



Signs and Symptoms of Addiction

Below we have listed some of the thoughts and behaviours that a person with an addiction may experience. If you recognize yourself in one or more of these statements, please talk to us. We'll be happy to discuss your answers with you and help you consider options for support or treatment.

Do any of these statements sound familiar?

- I need more of the substance to get the desired effect.
- I experience withdrawal if I try to stop.
- I need to take the substance to prevent or relieve withdrawal.
- I'm using more than I planned to.
- I want to cut down or stop. I just can't seem to.
- Most of my time is spent trying to get the substance, use the substance and recover from its effects.
- I've given up or have reduced doing the things that I used to enjoy.
- I want people to mind their own business about my drinking/using and stop telling me what to do.
- Even though the substance is negatively affecting me physically and mentally, I still can't seem to stop using it.
- My substance use is interfering with my sleeping and eating.
- The thought of running out of substances terrifies me.

Have you ever...

- Decided to stop using substances for a week or so, but only managed a couple of days?
- Had problems connected with substance use during the past year?
- Missed days of work because of substance use?
- Felt that your life would be better if you did not use substances?
- Used alone?
- Manipulated or lied to a doctor to obtain prescription drugs?
- Stolen to obtain substances?

- Avoided people who do not approve of your substance use?
- Been arrested as a result of using substances?
- Lied about what or how much you use?
- Put the purchase of substances ahead of your financial responsibilities?
- Felt it was impossible for you to live without substances?
- Thought you couldn't fit in or have a good time without substances?
- Felt defensive, guilty, or ashamed about your using?
- Obsessed about substances?
- Used substances because of emotional pain or stress?
- Overdosed on any substances?

Does a person I know have an addiction?

- They appear to be frequently high or intoxicated.
- Their activities are focused around drinking or other drug use.
- Their group of friends appears to use substances.
- They isolate themselves from others and their substance abuse occurs alone.
- They seem reluctant to attend events where substances won't be available.
- They use "social drugs" with prescribed medications.
- They seem to be able to consume large quantities of substances without appearing intoxicated.
- Their patterns of use are predictable or well known to others.
- They seem to rely on substances to cope with stress.
- Other things in their life have changed (they've moved, changed friends) but their substance use has stayed the same or increased.
- They appear to feel guilty about some aspect of their substance use.
- They've missed work or gone to work late due to their substance use.
- They blame their substance use on work related problems.
- Family members or friends have expressed concern about their use.
- They have lost or spoiled important relationships because of substance use.
- They have been in trouble with authorities or arrested for alcohol or drug related offenses.
- They frequently miss making payments when they are due.
- They appear angry or defensive but they don't know why.
- They become defensive or angry when confronted about substance use.
- They give up or change social and family activities in order to use.

Adapted from material provided by:

Alcoholics Anonymous www.aa.org

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health www.camh.ca

Narcotics Anonymous www.na.org

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. www.ncadd.org