

I'm Not Bluffing

By
Tanner Dicus

The urge to gamble started very innocently about three years ago when Bob turned thirteen. As a special treat Bob's dad invited him to play in his weekly Texas Hold'em game. The stakes were nickels, dimes, and quarters. Bob picked up the poker language quite quickly and by the end of the evening was bluffing with the best of the group. What seemed to be a night of harmless fun was just the opposite. Bob had a fever, he had the gambling fever. Bob was hooked.

This story may just seem like any other typical night of harmless fun. Wrong! Underage gambling is on the increase. Underage gambling is even reaching into our middle schools. Parents have always been worried about their children having sex or using drugs and alcohol. Today underage gambling can be added to the list. Underage gambling ranked lower on a survey list of concerns parents had about their children(Newell 1). Unfortunately, an innocent game of Texas Hold'em can turn into a life time addiction with serious consequences.

Moreover, gambling is not selective. This addiction doesn't care about race, age, type of family, or socioeconomic background. Gambling appears to be fun, but can quickly become an addiction. Winning is a morale booster and increases self esteem. To gamblers, every game is a "sure thing". It is evident that awareness for underage gambling needs to be addressed.

Early signs of gambling can be as apparent as the early signs of a life threatening disease. Such warning signs of a possible underage gambling problem could be carrying gambling materials such as dice, cards, or other gambling items. Another sign is the need for quick money. Money is needed for betting. If winning is frequent, the flash of cash to others is a sign. If losing, stealing from family members, using lunch money, or borrowing money from family and friends will increase. Like so many other teen issues, lies will be on the increase to cover their gambling(Missouri 1).

Furthermore, underage gambling poses many serious consequences. Underage gamblers perform badly in school. The loss of after school employment can occur. Stealing money for bets leads to misdemeanor theft charges. Gambling can lead to a lifetime addiction with many hours of therapy to curb the desire. Teens need to know there are a variety of resources to help prevent gambling addictions..

Fortunately, for Bob there is a "sure bet" for him. First, Bob lives in the state of Missouri. Missouri is recognized across the United States for addressing problem gambling issues. Also, Missouri provides FREE compulsive gambling treatment. This service is for the gambler and his family members. The Missouri Gaming Commission employs a gambling advocate to assist anyone with the programs available. In addition, the Missouri Gaming Commission has a variety of speakers that travel to give presentations on problem gambling topics. Missouri has a 24 hour hotline to provide gambling help 1-888-BETS OFF(Missouri 1). Bob no longer needs to bluff his way to success.

Works Cited

Newell, Jennifer. "Study Shows Parents Often Ignore Underage Gambling Risks." 13

Dec. 2009. PokerWorks. 10 Feb. 2010. <http://pokerworks.com/poker-news/2009/12/13/underage-gambling-risks-often-ignored-by-html>>.

"What Are the Odds One of Your Students Is Gambling?" 2007. Missouri Gaming Commission. 10 Feb. 2010. <<http://www.mgc.dps.mo.gov/prob-gambling/pg-underage.htm>>.