



Voices from Talking Point forum

Narratives by affected family members show great suffering

Two narratives by daughters affected by their mother's gambling discuss issues which arose through her gambling such as crime, fraud, debt, lack of food, lack of self esteem, eviction, owing money to friends and whanau, relationship breakdown, unemployment and highlights the number of people affected by one person's gambling.

First extract:

My mother is a compulsive gambler and what's worse is that she is a pro. at playing the guilt trips on me. She is now unemployed, she has taken money from a parent teachers association that she was the chairperson of, and she spends all her benefit on going to the casino. she honestly believes that she will hit the big one. At last count, she owed forty six people money.

I am sick of it. its been two years since she has been chronically gambling, she's always gambled, housie, poker, races, but in moderation. now she is just out of control. She is about to be evicted and my younger brother is still living with her. She is absolutely pathetic and she makes me sick. she spends all her benefit on gambling and then begs my brother for money, saying that she is hungry. She would rather spend her money on gambling than food. The counsellor said to me that only tough love will work with my mother, but that's not true cause she will turn it around and use it to her advantage. she is a manipulative person who is extremely selfish, she just thinks about herself and all she wants from me is money to feed her habit. She's getting herself more into debt and keeps saying that she is going to kill herself. She's is pathetic, a shadow

of her former self, she no longer cares about her appearance or her personal hygiene, she has had her car repossessed and the phone is cut off.

And yet she still goes to the casino. I want to help her but I don't want to spend all money on her when she wastes her own money. We went to counselling together as a family and she admitted that she lied to the counsellor.

I hate her for what she is doing to my family. GAMBLING SUCKS, and its stuffed us up, I want someone to blame, and its her for being pathetic and weak and not getting some help. My mother will turn it around by using it and adding it to her sob story that she tells to get money from people to fund her gambling. I got a call today and the police are going to be involved cause she used money that wasn't hers when she was involved in a community group. So she's not going to change of her own volition, perhaps a court can make her go to counselling but that doesn't mean she will drink the water, as in leading a horse to water. The gambling has won and beaten us all. She will die a gambler, that's how bad it is. and probably lonely too. If problem gambling and the stink government can help us, I will be truly amazed.

BETWEEN 5 AND 17 PEOPLE ARE AFFECTED BY EVERY PROBLEM GAMBLER

These narrative are part of Gambling Help line's Talking point online forum. It has been reproduced to help those who are significant others and are affected by the gambling of a family member.



Second extract

I have a message for you. Don't run around after your mum, I did, and I can tell you I think that your mum is probably borrowing money either from the mortgage or from friends to fuel her habit, it doesn't matter if you take over her finances or even pay some of her bills, she will still find a way to gamble, because all gamblers are sick. They are in a rut, an ever decreasing, dark, swallowing pit that affects their whole life, and the way they think. My mum is still sick, I can hear it in her voice. She lost our home because she wanted to gamble. When my father died the house was almost paid off, and only three years later it was sold from under us.

I was at a stage where I hated ringing her, my brother who lives in Australia hated ringing me because he didn't want to hear about all the bad things that were going on with mum. Mum is scared because she doesn't want to be alone, she's realised it now since she got evicted. She has judgments coming out of her ears, she has nothing absolutely nothing now. She is selling her furniture, our furniture from our family home, to get some money to buy herself a car. Personally I'm glad she doesn't have a car because that was a weapon for her to go to the casino.

I'm paying back the school who she stole money from, but I can't go to my old school reunion because I am embarrassed, when my mother worked there temporarily she was fired for assaulting another teacher - probably because the stress of the gambling was building up, but anyway, she borrowed hundreds of money from

my old science teacher and the principal and hasn't paid them back, I can't face them and am staying away from the reunion.

A month ago my mother went missing for two days, she was at the casino, my uncle couldn't believe it, after everything that has happened, my mother goes back to the casino, all our furniture from our home together is in storage at another relative's place, about to be sold. So we have nothing in Auckland, absolutely nothing.

My goal is to buy back our family home, the home my father worked for and the home he died in. I've since got my own flat and am feeling really settled, but I'm not going to be like my mother and feel sorry for myself. I'm going to be happy and I'm going to achieve my goals. My mother is going to have to grow up and deal with her own life. She's not my problem anymore.

I'm sorry for my long-winded story, but I wanted to share, I hope it helps you if you have a parent who is a gambler, it's not over for me and my brothers, and I'm not sure it will never be, but I've learnt that I can't lose my life because my mother doesn't value hers. Don't get me wrong, I love my mother, but I love myself too, so much so that I know I need to let go and let her deal with herself, live your life and let her live hers, if I can save the house then it might be good to save it, cause that's my biggest regret that I didn't step in faster or find out faster from my mum about our family home. But yeah, gamblers gotta learn and gotta wake up, if not for their own sanity then for the sanity and safety of their families and friends.

**Problem Gambling Foundation Freephone
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