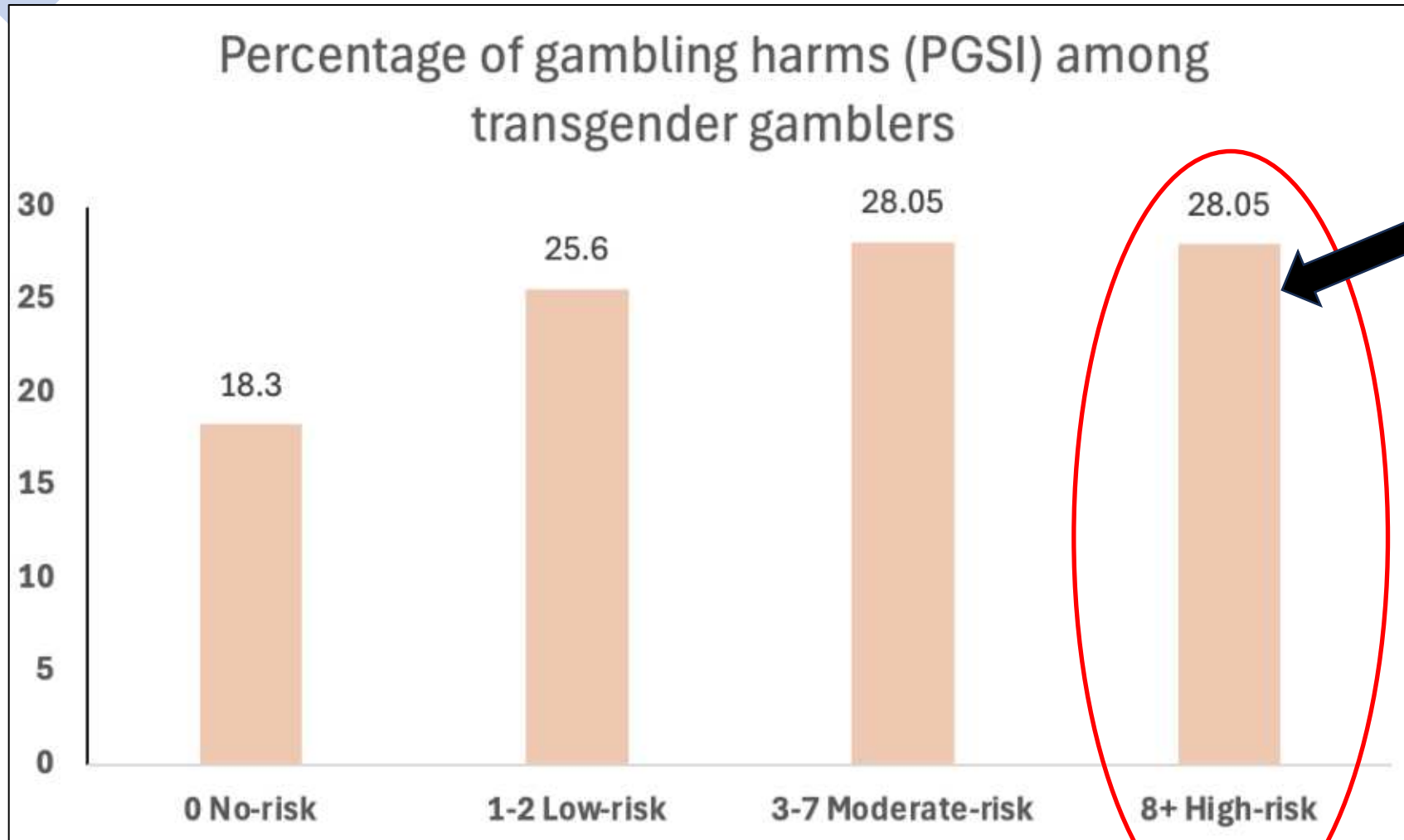
16% of transgender individuals resent their gender identity/expression or feel like a freak.

17% of transgender individuals feel like an outcast because of their gender identity/expression.

18% of transgender individuals often ask why their gender identity/expression cannot be viewed as 'normal'?

Internalised Transphobia: The discomfort experienced after internalising society's normative gender expectations.

Gambling Harms: Transgender Individuals



28% of transgender gamblers score 8+ on the PGSI

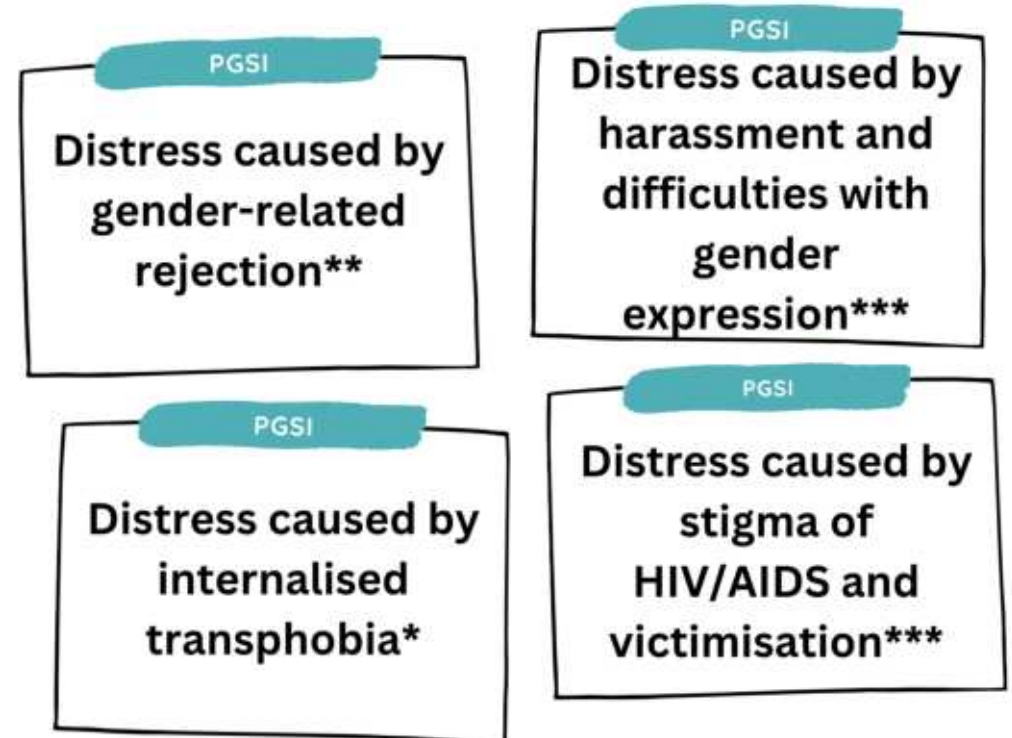
"When I feel more masculine, I am more of a risk taker."

Gambling Harms: Transgender Individuals



"If I win lots of money on gambling, I can get gender reassignment surgery. I think that would definitely be a motivation for some people"

Statistically significant relationships between distress caused by life stressors and higher scores on the PGSI.



Gambling Harms: Transgender Individuals

"Gambling makes you feel out of control. But when you take control of your gender identity and you express yourself, that gives you back control, and that is further validation that you can stop disruptive behaviour."



"We are more likely to have issues with gambling, because of our lives, because of homophobia, because of the way society looks down on non-conformity"

"I've got toxic masculinity and I feel that I have to be the breadwinner and I have to provide"

LGBTQIA+ individuals from ethnic minority groups

N = 200

Age: Mean age: 30.08 years ($SD = 9.02$); range: 18-64

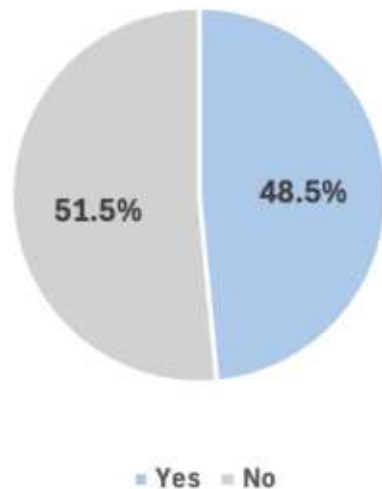
Ethnicity:

- Asian: $n = 46$ (23.0%)
- Black: $n = 88$ (44.0%)
- Mixed ethnicity: $n = 58$ (29.0%)
- Other ethnicity: $n = 8$ (4.0%)

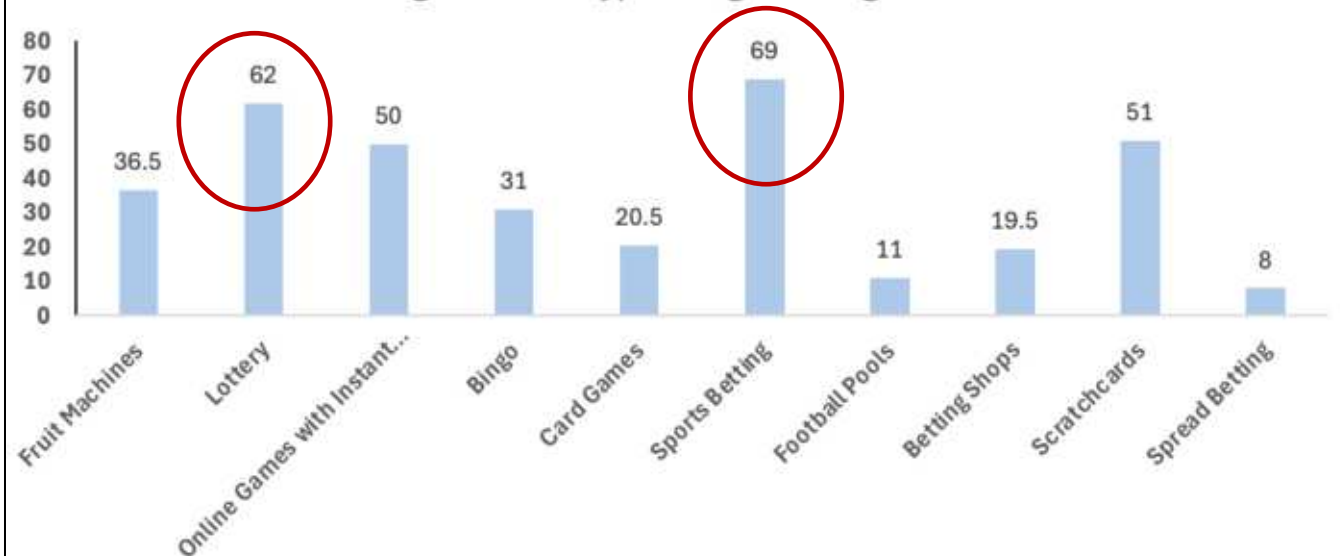
Frequency of Gambling:

- Daily: $n = 29$ (14.5%)
- Weekly: $n = 78$ (39.0%)
- Monthly: $n = 93$ (46.5%)

Percentage of LGBTQIA+ individuals from ethnic minority groups that have used safer gambling tools



Percentage of LGBTQIA+ individuals from ethnic minority groups among different types of gambling activities



Stressors: LGBTQIA+ individuals from ethnic minority groups

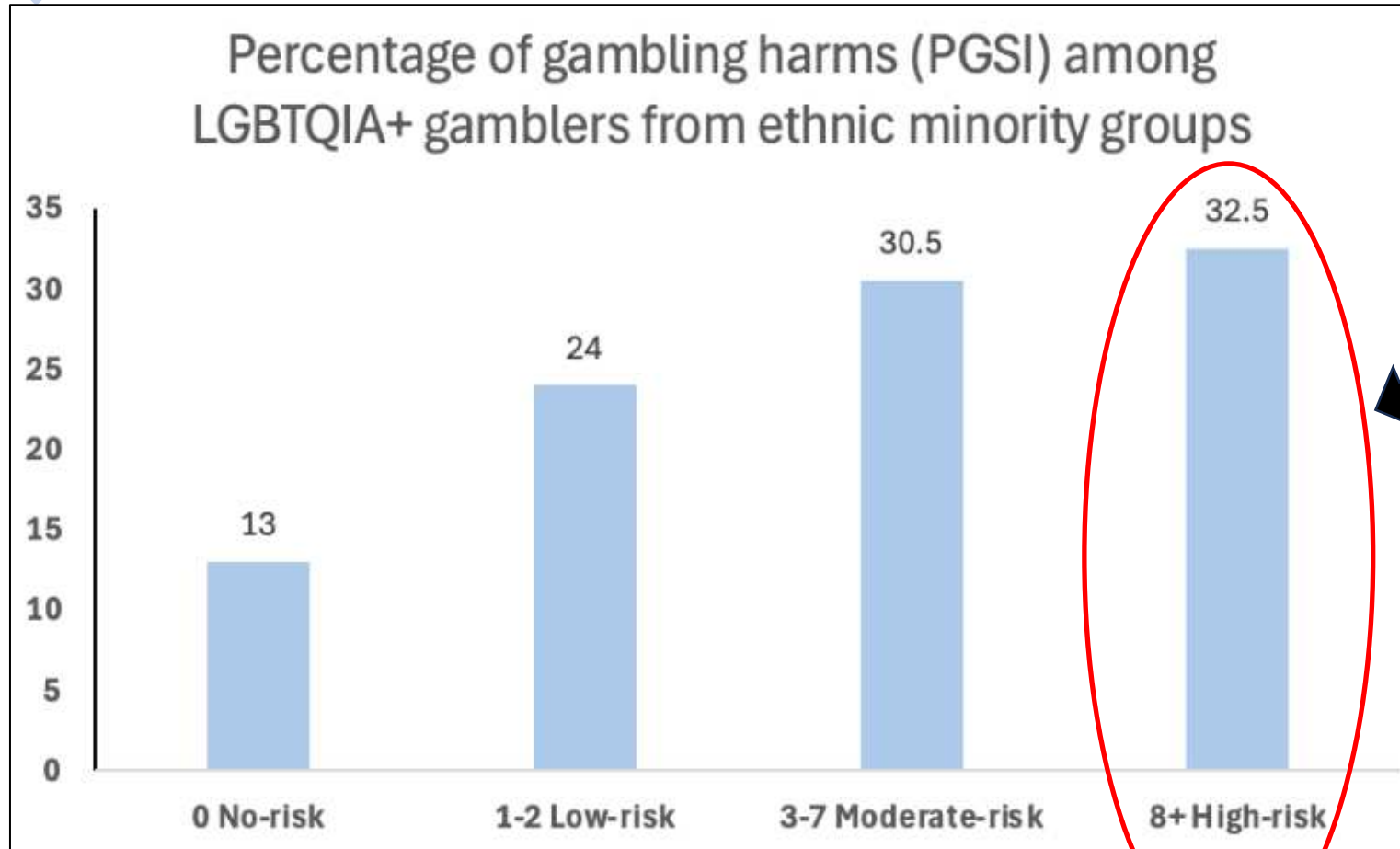
	Occurrence	Distress	
	%	M	SD
Heterosexism		2.04	1.02
Difficulty finding friends who are LGBT and from your ethnic background.	73.6	2.38	1.47
Feeling unwelcome at groups or events in your ethnic community.	50.2	1.85	1.29
Not being accepted by other people of your ethnicity because you are LGBT.	55.7	2.09	1.41
Feeling invisible because you are LGBT.	54.7	1.88	1.22
Not having any LGBT people of colour as positive role models.	46.8	1.81	1.21
Feeling misunderstood by people in your ethnic community.	65.2	2.22	1.34
Racism		2.06	1.13
Feeling like white LGBT people are only interested in you for your appearance.	56.2	1.96	1.33
Feeling misunderstood by white people.	55.2	1.98	1.35
Being told that 'race isn't important' by white LGBT people.	54.2	2.10	1.45
Not being able to trust white LGBT people.	47.8	1.80	1.24
Having to educate white LGBT people about race issues.	62.2	2.12	1.39
White LGBT people saying things that are racist.	65.2	2.38	1.52
LGBT relationship racism		1.72	.96
Being rejected by other LGBT people of your same ethnicity.	38.3	1.56	1.11
Being discriminated against by other LGBT people of colour because of your race.	40.8	1.62	1.17
Being seen as a sex object by other LGBT people because of your ethnicity.	44.8	1.85	1.33
Being the token LGBT person of colour in groups or organisations.	46.8	1.88	1.30
Reading personal ads that say, 'white people only'.	43.3	1.68	1.17


46% experience some form of discrimination or prejudice on the assumption that heterosexuality is the only normal sexual orientation.

47% experience some form of racism within the LGBTQIA+ community.

38% experience some form of racism in LGBTQIA+ dating and close relationships.

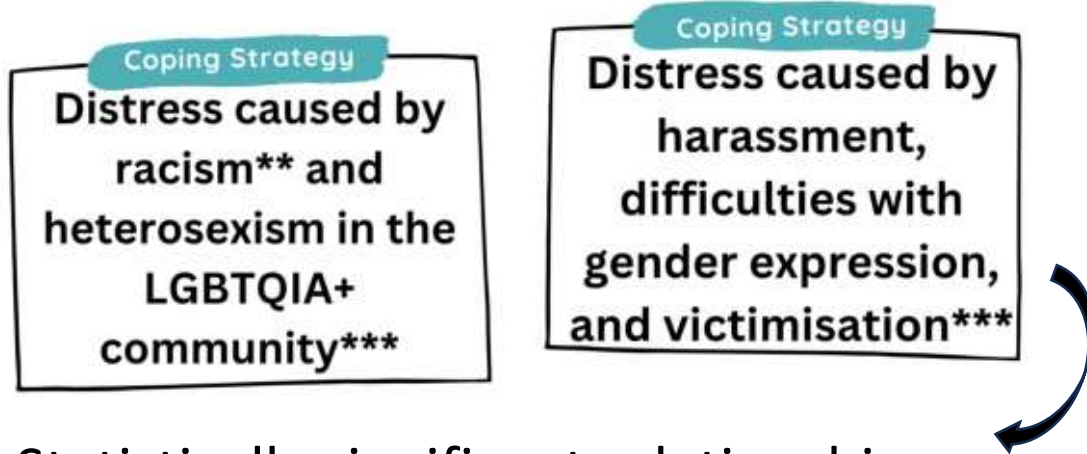
Gambling Harms: LGBTQIA+ individuals from ethnic minority groups



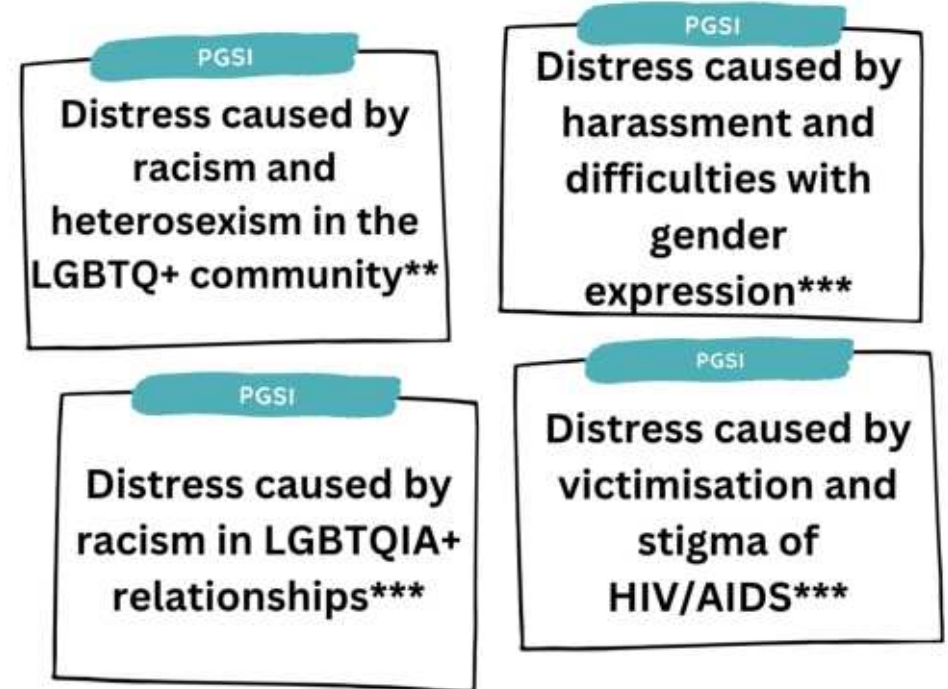
 32% of LGBTQIA+ individuals from ethnic minority groups score 8+ on the PGSI

"I had to live a double life when it came to religion and my sexual orientation and my thoughts. All of this, bottled up together made me feel a certain way and that's what led me to gambling"

Gambling Harms: LGBTQIA+ individuals from ethnic minority groups



Statistically significant relationships between distress caused by life stressors and higher scores on the PGSI.



Gambling Harms: LGBTQIA+ individuals from ethnic minority groups

"A lot of people are strongly opinionated towards gay people. So that feeling of being excluded, being looked down upon and being ashamed of yourself, it was a rough patch, especially from my ethnic background. So gambling was, you know, a distraction."



"From where I come from, if you don't like football, or play football, or have an interest in football, you're seen as being feminine"

"There was just too much for me to deal with. You know, first of all you're a woman so you shouldn't be gambling. Then, 'oh you're a black woman', you definitely shouldn't be gambling. We've been brought up in the church or in this way, you know. It's unheard of. And then within dealing with all of that is the whole 'you shouldn't be gay', you should know better"

Comparisons: Overview

	PGSI	Depression (Mean)	Quality of Life (Mean)	Social Support (Mean)
LGBTQIA+ sample (n = 1444)	1-7 (58.17%) 8+ (15.79%)	8.75	22.51	16.18
Minority ethnic sample (n = 200)	1-7 (50.5%) 8+ (32.5%)	9.45	22.49	16.06
Transgender sample (n = 82)	1-7 (53.65%) 8+ (28.05%)	10.37	20.85	14.79
Non-LGBTQIA+ (n = 1472)	1-7 (51.69%) 8+ (10.96%)	5.98	26.01	17.53

LGBTQIA+ samples: Significantly higher proportion of individuals scoring 8+ on the PGSI compared to non-LGBTQIA+ sample.

Transgender individuals have the highest levels of depression and the lowest levels of QoL and Social Support.

Protective Factors?



Social Support

Social support may play a significant role in reducing harmful gambling behaviour

Social Support

High levels of social support predicts low levels of gambling harms***

“Connection is the opposite of addiction. A support network and having people behind you to look after you and that you can speak to was invaluable to me”



Support Barriers

"I would be less likely to use services because I am gay. They are not geared towards people like me."

"Men and women's rehabilitation groups discriminate against the trans community and gay men."

"I haven't seen any inclusiveness for trans people when it comes to gambling support"

"If you got someone that wasn't too inclusive or didn't know about the LGBT+ community, you might not get the correct help."

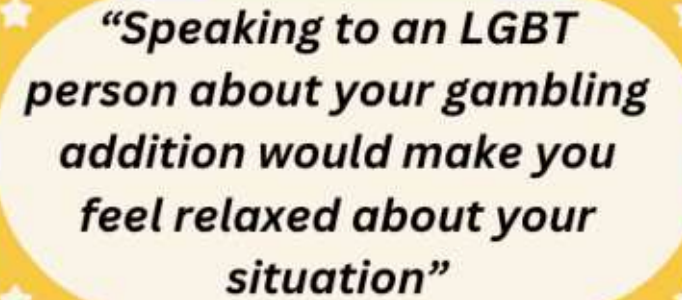
"There's an absolute bias. If you're anything less than cis heterosexual then there's a clear unconscious bias against you."

"It's more geared towards more masculine men, straight men, rather than anybody LGBTQ"

Tailored Treatment

"If there was an actual full support network for people in the community where you knew you wouldn't be judged, just because of how you present yourself or identify, that would go a long way"

"There needs to be more support for the LGBT community"



"Speaking to an LGBT person about your gambling addiction would make you feel relaxed about your situation"

"I would benefit from talking to somebody I can be open with. I think somebody that is in the LGBT community would be nice, because they have experiences that I've had".

"An LGBT specific gambling support service would be able to provide better support than the generalist one. LGBT gamblers have specific needs that may not be fully addressed."

"I've even looked into trans helplines and there's nothing. There's no information [on gambling]"

Recommendations

- ✦ **Culturally Competent Care**
- ✦ **Integrated Treatment**
- ✦ **Tailored Interventions**
- ✦ **Support Networks**
- ✦ **Inclusive Policy Development**
- ✦ **Inclusive Public Health Campaigns**

"The reach of social media is insane. If you just saw someone that looked like us or was happy to share their gambling experience as a person from the LGBT community that would be great."

"I think that peer support would be great, from somebody who's had that experience"



Thank you!

Prof John McAlaney: *Bournemouth University, UK*

Dr Emily Arden-Close: *Bournemouth University, UK*

Dr Catherine Talbot: *Bournemouth University, UK*

Dr Liam Wignall: *University of Brighton, UK*

Alex Caton-Bradley

Diana Hrynishak

Support services: Ara, GamCare, Gordon Moody, Ygam

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