Addiction

Jason's life is beginning to unravel. His grades have slipped, he's moody, he doesn't talk to his friends, and he has stopped showing up for practice. Jason's friends know he has been experimenting with drugs and now they’re worried he has become addicted.

**What Are Substance Abuse and Addiction**?

The difference between substance abuse and addiction is very slight. Substance abuse means using an illegal substance or using a legal substance in the wrong way. Addiction begins as abuse, or using a substance like marijuana or cocaine.

You can abuse a drug (or alcohol) without having an addiction. For example, just because Sara smoked pot a few times doesn't mean that she has an addiction, but it does mean that she's abusing a drug — and that could lead to an addiction? People can get addicted to all sorts of substances. When we think of addiction, we usually think of alcohol or illegal drugs. But people become addicted to medications, cigarettes, even glue! And some substances are more addictive than others: Drugs like crack or heroin are so addictive that they might only be used once or twice before the user loses control.

Addiction means a person has no control over whether he or she uses a drug or drinks. Someone who's addicted to cocaine has grown so used to the drug that he or she has to have it. Addiction can be physical, psychological, or both.

**Physical Addiction**

Being physically addicted means a person's body actually becomes dependent on a particular substance (even smoking is physically addictive). It also means building tolerance to that substance, so that a person needs a larger dose than ever before to get the same effects.

Someone who is physically addicted and stops using a substance like drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes may experience withdrawal symptoms. Common symptoms of withdrawal are diarrhea, shaking, and feeling awful.

**Psychological Addiction**

Psychological addiction happens when the cravings for a drug are psychological or emotional. People who are psychologically addicted feel overcome by the desire to have a drug. They may lie or steal to get it.

A person crosses the line between abuse and addiction when he or she is no longer trying the drug to have fun or get high, but has come to depend on it. His or her whole life centers around the need for the drug. An addicted person — whether it's a physical or psychological addiction or both — no longer feels like there is a choice in taking a substance.

**Signs of Addiction**

The most obvious sign of an addiction is the need to have a particular drug or substance. However, many other signs can suggest a possible addiction, such as changes in mood or weight loss or gain. (These also are signs of other conditions too, though, such as depression or eating disorders.)

Signs that you or someone you know may have a drug or alcohol addiction include:

**Psychological signals:**

use of drugs or alcohol as a way to forget problems or to relax withdrawal or keeping secrets from family and friends loss of interest in activities that used to be important problems with schoolwork, such as slipping grades or absences changes in friendships, such as hanging out only with friends who use drugs spending a lot of time figuring out how to get drugs stealing or selling belongings to be able to afford drugs failed attempts to stop taking drugs or drinking anxiety, anger, or depression mood swings.

DEALING WITH ADDICTION- Use the article to complete the following questions.

#1. **In your own words, what is the difference between substance abuse and addiction?** Substance abuse is violating a substance and putting it in your body. Addiction is the compulsive need or urge to do something.

#2. Define Addiction – A compulsive need for using a substance

#3. Being physically addicted means a person’s body becomes dependent on a certain substance and builds tolerance.

#4. Define withdrawal, include symptoms – Symptoms your body experiences when not using drugs. Some symptoms include shaking and feeling awful.

#5. What are 3 psychological signals that one might be addicted? Using drugs as a way to escape from reality, using drugs to relax from withdraw and a loss of interest in activities that one used to be important.

#6. What are 2 physical signals that one might be addicted? Feeling shaky and changes in sleeping habits

#7. Why do you think that first step is so difficult for people? The first step is difficult for most people because people don’t realize that they actually need help and don’t reach out.

#8 If you can't talk to your parents, name 2 other adults you could go to, if you needed help. You can tell a drug counselor or therapist.

#9. Out of the tips listed for recovery, which 2 do you agree with the most and why?

TIP 1- Telling friends that you are quitting drugs

Agree because you will know who your true friends are and who will have your back. They can be your emotional support and help you.

TIP 2- Accepting invitations that do not involve drugs

Agree because- then you won’t be able to abuse drugs or alcohol, which keeps you clean.

#10. Name 2 things that will help make recovery a life-long process. Joining a support group or joining treatment programs.