

## Fast Facts Box 1

### Drug Addiction

- Addiction is when a person seeks and uses drugs in a compulsive, or unable to control, way even though there are harmful consequences
- Result of how your brain responds to the drug's effect on the "reward center" of your brain
  - Overtime brain adapts and cues your reward center to not be as responsive to the drug the more you use it causing a decrease in the affect (process is known as developing a tolerance)
- Other brain adaptations include decreasing your ability to learn, make judgement/decisions, increase your stress level, impact your memory and cause behavioral changes
- Certain factors, like family history of drug addiction, growing up in an environment that exposes you to drug use and early experimentation with drugs, significantly increase the likelihood that you'll will have a drug addiction problem

<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Prevention</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Need to use the drug regularly (daily or several times a day)</li> <li>-Intense urges for the drug block out all other thoughts</li> <li>-Need to take more of the drug to get the same feeling that a lesser amount used to provide</li> <li>-Make sure that you have a supply of the drug on hand at all times</li> <li>-Spend money you can't afford on drugs</li> <li>-Miss obligations at work/home due to your drug use</li> <li>-Participate in activities that you wouldn't normally do (especially risky ones)</li> <li>-Use the drug even though you realize it is causing problems in your life</li> <li>-Have withdrawal symptoms (ex. nausea, vomiting, sweating) when you stop taking the drug</li> <li>-Tried to stop using the drug and failed</li> </ul>	<p><i>Goal:</i> Understand what addiction is, become drug-free and prevent relapse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Most individuals are in denial about having a drug problem</li> <li>-Require an intervention from family and friends</li> <li>-An individual has to want help</li> <li>-Start with detoxification (detox)</li> <li>-Followed by behavioral therapy</li> </ul> <p><i>See a Doctor:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Using drugs and can't stop</li> <li>-Continue using them even though you know that they are causing harm</li> <li>-Using has led you to practice unsafe behavior</li> <li>-Have withdrawal symptoms when you do stop using</li> </ul> <p><i>Get Emergency Care:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-May have overdosed</li> <li>-Changes in level of consciousness</li> <li>-Difficulty breathing</li> <li>-Seizures/convulsions</li> <li>-Signs of a heart attack</li> <li>-Any other worrisome reaction to a drug use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Easiest way is to not take drugs</li> <li>-If you need to take a prescription medication that has a high risk of addiction, follow the instructions</li> <li>-Talk with your children about drug use and abuse</li> <li>-Listen to what they have to say about peer pressure and resisting use</li> <li>-Be supportive and strengthen your connection with them</li> <li>-Set a good example for them by not using/abusing drugs yourself</li> </ul> <p><i>Preventing Relapse:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Monitor cravings</li> <li>-Continue to see a therapist or go to group meetings</li> <li>-Avoid situations that will increase your chances of relapsing</li> <li>-If you do relapse, get help immediately</li> </ul>

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