

SUBSTANCE ADDICTION

Substance addiction refers to disorders resulting from excessive use of various drugs or psychoactive substances, which may include alcohol, cannabis, cocaine, and other drugs. There are six types of substance addiction:

1. Alcohol Use Disorder
2. Tobacco Use Disorder
3. Cannabis Use Disorder
4. Stimulant Use Disorder
5. Hallucinogen Use Disorder
6. Opioid Use Disorder

Drugs can create a temporary feeling of pleasure by activating the reward system in human brain. In order to experience this pleasure, people may become unable to perform their daily activities or fulfil their important responsibilities.

When people are addicted, they may continue using the substance despite the harm it causes. There are various diagnostic criteria for substance use disorders, including:

- Having intense urges for taking the addictive substance, feeling that you have to use the substance every day
- Feeling tense, nervous, or jittery when not taking the substance
- Having feelings of relaxation and satisfaction after using the substance
- Dedicating all of your time and energy to this particular harmful habit or substance. Feeding the addiction becomes the number one priority
- Having trouble managing responsibilities at work and/or school; neglecting social or family responsibilities
- Unsuccessful attempts to quit or reduce the cravings for the addictive substance/behaviour
- Social problems including failure to complete major tasks at home, work or school, disruption of communication and social life
- Failed attempts to quit the addictive substance despite the fact that you are having trouble managing responsibilities at work/school; continuing to use the substance despite repeated negative social, financial, physical, and mental consequences directly related to the substance use
- Feelings of intense anxiety and agitation between doses
- Taking larger or higher doses of the drug/substance over time and over a longer period of time to achieve the same effect (develop tolerance to the drug after repeated use over time)

Physical and mental effects of substance abuse are:

- Depression
- Psychotic Disorders
- Generalized Anxiety Disorders
- Sexual Dysfunctions
- Sleeping Disorders
- Neurological Disorders

- Delirium

Tips for How to Overcome Substance Addiction

1. Admit You Have a Problem

The first and the hardest step to overcoming an addiction is to admit that you have developed an addiction to a certain substance or substances. Even if you are not aware of it, in the process, you may have become addicted to the effects that substance creates in your body or mind. Accepting the situation will help you muster the necessary courage to beat the addiction and discover the underlying causes.

2. Get Professional Help

Trying to quit an addiction by yourself is not easy. In such cases, people should seek professional help to manage the cleansing process in a healthier and more stable way. Individual or group therapies, residential or outpatient rehab treatment centres play an effective role in controlling and overcoming addiction.

3. Realise You Can Live A Healthy Lifestyle Without Drugs

Substance abuse causes short or long-term negative effects on people's physical and mental health. Realising how healthy and good they can actually feel in the absence of these effects is another important step in overcoming addiction. When substance abuse is eliminated, people can achieve a stronger and stable physical, mental and also financial integrity, which will also provide a great opportunity to regain control of their lives.

4. Identify Your Stressors

Thinking about why you have a substance use disorder and discovering the underlying causes will help you find long-term and permanent solutions. Exploring the negative life experiences or stressors that push you into substance abuse and developing coping skills is the healthiest way to overcome your addiction.

5. Healthy Eating and Exercise

Eating a healthy balanced diet and exercising regularly have significant positive effects both mentally and physiologically since they help us develop stronger coping skills and strategy by changing our way of thinking from negative to positive. Regular exercise is an effective method to relieve stress and can help us gain new perspectives. Also, looking and feeling healthier will positively affect work and school engagement as well as interpersonal and family relationships.

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