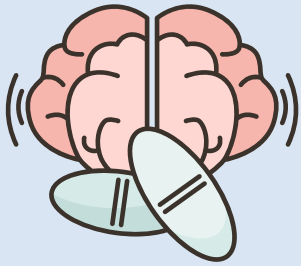


WHAT IS ADDICTION?



Addiction is a chronic disease that involves behaviors such as seeking out and taking substances or performing an activity despite any negative consequences that may come with that. Despite what many people think, addiction is not the result of making bad decisions and a lack of willpower. Addiction is a brain disorder that changes the chemistry in one's brain. There are two groups of addiction, substance addictions and non-substance addictions with the most common addiction being alcohol use.



Substance Addictions

Also known as substance use disorders, substance addictions involve the use of substances that activate the reward center of our brains. This can include substances such as alcohol, caffeine, inhalants, opioids, stimulants, nicotine, hallucinogens, marijuana, and sedatives. Opioids and stimulants can be prescriptions or non-prescriptions such as oxycodone, heroin, Adderall, cocaine, and methamphetamine.



Non-Substance Addictions

Also known as behavioral addictions, this group of addictions refers to activities that activate our brain's reward system. While the only "official" behavior that can be diagnosed is gambling, other behaviors that have the potential of creating an addiction include things such as eating, exercising, shopping, sex, viewing pornography, playing video games, or using the internet. These activities can become addictions if they are all-consuming and negatively impact your day-to-day life.



Symptoms

While symptoms can vary depending on the person, below are a few common symptoms.

- unable to stop even when they want to
- increased tolerance of the substance
- intense focus on substance; take increasing amount of time craving, thinking about, and obtaining the subject of addiction
- withdrawal
- feeling a lack of control



Treatment

There are a few different forms of treatment for addiction such as hospital management, medication, rehab, therapy, and support groups. Hospital management would be used specifically for someone who is going through severe withdrawal. While there isn't a medication to cure addiction, there are some medications that help reduce urges and cravings as well as reduce withdrawal symptoms.