ADDICTIVE BEHAVIORS

Most people understand addiction when it comes to a dependence on substances, but they have a hard time with the concept of addictive behaviors. Yet, it's also possible to develop a behavioral addiction. In fact, people can get hooked on everything from gambling to sex to the internet.

Addictive behaviors may include substance misuse (alcohol, other drugs, or nicotine), a combination of misused substances, or behavioral addictions (including but not limited to): gambling, gaming, internet use, sexual activity, exercise, and food.

Signs of an addictive behavior:

- Compulsively engaging in the same behavior despite having negative or harmful consequences to your wellbeing (which may include: physical health, friends/family/romantic relationships, sex drive, risky situations, legal issues, financial concerns, academic challenges or changes in appetite or sleep).
- Cravings may develop, meaning having strong urges to seek it out in order to feel normal or maybe just in order to fall asleep or start the day.
- Tolerance, meaning you need more of it to get the same desired effect.
- Withdrawal from discontinuing it. This can have physical and/or psychological symptoms (possibly life threatening) and most often occurs from misusing substances (alcohol, marijuana, opioids, stimulants, benzodiazepines, nicotine, etc.).

Harm-reduction

Addictions are complex treatable conditions affecting both brain function and behavior. There is no one way to treat an addiction. Harm-reduction is a non-judgmental approach and practice that focuses on making positive changes to promote health and safety. Sobriety or abstinence is not a requirement or expectation to participate in harm reduction treatment.

Recovery

“Recovery is a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential.” (SAMHSA)

There is no one way to find or be in recovery. Some students enter or return to college already in recovery for addictive behaviors. Others find recovery while attending college. Students in recovery face unique challenges such as avoiding triggers, peer pressure, finding new supports, friend groups and community.
Learn about specific addictive behaviors & safety concerns

Alcohol addiction and abuse
Nicotine addiction and abuse
Vaping (Nicotine or Marijuana)
Marijuana addiction and abuse
Opiate addiction and abuse
Benzodiazepine addiction and abuse (Xanax, Valium)
Stimulant addiction and abuse
Gaming addiction
Internet addiction
Social Media addiction
Binge-watching
Sex addiction
Gambling addiction
Porn addiction

Websites

Substance Use Treatment Locator (SAMHSA)
Association of Recovery in Higher Education
SMART Recovery
Adult Children of Alcoholics
Al-Anon Meeting Schedule
Sex Addicts Anonymous
Gamers Anonymous
Gamblers Anonymous
Porn Addicts Anonymous
Nicotine Anonymous
Narcotics Anonymous
Women For Sobriety
Podcasts/Videos

Podcast: The Addicted Mind
Podcast: A Sober Girls Guide
Podcast: The Sober Guy

TED Talk: Johann Hari, “Everything you think you know about addiction is wrong”.
TED Talk: Judson Brewer, “A simple way to break a bad habit”.
TED Talk: Dr. Pam Peeke, “Hooked, Hacked, Hijacked: Reclaim your brain from addictive living”
TED Talk: Sam Fowler, “Wasted - Exposing the Family Effect on Addiction”

Books

Blackout: Remembering the Things I Drank to Forget by Sarah Hepola
Drinking: A Love Story by Caroline Knapp
Unbroken Brain: A Revolutionary New Way of Understanding Addiction by Maia Szalavitz