

What is Addiction?



When life spins out of control, sometimes there is an urge to look outside of yourself for something to make it feel better because the challenges seem too overwhelming to face. Whether it's drugs, alcohol or gambling, the "interventions" in which we choose to engage might make us feel better quickly, which can make it seem like our intervention is working. You might feel as though the activity gives you more confidence and a much-needed distraction from the challenges you're experiencing. But sometimes, these seemingly short-term solutions to life's challenges make our lives spin even more out of control. Over time, you may need

more and more of the substance or activity to make you feel better. You might also start to experience negative changes to your body and your brain, and significant disruption in your relationships, work life, and health.

An addiction is a strong and compulsive need to have, or do, something repeatedly that is typically harmful to you in some way.

There are many different kinds of addictions but the most common ones include alcohol, drugs (prescription or recreational), gambling, sex, and shopping.

Signs of an Addiction

It can sometimes be difficult to pinpoint whether there is an addiction because it can flip from healthy to unhealthy over a long period of time. There are four critical questions that help clarify if an addiction is affecting you:

- Do you have cravings for the substance or activity?
- Do you lose control over the amount and frequency of use?
- Do you have an overwhelming need or compulsion to use?
- Do you use regardless of the consequences to yourself and others?



If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, it may be time to get more information about dealing with addictions and unwanted behaviours.

Treating Addictions

- The first step to any addiction is recognizing and admitting that something is wrong. Having an awareness of the issue allows you to make decisions about how you're going to move forward towards resolving it.

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Sources

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. (2012). Addiction. Retrieved from https://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/health_information/a_z_mental_health_and_addiction_information/drug-use-addiction/Pages/addiction.aspx

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. (2012). About alcohol. Retrieved from http://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/health_information/a_z_mental_health_and_addiction_information/alcohol/Pages/about_alcohol.aspx

Are You Living with a Mental Health Condition?

- Between chronic joint pain, frequent medical problems, and hospital visits, the bleeding disorders population is susceptible to mental health problems.
- It is important to understand that medical treatment of your hemophilia alone does not automatically translate into better quality of life. Psychosocial support is also an important part of comprehensive care for people with hemophilia.
- The first step is to be aware of the various symptoms of mental health issues that may impact you, as well as possible treatment

strategies. If you feel that you are experiencing a mental health issue, you are not alone. Reach out to your healthcare team and get the support you need to live your best life.

References:

World Federation of Hemophilia. Psychological care for people with hemophilia. Accessed March 3, 2021 at <http://www1.wfh.org/publications/files/pdf-1198.pdf>

National Hemophilia Foundation. Mental Health. Accessed March 3, 2021 at <https://www.hemophilia.org/educational-programs/education/mental-health>