



Major Life Aspects of the Disease of Addiction

The following diagrams discuss how addiction can impact one's life physically, mentally/behaviorally, and spiritually and then aspects of recovery in the same three life areas (Part 2). Each person's experience and recovery is unique so not every item mentioned may apply as some will, but some will not. Keep in mind, the physical aspects of addiction can be specific to the type(s) of substances or behaviors involved. Also, "spiritual" in this discussion refers to a broader view of one's sense of meaning and purpose and personal belief system and goals as opposed to a specific type of "spirituality" or belief system - Review and discuss the following:

The Life Impact of Addiction:

<i>Physical</i>	<i>Mental/Behavioral</i>	<i>Spiritual</i>
<p>Tolerance (Needing more of substance for same effect)</p> <p>Reduced physical self-care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not eating right (Decrease in nutrition, eating junk food for example) • Appetite change/shift • Less exercise • Weight loss (or gain) • Reduced care for appearance • Neglect of medical care (check-ups/appointments, or procedures needed. Not seeing dentist, taking medications, etc.) <p>Fatigue (especially when not using)</p> <p>Withdrawal symptoms (Depends on substance)</p> <p>Sleep disturbance (insomnia/hypersomnia)</p> <p>Cravings (Physical: Your body wants the substance)</p> <p>Medical Problems (This can vary greatly dependent upon types and amounts of substance used)</p>	<p>Obsession –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking about using/obtaining substance (preoccupation). • Planning and scheduling time to use and to recover from effects the next day <p>Compulsion -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Losing control of using behavior. (Doing things feeling guilty about or regret later) • Losing control of amount and frequency of use • Losing control of time spent using/obtaining substances • Losing control of consequences. Problems related to use and behavior piling up • Neglect of responsibilities, career, chores, home <p>Mental and Emotional Symptoms Increase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased anxiety • Depressive symptoms • Mood swings • Paranoia (in some cases) • Poor impulse control • Anger issues/conflicts 	<p>"Sense of Belonging" impacted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawing from family, and positive friends • Primary "bond" with other users (Revolves primarily around using) • Isolation/loneliness • Disconnected from society <p>Meaningful sense of "Self" impacted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased insight and self-awareness – "Denial" • Decreased motivation for things other than using • Excuse making, blaming, justifying behavior (even when it is wrong) <p>Change in values and priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less concern about the more important things in life (family, career, goals) • Not thinking about "the big picture". Just living for the moment. • Pleasure seeking a priority over morals and values or feelings of others • Doing things against our morals/values or against desires of loved ones <p>Shift in (or neglect of) nurturing own beliefs and spiritual practice (like nature for example)</p>



Part 2 – The Positive Change Process (Or Recovery) – This chart reviews some key aspects of each area when overcoming and recovering from addiction through positive change. Once again, remember that some may apply and other areas not as much, depending upon each person’s unique change process

Full Life Recovery From Addiction:

<i>Physical</i>	<i>Mental/Behavioral</i>	<i>Spiritual</i>
<p>Withdrawal management (Either detox to abstain or MAT)</p> <p>Self-Care (Physical)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diet/Nutrition/eat right • Exercise, walking, moving around • Manage appearance, grooming and dress • Medical care – Doctors, dentists, taking meds, following medical advice, seeing specialist if needed • Getting sleep and rest • Improving energy level • Managing physical cravings 	<p>Mental/emotional self-care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relaxation • Hobbies • Support groups • Therapy/treatment • Psychiatrist (if needed) <p>Regaining self-control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding triggers • Changing environment • Impulse control • Coping with urges and cravings <p>Managing emotions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anger management • Stress management • Coping with mood swings • Coping with depression • Learning to identify and appropriately express feelings • Learning to cope with guilt, shame, trauma <p>Managing behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning to cope without acting out • Making new and positive behavior patterns • Planning ahead for sustained positive lifestyle change • Taking care of past consequences (resolve legal issues, repair relationships, etc.) <p>Reestablish work and home care responsibilities, (paying bills, chores, work or school etc.)</p>	<p>Reestablish “Sense of Belonging” and making meaningful connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebuilding family relationships • Positive friendships • Positive choices for romantic partner or learning positive communication with current partner • Positive socialization • Connecting with neighbors and community <p>Establish meaningful sense of “Self”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insight building and increasing self-awareness • Building positive motivation • Accountability – No more blaming or making excuses. <p>New values and priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals • Priorities • Developing sense of right and wrong and sticking with it • Positive choices <p>Exploring and learning what you believe in and nurturing those beliefs</p>