

STEPS FOR RECOVERY

Understanding Addictions

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Addictions eventually catch up with you and change your life in such a way that you will have to face the fact that you need help. Recovering from addictions usually happens once you have hit the bottom and finally realize that you need help from outside sources so that you can lead a life that is addiction free. There are many types of addictions that will have a devastating affect on your life.

Addictions, and recovery from them, require that you actively seek help from a source other than yourself. You may want to start by consulting with your family doctor or with an addictions counselor. This is a good place to start since it will be important to access both your emotional and your physical behavior as they are related to your addictions and your substance abuse. You and your doctor will need to decide what is going to work best for you in order that you stop using your drug of choice. It won't matter what your type of addiction is since all addictions require the same amount of professional help and support.

There are several different types of addictions that you may or may not already be aware of. Addictions include:

- alcohol abuse
- opiates
- food addictions
- marijuana abuse
- relationship addictions
- sex addictions
- gambling addictions

People become addicted to many types of substances. Many people become addicted to medications and other substances. There are some substances that are more addictive than others. For instance, drugs like heroin are so addictive and it can take it only one or two uses before a person is addicted.

A person who is addicted to cocaine has grown so used to the drug that they feel they can't live without it. Addiction can be physical, psychological, or both. Physical addiction is when a person has become physically dependent on a substance.

Over time a person will build up a tolerance to that substance, so that they need a larger dose so that they get the same effects. When an addict who is physically addicted to a substance stops using they may experience withdrawal symptoms. Withdrawal can be much like having the flu and include symptoms such as the shakes, diarrhea, and weakness.

Believe that Recovery is Possible!

Freedom from addictions is often referred to as "recovery". There are many temporary solutions for freedom from addictions but there are really only two ways to permanently overcome addictions.

One of the most common methods of overcoming addictions is to be firm with the practice of abstinence. This means that you completely stop using your drug of choice so that you have no way to continue to feed addictions. This means that the alcoholic can never have another drink and that the gambling addict can never again go to a casino or other place where any type of gambling action takes place.

This method of abstinence, however, won't work with food addictions since you cannot stop eating. Wanting to give up your addictions is one thing, but to actually to follow through with abstinence is usually very difficult for an addict. Many addicts think that they can continue with their addictions but to only use their drug of choice in a moderate manner. For most people with addictions this is only a dream and wishful thinking. Full recovery from addictions for most addicts will mean a lifetime of abstinence from their drug of choice.

For those addicts with addictions that can be controlled by limiting the drug of choice in a moderate manner, there is the realistic goal those addictions can be overcome permanently. These types of addictions include food addictions, shopping addictions, and sexual addictions. The addict will need to decide how much moderation

they need to exercise before their addictions take over with addictive behavior once again. This is the path of recovery from addictions.