

# Addiction

## **What Is Addiction?**

Addiction is where we use a substance or activity to fulfil an emotional or psychological need. It often starts when we experience pleasure when taking drugs, drinking alcohol, eating, having sex or using the internet. We then begin to repeat that experience when we feel down, lonely, upset or stressed. As time goes on we begin to feel we cannot function without the substance or activity we have become fixated on, it has become our way of coping.

## **How Can It Affect Me?**

You may find that over time your use of the substance or activity increases as you become tolerant of it, you may be irritable and moody without it. Your behaviour and personality may change as you take more risk and obsess about the activity or substance you are addicted to. You may find relationships and functioning on a daily basis become difficult, and that the substance or activity is causing side effects that become increasingly difficult to ignore.

## **How Can I Help Myself?**

Relaxation can help to stop you feeling on edge and get through your cravings.

Meditation can help you to control your thought patterns and reduce your cravings.

Talking about your addiction with a friend or counsellor can be helpful, as they can help you to identify the psychological and emotional needs you are fulfilling with your addiction and help you to find better ways to cope and manage your needs.

## **What Do I Do If It Gets Too Much?**

If you are using drugs or alcohol, you are unable to function without your addiction or you are neglecting yourself you should make an appointment to see your GP. They can talk through options with you including medication, detoxing programmes, counselling, and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy or a combination of these therapies, all of which can be very effective.

If you choose to use a private counsellor make sure they are BACP or NCS registered. The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy and the National Counselling Society hold the voluntary registers for counsellors and psychotherapists so you know that anyone registered with them has the appropriate training and qualifications to treat you.

**Make an appointment today**

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