

THE 7 STAGES OF ADDICTION

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INITIATION

The person tries the substance for the first time. This is often due to:

- Peer pressure.
- Mental health conditions.
- Substance availability.
- Environment.

EXPERIMENTATION

This is the stage where the person makes a decision to use the substance.

- The drug may be used to unwind after a hard day.
- Use may be connected to parties or social gatherings.

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REGULAR USE

A pattern of drug use develops.

- May begin to use the substance alone.
- The user thinks about the drug more often.
- The user relies on the substance to obtain the desired effect.

RISKY USE

At this stage, signs of addiction become apparent.

- People may notice changes in behavior.
- Users may begin to hide drug use.
- Financial problems may arise.
- Users may begin to neglect work or family responsibilities.



DEPENDENCE

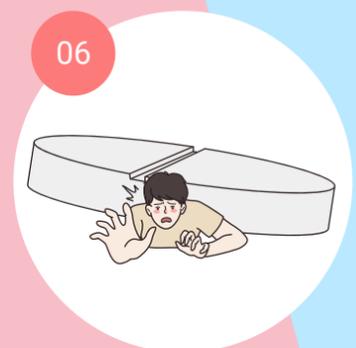
The user's body relies on the substance.

- Tolerance to the substance has begun.
- The user understands that they need the substance to function.
- Withdrawal symptoms may occur if drug use abruptly stops.

ADDICTION

Drug use is no longer a choice.

- The user loses control of their choices and actions.
- Even after treatment, relapse is common.
- Users may compulsively lie about their drug use.



CRISIS/TREATMENT

The user becomes a threat to themselves and others.

- The user is at high risk for an overdose.
- Many users seek treatment or are forced into it.