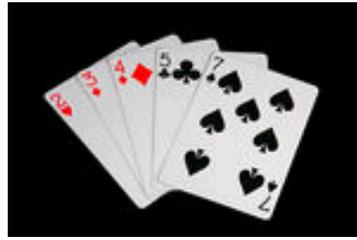




Do you or someone you know have an addiction problem?



Addiction has long been thought to mean an uncontrollable habit of using alcohol or illegal drugs. More recently we have come to learn that people can also develop addictions to legally prescribed drugs and certain behaviors, such as gambling, internet use, and shopping to name a few.

What makes something an addiction?

There are two aspects that all addictions have in common. First, the addictive behavior is counter-productive to the individual. So, instead of helping the person adapt to situations or overcome problems, it tends to undermine their coping abilities. For example, a gambler might wish he had more money – yet gambling is more likely to drain his financial resources. A heavy drinker might want to cheer herself up – yet alcohol is a contributing factor to her depression.

Secondly, the behavior is persistent. When someone is addicted, they will continue to engage in the addictive behavior, despite the fact that it causes them trouble. An occasional weekend of self-indulgence is not necessarily an addiction, although it may cause different kinds of problems. Addiction involves more frequent engagement in the behavior.

What's the problem if it isn't doing any harm?

Addictions are harmful both to the person with the addiction and to the people around them. The biggest problem is the addicted person's failure to recognize the harm their addiction is doing. They may be in denial about the negative aspects of their addiction and choose to ignore the effects on their health, life patterns and relationships. Or they may blame outside circumstances or other people in their lives for their difficulties.



The damage caused by addiction is difficult to recognize when the addiction is the person's main way of coping with the other problems they have. Sometimes other problems are directly related to the addiction, for example, health problems, and sometimes they are indirectly related, such as relationship problems.

Some people who become addicted to substances or activities are very aware of their addictions, and even the harm caused by the addiction, but they keep doing the addictive behavior anyway. This may be because:

1. They don't feel they can cope without the addiction,
2. They are avoiding dealing with some other issue that the addiction distracts them from (e.g., domestic violence) or
3. They do not know how to enjoy life any other way.

The harm of addiction may only be recognized when the addicted person goes through a crisis. This can happen when the addictive substance or behavior is taken away completely, and the person goes into withdrawal and cannot cope. Or it can occur as a consequence of the addiction, such as a loss of a job, serious illness or a partner leaving the relationship.

If you or someone you know needs support, we want you to know that **help is available**.

HealthPartners

If you are enrolled in our HealthPartners medical plan, you have access to behavioral and chemical health benefits. Through HealthPartners network providers, you will find highly qualified and experienced health care professionals who will assess, stabilize and treat a wide range of behavioral and chemical health problems. For additional information about your benefits, call 1-800-883-2177 or visit www.healthpartners.com/cityofduluth.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

EAPs are plans that help identify and resolve issues facing troubled employees through short-term counseling, referrals to specialized professionals or organizations, and follow-up services. These programs are not designed to provide long-term treatment, but it does offer a safe environment where an employee can discuss problems with a counselor who then makes a confidential assessment, and if necessary, provides the employee a referral to a mental-health professional. The City of Duluth and the Duluth Airport Authority (DAA) offer their employees an EAP through Midwest EAP (1-800-383-1908 or www.midwesteap.com). Contact the City of Duluth's Human Resources office for your login and password. If you are an HRA employee, you have access to EAP services through St. Luke's and can reach them at 218-249-7077 or 888-355-8495, or visit them online for confidential, professional help at no charge to you: www.slhduluth.com/Hospital/Additional-Services/Employee-Assistance-Program/EAP.aspx.

Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) provides information on its website about its program to enable visitors to decide if AA is appropriate for them. The site has material for friends and family members of people who have an alcohol problem, as well as articles for teens. Material is provided in English, Spanish and French. Their website is www.aa.org.

Gamblers Anonymous

Gamblers Anonymous offers information and assistance to those struggling with a compulsive gambling problem, as well as to family and friends of compulsive gamblers. For further information, please visit www.gamblersanonymous.org.

Center for Internet Addiction Recovery

The Center for Internet Addiction Recovery (www.netaddiction.com) offers information, self-assessments, and assistance for people with online and Internet addictions, including Internet addiction, e-auctions, online gambling, cybersex, and day trading.

National Institute on Drug Abuse

The National Institute on Drug Abuse provides up-to-date information on all commonly abused drugs and drug treatment, and features material for parents and young people. Please visit www.drugabuse.gov for information.

Narcotics Anonymous

Narcotics Anonymous (www.na.org) is an international, community-based association of recovering drug addicts with more than 31,000 weekly meetings in over 100 countries worldwide.

Overeaters Anonymous

Overeaters Anonymous is a 12-Step Program that aids in recovery from compulsive overeating. The website (www.oa.org) helps visitors understand the program and whether or not it is the right choice for them. It also allows visitors to search and register for local face-to-face meetings and also telephonic meetings.

SAMHSA's Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), a department of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provides a locator tool which allows you to search for drug and alcohol abuse programs by state, town, zip code, and street address. The website also provides links to locators to help find mental health services and physicians authorized to prescribe buprenorphine (www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov).

Expert Help to Help You Quit Smoking

Did you know you could talk to an expert to help you quit smoking? The U.S. government provides free support by telephone and online chats. Learn more at www.smokefree.gov/expert.aspx.

You matter to us!

