



The Use – Abuse – Dependence Continuum

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Use		Abuse		Dependence (Addiction)
<p><i>Responsible use</i>, typically to enhance the pleasure of normally pleasurable situations</p> <p>No negative consequences, problems, unpredictability, guilt, remorse, etc.</p> <p>No controlling considered or required: No limit setting or promises needed or made</p> <p>No thoughts of using</p> <p>No one complains</p> <p>Tolerance not tested; no withdrawal symptoms</p>	<p><i>Possible reasons for transition from use to abuse:</i></p> <p>Life problems</p> <p>Poor coping skills</p> <p>Peer pressure</p> <p>Immaturity</p> <p>Mental illness</p> <p>Habit</p>	<p><i>Intentional overuse</i> of substances in cases of celebration, anxiety, despair, or ignorance; people making bad choices about the use of drugs</p> <p><i>DSM-IV: A maladaptive pattern of alcohol or drug use leading to impairment or distress, presenting as <u>one or more</u> of the following over a 12-month period <u>and</u> symptoms have never met the criteria for chemical dependence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recurrent use leading to failure to fulfill obligations • Recurrent use that is physically hazardous • Recurrent alcohol- or drug-related legal problems • Continued use despite social/interpersonal problems 	<p><i>Possible reasons for transition from abuse to dependence</i></p> <p>Genetic predisposition</p> <p>Neurobiology (brain chemistry)</p> <p>Excessive use: Neuroadaptation</p>	<p><i>Impaired control</i> over substance use, probably caused by a dysfunction in the brain's pleasure pathway</p> <p><i>DSM-IV: A maladaptive pattern of alcohol or drug use, leading to impairment or distress, presenting as <u>three or more</u> of the following over a 12-month period</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tolerance to the substance's actions • Withdrawal symptoms or use to avoid withdrawal symptoms • Substance is used more than intended • There is an apparent inability to control use • Effort is expended to obtain the substance • Alcohol or drug use continues despite negative consequences
Action: None required		Action: Moderation through risk management & harm reduction education, intervention, insight		Action: Abstinence & recovery through treatment, counseling, 12-step program, spiritual awakening