

****"Can You See Me?" Campaign: Drug Addiction Help Sheet****

****Understanding Drug Addiction****

Drug addiction, also known as substance use disorder (SUD), is a chronic, relapsing condition characterized by compulsive drug seeking, continued use despite harmful consequences, and changes in the brain's structure and function. Addiction can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender, or background.

****Types of Drug Addiction****

1. ****Illicit Drugs:**** These include substances like heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, and marijuana, which are illegal to possess, produce, or distribute.
2. ****Prescription Drugs:**** Some prescription medications, such as opioids, benzodiazepines, and stimulants, can be misused or abused, leading to addiction.
3. ****Alcohol:**** While legal for adults, alcohol can also be addictive and lead to alcohol use disorder (AUD) when misused or abused.

****Signs and Symptoms of Drug Addiction****

1. ****Compulsive Drug Seeking:**** Spending a significant amount of time and effort obtaining, using, or recovering from the effects of drugs.
2. ****Loss of Control:**** Inability to limit drug use or stop using despite wanting to quit.
3. ****Cravings:**** Intense urges or cravings for the drug, which can be triggered by environmental cues or stress.
4. ****Physical Dependence:**** Experiencing withdrawal symptoms when attempting to quit or reduce drug use.
5. ****Tolerance:**** Needing higher doses of the drug to achieve the desired effects, due to the body adapting to its presence.
6. ****Neglecting Responsibilities:**** Prioritizing drug use over obligations at work, school, or home.
7. ****Social and Interpersonal Problems:**** Experiencing difficulties in relationships, legal issues, or financial problems due to drug use.

****Symptoms of Being High on Methamphetamines****

1. ****Elevated Mood:**** Feelings of euphoria, increased energy, and confidence.
2. ****Increased Alertness:**** Heightened awareness, talkativeness, and hyperactivity.
3. ****Decreased Appetite:**** Loss of appetite and weight loss.
4. ****Paranoia:**** Extreme distrust or suspicion of others, feeling like people are out to get them.
5. ****Hallucinations:**** Sensory perceptions that aren't based in reality, such as seeing or hearing things that aren't there.
6. ****Psychosis:**** Loss of touch with reality, including delusions, hallucinations, and disorganized thinking.

****Symptoms of Being High on Cocaine****

1. ****Euphoria:**** Intense feelings of pleasure, confidence, and energy.
2. ****Increased Alertness:**** Heightened awareness, talkativeness, and hyperactivity.
3. ****Decreased Appetite:**** Loss of appetite and weight loss.
4. ****Paranoia:**** Extreme distrust or suspicion of others, feeling like people are out to get them.
5. ****Agitation:**** Restlessness, irritability, and anxiety.

****Symptoms of Opioid Use****

1. ****Euphoria:**** Feelings of pleasure, relaxation, and sedation.
2. ****Drowsiness:**** Feeling sleepy or nodding off.
3. ****Slowed Breathing:**** Shallow or slowed breathing, which can be dangerous and lead to overdose.
4. ****Constipation:**** Difficulty or infrequent bowel movements.
5. ****Nausea and Vomiting:**** Upset stomach, nausea, and vomiting.
6. ****Constricted Pupils:**** Pinpoint pupils, even in dim lighting.
7. ****Itching:**** Persistent itching or scratching, particularly of the skin.

****Accessing Narcan (Naloxone)****

Narcan, also known as naloxone, is a life-saving medication that can rapidly reverse opioid overdose. It is available without a prescription at many pharmacies and can be obtained through various community programs and initiatives. Here's how you can access Narcan:

1. ****Pharmacies:**** Many pharmacies offer Narcan without a prescription. You can ask the pharmacist for Narcan and receive training on how to administer it.
2. ****Community Programs:**** Local health departments, harm reduction organizations, and community outreach programs may distribute Narcan for free or at a reduced cost. Check online or contact your local health department for information.
3. ****Training Programs:**** Some organizations offer training sessions on overdose prevention and Narcan administration. Attend a training session to learn how to recognize an overdose and administer Narcan effectively.

****Resources for Support and Information****

1. ****Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA):**** Provides information, treatment locators, and resources for individuals and families facing substance abuse issues. <https://www.samhsa.gov/>
2. ****National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA):**** Offers research-based information on drug addiction, treatment options, and prevention strategies. <https://www.drugabuse.gov/>

3. **Narcotics Anonymous (NA):** A fellowship of individuals who support each other in recovering from drug addiction. Attend meetings or find online resources for support.
<https://www.na.org/>

Remember, recovery is possible, and no one has to face addiction alone. With the right support and resources, individuals can overcome drug addiction and lead fulfilling lives.

Together, we can combat drug addiction. You are seen, you are heard, and you are valued.