

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: Breaking Free: Your Recovery. Your Way

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