

Substance Use, Abuse & Dependence and Addiction

**Am I addicted?
Am I abusing drugs?
Do I run the risk of becoming an addict?
What are the dangers?**

- **Cigarettes**
- **Alcohol**
- **Tranquillisers**
- **Dagga**
- **Ecstasy**
- **LSD**
- **Heroin**
- **Cocaine**

Being at University means having opportunities and choices. Among these are decisions regarding the use of drugs. When encountering opportunities – at parties, on dates, in residence or in public places – remember that you have a choice and that you can make an informed decision.

The choices you make influence your academic performance, your personal development and your social life. Prepare yourself to make informed decisions.

The effects of drugs

Cigarettes, alcohol and other drugs are substances which change the way your body and mind function. Generally, drugs have short-term and long-term effects. Some will damage the body and mind after just one use and some drugs will damage you more slowly.

Generally, all drugs have a negative effect on your academic performance.

The dangers associated with drugs are (1) the effect of the drug itself, (2) your behaviour when under the influence, and (3) the unpredictable effect of mixing drugs.

Watch out!!

Drugs confuse your judgement, lower your inhibitions and produce an artificial sense of comfort with people. Date rape and unprotected sex are thus a real danger when using drugs.

Why do people use drugs?

People use drugs for different reasons, some because of peer pressure, to escape painful feelings or situations, to compensate for their low self-esteem or due to various other reasons.

Using drugs can influence your life negatively. You run the danger of damaging your mental and physical health.

Dependence and Addiction

If you consider yourself an occasional drug user, it's worth understanding a bit about dependence, especially the warning signals. Generally, you are not aware of slipping into an addictive cycle until it has turned into a problem!

Anybody can develop problems of substance abuse or addiction. However, having a relative who has a problem with drugs or alcohol increases your risk of developing a problem yourself.

Some drugs are more addictive than others. Know the dangers and the effects of the drugs you are taking. Know what is happening in your life, be honest and open with yourself and make changes to avoid problems!

You might be concerned about the use of alcohol or drugs by yourself or someone you know. It can be frightening to think of it as a problem but recognising it early might prevent disastrous consequences.

Check List

Symptoms of Dependence:

- You take more drugs or drinks than you planned or over a longer period than you planned?
 YES NO
- You know that things are kind of out of control and you are unable to put them right again
 YES NO
- You spend time finding the money to buy your substances, taking them, or recovering from them.
 YES NO
- You suffer intoxication or withdrawal symptoms when you should be doing your work or studying.
 YES NO
- You give up other social, academic or recreational activities.
 YES NO
- You develop physical problems yet continue even though continued use is making it worse.
 YES NO
- You are missing tutorials or lectures due to the drugs or alcohol effects?
 YES NO
- You must take more for the same effect.
 YES NO

You find withdrawal symptoms develop when you try to stop or reduce intake (you want to stop – but can't).

YES NO

After developing unpleasant withdrawal symptoms, you take the drug (or alcohol) to avoid the withdrawal.

YES NO

If you have answered **YES** to **three** of these symptoms, then you run the risk of being dependent and addicted.

**If you have any doubt, it is better to speak to someone -
Rather sooner than later!**

Find us @

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be informed

know the dangers

make an informed choice!!