

HOW YOU CAN HELP!

UNDERSTANDING ADDICTION

In order for them to succeed you and family members have an important role to play in their recovery. We need family & community support and backing to help them address their underlying issues.

Understanding addiction and addictive behaviours would benefit your understanding of how Transformations address the recovery process for residents!

People may become addicted to both substances and activities. Substance addiction includes any substances that are taken into the body. This may include street drugs, nicotine; and some prescription medications when used improperly. An activity addiction includes activities such as gambling, sex, the internet, pornography, and shopping. Sometimes people call these "process addictions."

Notice that it is quite possible to live a full and satisfying life without using any of these substances, or activities. However, there are also substances and activities that are essential to our very survival and even these things can become addictions. For instance, obese people often describe food as a type of addictive substance but clearly no one can live without food. Other people describe romantic relationships with a dependency so deep and damaging that their relationship could represent an addictive activity.

Obviously many people engage with these substances and activities at various times in their lives. Most do not develop any significant problems or difficulties. This leads to the question, "At what point does an activity or substance use become an addiction? These rest of our definition helps to answer, "Where's the line between 'behaving badly' and addiction?"

Sometimes individuals affected by addiction do not readily see that their involvement with a substance or activity has resulted in substantial harm. Therefore, they may "deny" they have addiction. Of course, this "denial" makes perfect sense because substantial harm is a defining characteristic of addiction. Without it, there is no addiction. However, to other people these individuals seem indifferent to the harm their addiction causes. In response to this apparent lack of concern, these individuals are often told they are "in denial."

"Addiction is repeated involvement with a substance or an activity, despite the substantial harm it now causes, because that involvement was (and may continue to be) pleasurable and/or valuable."

Signs of a drug addict include tolerance, a loss of control over how much or how often you use, an obsession with the substance, abandoning events and activities you used to enjoy, and continuing to use drugs even though they have had negative effects on your life. Anyone who begins to experience symptoms of withdrawal — whether mild or severe — in the absence of the substance, is likely dependent on the substance. Withdrawal symptoms can vary from drug to drug and include:

- Trembling
- Fatigue
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Nausea, with or without vomiting
- Excessive perspiration
- Headache
- Insomnia

Psychologists propose several possible causes of addiction: First, people may engage in harmful behaviours because of an abnormality, or "psychopathology" that manifests itself as mental illness. Second, people may learn unhealthy behaviour in response to their environment. Third, people's thoughts and beliefs create their feelings. This in turn determines their behaviour. To the extent that someone's thoughts and beliefs are unrealistic or dysfunctional, their behaviour will be similarly affected.

Common Behaviour Traits of an Addict – Transformations address behaviours and the underlying issues of these traits!

1. They lie.

Lies can begin earlier in life, but lies increase when an addict needs their fix. They may tell lies to mislead people about where they were when they were really out buying or using drugs or alcohol. They may tell lies about where the hundreds or thousands of dollars went. The more they feel they need drugs, the more likely they are to feel the need to lie.

When you have trusted a person for years and then they begin lying to you, it's very hard to set that trust aside. Family and good friends can be fooled by a skilful liar for years. But all this time, the person is slowly destroying themselves.

If a person's behaviour changes markedly and the explanations don't really add up, you have to hold onto your own common sense. If what you're being told doesn't make sense, then there's probably a very good reason – you're being lied to. You might be able to check some of the stories. Most, you probably can't. You will have no way of knowing if someone actually siphoned the petrol out of their car, causing them to need \$20 from you right now. The real tipoff is that these

strange things keep happening to them. Gradually, their life descends into chaos, camouflaged by these lies.



Sometimes lies have become so ingrained in a person, that they may confuse what is truth and what is not. Lies can begin through fear of consequences or getting their needs met.

2. They manipulate.

Unless a family member or friend are also addicted, family and close friends of an addicted person really want them to thrive and be happy. They try to encourage good decisions but the addicted person is on a destructive track. The allure of the drugs is so powerful, they feel they need the drugs to function, to be able to get through another day, to not get desperately sick from withdrawal. So they manipulate those who love them the most.

Drugs like opiates, alcohol, methamphetamine, cocaine, synthetics like Ice and even marijuana can change a person who was loving and open with their family into someone who has to manipulate everyone so they will let them keep using drugs.

With love in their hearts, family and close friends try to convince the addicted person to stop using these deadly substances, to go to rehab. But their answer could be:

"I have it under control."

"I can stop any time I want."

"You are just jealous because I can have fun and you can't."

"You never want me to enjoy myself."

"It's your fault I'm this way."

"You don't even try to understand how I feel."

"You wouldn't say that if you loved me."

And many, many more examples of this type.

And perhaps the most awful type of manipulation occurs between a man and wife or girlfriend and boyfriend. drugs, the addicted person better, to go to meetings, to get another job, to stop other drug users. The non-believe the promises so they They let the addict back in from kicking her out. As soon the addicted person will and loving for a little while – drug or alcohol use. Then all



When caught using will promise to do start going to church, to seeing drug dealers or addict really wants to let up on the pressure. the home or backs down as the pressure is off, probably be attentive until the next binge of bets are off.

An addict may call in the middle of the night, crying and professing love, begging to see the one they love just one more time, but then if they meet, they ask for money just to get some good food and then is gone. The money goes to drugs. It's all manipulation.

Unfortunately, this pattern of manipulation all too often goes on for months or years without there being any change in behaviour. When everything valuable is gone and the children are at risk, the non-addict finally moves away or changes the locks.

The sad truth is that while a person is addicted, the promises can't be believed. It's just more manipulation. People learn how to manipulate when they are young children. They know who and what they can manipulate.

3. They are very likely to be engaged in criminal acts.

This isn't true of every addict, but it is a typical pattern for a person who has been addicted for a considerable time. Eventually, the money runs out. They have pawned or sold everything of value. They owe friends and family money. There are no more assets but the drugs or alcohol have to be obtained.

At this point, many people will begin committing crimes. Selling or manufacturing drugs are common ones. Burglary, robbery, identity theft, credit card theft, car thefts and shoplifting are also common. An employee may steal items from the place of business and pawn or sell them. Someone with access to cash may embezzle from a company. Many people steal items from the homes of family or friends.

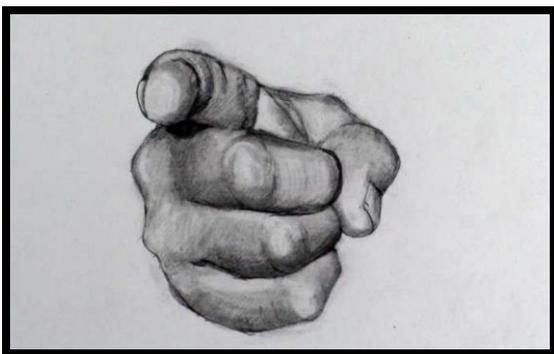


When a person is addicted to prescription drugs, the crimes may be a little different. They may visit multiple doctors to get prescriptions for pills or may forge prescriptions. In recent years, there have been more safeguards put in place in most states so that these attempts are less likely to succeed.

Of course, there is driving while drunk or high. Also, some drugs change a person's personality to make him more paranoid or aggressive which can result in assault or domestic violence charges.

And unfortunately, some drugs so deplete a person's sense of self-respect, self-worth and they may turn to prostitution or any degraded activity that will score them their next hit.

4. An addict will shift the blame.



Addict accusing another irresponsibility is the name of the game for an addict. Whereas this person may have lived their prior life as a highly responsible individual, drug addiction steals that quality away. Whatever happens is never their fault. If they get fired from a job, it's the boss's fault, the addict was unfairly targeted. If they get in a car accident, it was totally someone else's fault. If they fail at some activity, those close to them will be blamed.

Family start to appeal to them to care for the children and their spouse, get another job, stop using these drugs and so on. Even if they want to, the addiction is more powerful than them, and they will be drawn to their drug, their drug dealer, and their drug-using friends. And whatever means they will employ to keep the drugs coming. What really has to happen is they must be rehabilitated to the point of having more power than the drugs.

5. An addict is very likely to become abusive.

It's tragic that an addict's blame can even take a violent and abusive form. With the delusional thinking common to most addicts, they can perceive those around them as being threatening, dangerous or malicious. As they shift the blame, they may physically, mentally or emotionally attack the one they are blaming.

The spouse of an addict very often bears the brunt of both the blame and the abuse. It's hard to do anything right. They usually find it hard to be supportive. Mental and emotional abuse may be directed at the spouse to completely shut down any ability to effectively fight the real problem – the addiction. It's very common for spouses and significant others to be browbeaten into submission, often for years.

Of course, physical violence is a very real possibility, especially toward spouses, children, and elderly parents – particularly those people who can't fight back.



It doesn't matter what drug a person is addicted to – the need to get and use the drug is a compulsion. If it were not bigger and more powerful at this moment than their own will, some of them would not be addicted, they would stop using drugs and begin to fix their life. Others are feeling powerless, hurt and use drugs to numb the pain.

Some of the behaviours below are what we deal with through their program.

- Lying,
- Manipulating,
- Control
- Entitlement,
- Taking ownership,
- Communication,
- Anger issues,
- Accountability
- Integrity,
- Co-dependency,
- Selfishness,
- Mental health issues,
 - Including isolation,
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - ADHD
 - Trauma.

Following a few guidelines will help family members while they are in a recovery program:

- **We encourage you** to support them while they are in program through; phone calls, visits and letter writing. Because of the rigidity of the program, they are more than likely going to complain about how hard it is, and unfamiliar it is to their old lifestyle. *They will sometimes be on restrictions and will not be able to make phone calls or have visits.* They will let you know when that applies.
- **We encourage you** not to rescue them when they are complaining as it is a form of manipulation and old behaviour. And we encourage you to ring our office and speak to the Case manager, and check whether their story to you has truth in it.
- **We encourage you** to trust program requirements that recovery. If you have any hesitate to call us. We are supportive of the process of program dealing with their, dysfunctional behaviours.
- **We encourage you** as a family member to find support while your loved one is in rehab. Whether that is at a support group such as Al-anon, or counselling. We understand that you too have suffered from their addiction. And just reminding you Counselling is available between you and your loved one in Stage 3.
- **We encourage you** to share with the Resident's children to see this rehabilitation program is similar to a hospital where mum or dad is getting well.



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