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Gambling and Suicide:  
Research With Real  
Involvement of Lived  
Experience



# **EXCESSIVE GAMBLING: PROMOTING AND PROTECTING HEALTH IN A DIGITALISED WORLD**

**5th International Multidisciplinary Symposium**

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**Caux • Montreux**

## **Declaration of Financial Interests or Relationships**

I have no financial interests or  
relationships to disclose regarding the  
subject matter of this presentation.



# A psychological autopsy of gambling and suicide

Funded by Greo – Gambling Related Suicide: Qualitative Research Call 2023

Partnership bid, led by University of Lincoln, between several academic institutions and independent lived experience gambling support charities





# The scale of gambling harm and suicides

Research literature going back decades linking gambling and suicide: “people suffering problem gambling are a high-risk group for suicidality even when other factors are taken into account.”

- 117 – 496 gambling related suicides every year in England (OHID, 2023)
- Most recent international estimate (Victoria, Australia): 4.2% of suicides related to gambling (equivalent to 250 every year in England) (Rintoul, 2023)
- 2.5% of adults in GB suffering ‘problem gambling’ – 2.5% of the population is 1.3 million. (Gambling Commission, Gambling Survey of Great Britain, 2024)
- 44% of people suffering ‘problem gambling’ classified as ‘at high risk of suicidal behaviour’ (YouGov for GambleAware, 2023)



# Gambling Suicide Prevention

## **National Suicide Prevention Strategy 2023 to 2028** published September 2023

- Gambling highlighted as one of six factors linked to suicide at a population level
- Gambling noted as a ‘dominant factor without which the death may not have happened’
- Need to understand why gambling can be lethal – to support suicide prevention changes and activities at all levels, from individual understanding to gambling regulation

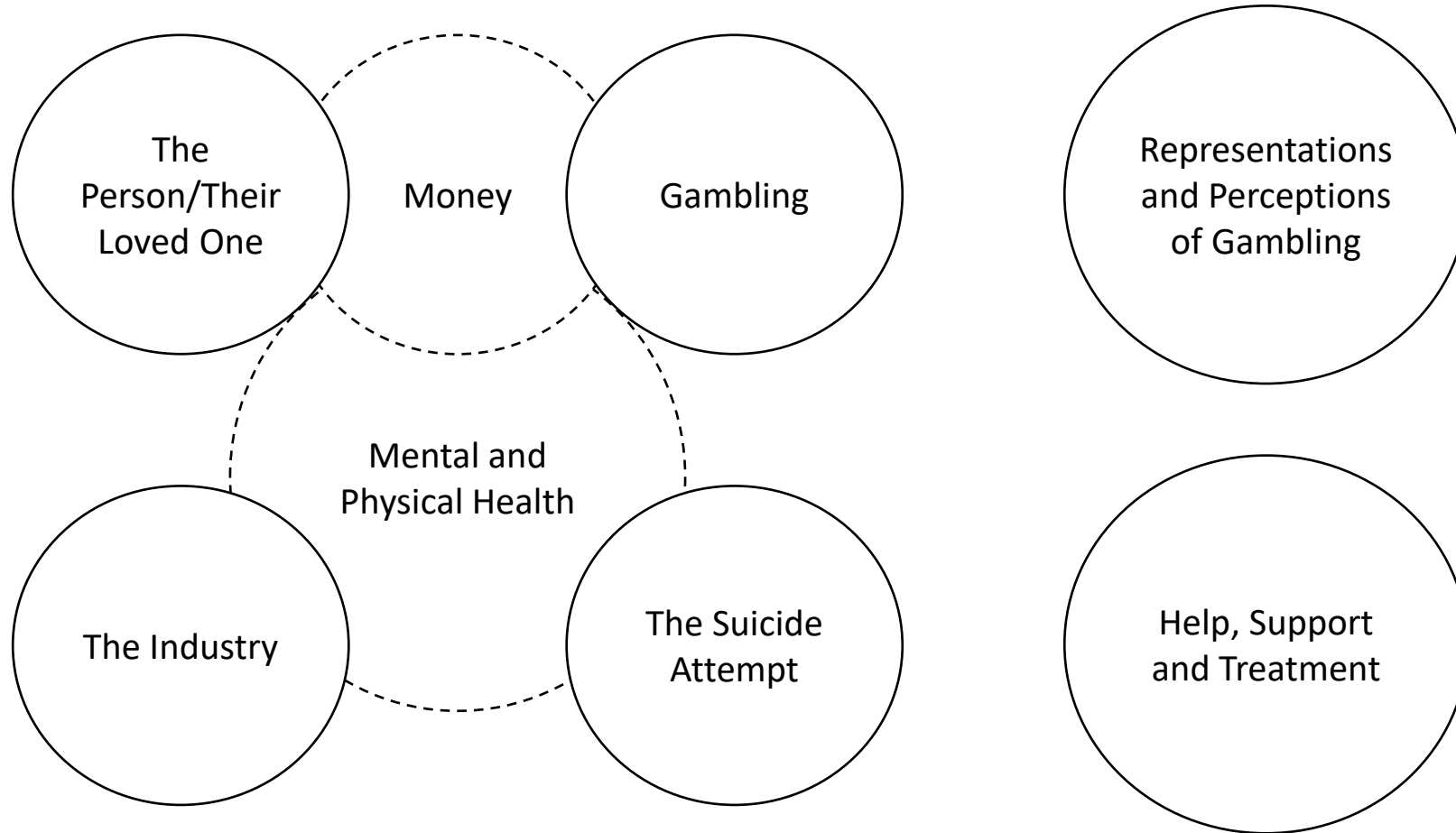


# Involvement of Lived Experience

- Overall design of the research and development of the bid
  - Detailed investigation (psychological autopsy) of 10 gambling related suicides and 10 gambling related 'serious attempts'
  - Interviews (individuals, family/friends, professionals – 3/5 per study)
  - Examination of gambling, banking and medical data
  - Budgeting
- Undertaking the research – joint design and undertaking
  - Focus groups/discussion meetings
  - Interviewing
  - Analysis and interpretation
- Knowledge mobilisation



# Elements and areas investigated





# Benefits/Power of Lived Experience

- Recruitment – networks/contacts
- Development of trust encouraging participation – support
- Research topic insights
  - Individual responsibility model
  - Finance vs. mental health
  - Sources/mechanisms of stigma
- Access and advice
  - Gambling records (Subject Access Requests)
  - Coronial processes
  - Industry practices – business and legal
- Analysis and interpretation
  - Wider experience base
  - Additional insights
- Knowledge mobilisation
  - Who needs to know and what works



# Challenges

- Real commitment to involvement of Lived Experience – openness to challenge ... both ways/for all involved
- Can Lived Experience be “objective”?
  - Impartiality
  - Preconceptions
- Ensuring all voices are fully captured in reporting
- Safeguarding
- Privacy/anonymity
- Skills development and training
- Numbers and time



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