

Classic Alcoholic Behaviors

We all know someone who cannot control his or her drinking, and sometimes after repeated attempts to stop, the alcoholic is successful and can control the urge to drink. The following represents some of the classic alcoholic behaviors in the first stage of alcoholism. According to various reliable sources, the person's drinking is no longer social because it has become a means to escape work-related stress, relationship issues, inhibitions, and life's problems in general. Early into the development of the disease of alcoholism, the person increasingly depends on the feeling that results from drinking. Tolerance for alcohol also gradually increases requiring larger amounts in order to reach the desired level of intoxication.

Some of the early, classic alcoholic behaviors are lack of recognition by the person that he or she is in the early stages of alcoholism, as exhibited by frequent drinking of increasing amounts, huge tolerance, boasting, an ability to drink huge amounts of alcohol, and behavioral changes including irritability when unable to drink. Once a conflict surfaces the alcoholic denies there is a problem as he or she begins to experience physical symptoms including stomach upset, vomiting, hand tremors, hangovers, and blackouts. Problems begin to arise in all areas of an alcoholic's life, and instead of facing on the real cause, alcohol; they begin to blame everyone and everything around them. Now the alcoholic is drinking not for stress relief, but because of the dependence. The next disruption is usually marital difficulties, work-related issues, health problems, and financial difficulties. Things that were once of great of importance to the alcoholic are now neglected, aggressive and grandiose alcoholic behaviors prevail, avoidance of family and friends increases, violent or destructive behaviors occur, poor nutritional habits and poor sleep pattern, unreasonable resentments, and increasing physical symptoms.

The most profound of the classic alcoholic behaviors occur during the last stage of the disease. Even though the alcoholic may have successfully held down a job, was a "functional" alcoholic, has now lost all control. Drinking now takes place during the day, starting out with an "eye opener" before work, and progressing throughout the day. The job is lost as the alcoholic has total disregard for everything that they once held sacred; job, family, home, and food take the back seat to drinking. Neurological symptoms are also now present in the form of "the shakes", tremors that occur when he or she tries not to drink. When this occurs with hallucinations, it is called the "DT's" or delirium tremens, which is potentially fatal without medical attention. The cycle usually continues to repeat itself until the alcoholic behaviors persist until the individual has reached the bottom, then recovery may be possible with a strong desire to stop drinking.

