

Worst Addiction

By: Grace Wallingford

Gambling has been around for a very long time. It dates back to even before written history. But it didn't become classified as a problem until the 1980s when pathological gambling was classified as a disorder of impulse control within the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders. This disorder was mainly caused by a failure to resist gambling. Many people never get help with their gambling addiction because it is so normalized in today's society. I feel like the history and objective should be brought to light, so if someone doesn't understand that they are addicted they can find help in the matter.

The worst harm can be done with gambling, it is an addiction that has effects not only you but your loved ones as well. Gambling can stimulate the brain's reward system just like drugs and alcohol can, which is what leads to the addiction and why it is hard to stay sober from it just like substance addiction. Compulsive gambling may originate from a combination of biological and genetic factors as well as environmental. Gambling is a problem because you chase bets that might lead you to losing savings and create debts for yourself. It is also seen that many people can turn to stealing to feed their addiction. The symptoms that most people with gambling addictions have are as follows: constantly planning gambling activities, having the need to gamble excessive amounts of money, trying to control or cut back on gambling but it's unsuccessful, feeling restless when not gambling, and using gambling as a coping mechanism for depression and anxiety.

Frank Wallingford is a paramedic and a fireman at the Cleveland airport, "I have seen a lot of people in my 10 years of working with patients. A lot of them have been gambling addicts, they would talk about the casino and buying scratchers, a lot of them were older men." There

isn't a definite way Wallingford would've known that his patients were gambling addicts, but he saw the signs just like how he would reconcile the signs of a drug addict. I asked Wallingford if he has ever participated in the lottery or Powerball and he explained yes. "My wife and I usually buy scratch off tickets and the Powerball but I don't believe it could ever get out of control for us." Stephanie Wallingford, his wife, explained to me that she wouldn't become a gambling addict because her mother was. "My mom and dad when I was younger would always go to the casino in hotels and we would go to the pool and swim for hours." This is a major reason how a gambling addict can affect their family in the long run.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/compulsive-gambling/symptoms-causes/syc-20355178>

<https://www.racgp.org.au/afp/2012/september/problem-gambling>