

RECOGNIZING ADDICTIONS

A person is “addicted” when the use of a **chemical, food, or behavior** is continued despite adverse consequences (i.e. loss of jobs, family, relationships, personal health, or life). This behavior frequently begins as a normal, seemingly harmless activity. It may be a coping mechanism perceived to remedy a problem or meet an emotional need. Addiction is an adaptive behavior occurring over a period of time, often without the person realizing it. It’s as simple as that, but an addiction is not simple to overcome. It is a bio-psycho-social disorder and it is a societal problem for all of us.

Triggers to Addiction

Abuse Trauma Pain Loneliness Anxiety
Depression Stress Grief Spiritual Emptiness



For a small segment of the population, addiction involves genetics, a predisposition or tendency. Addictive tendencies only make it easier to become addicted. But anyone can become addicted; no one is exempt.

The first step to overcoming an addiction is recognizing it.

Acknowledge that the behavior has become a problem. This means taking personal responsibility and not blaming anyone else. Seeing oneself in true light is difficult. Denial is often a big part of addiction especially when it involves an altered state of mind distorting perception. Frequently, an addicted person is afraid to face whatever caused the excessive behavior or afraid of what will be required to change the behavior.

If you recognize that someone you care about has developed an addiction, don’t judge them. Lovingly tell them you are concerned about them. Tell them how you feel, how the behavior affects you and your relationship with them. When they recognize the problem and want to change, they will need to consult a health care professional. The congregation, priesthood, and friends can be there to offer help through prayer and support as the individual seeks to cope with life differently.

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WHAT IS AN ADDICTION?

Anything that is done habitually to excess interfering with playing, working, loving, and living a balanced life to the fullest is an addiction. Anything that has the capacity to alter mood whether to distract, soothe, or enliven can become an addiction.

Substances Commonly Addictive

<i>Tobacco</i>	<i>Illegal Drugs</i>	<i>Prescription Drugs</i>
<i>Alcohol</i>	<i>Simple Carbohydrates</i>	<i>Chocolate</i>

Activities Frequently Addictive

<i>Overeating</i>	<i>Television</i>	<i>Video Games</i>	<i>Internet</i>
<i>Gambling</i>	<i>Shopping</i>	<i>Working</i>	<i>Exercising</i>

Certain brain chemicals called neurotransmitters are released by various stimuli, creating a feeling of pleasure. These include dopamine, serotonin, and norepinephrine. Dopamine especially is involved in all addictions. Serotonin is produced at high levels by simple carbohydrates, causing cravings which in excess cause obesity. Hormones such as adrenaline and endorphins mediate pain. Exercise is well-known to raise endorphin levels; but sugar and chocolate do also. Anything that stimulates the production of these brain chemicals or hormones has the potential to be addictive.

Recovery from any addiction means making changes: socially, physically, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually. This kind of change requires a lot of support, encouragement, and faith knowing that all things are possible through the Holy Spirit who strengthens us.



2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

Provided by Community of Christ Health Ministries Association
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