



# Drug Addiction

## Quick Reference Card

### Drug Addiction Fundamentals

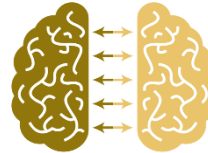
**Drug addiction**, or substance use disorder, is compulsive drug use despite harm. Key warning signs



1. Physical: Weight change, bloodshot eyes.
2. Behavioral: Poor performance, mood swings.
3. Financial: Unexplained borrowing.
4. Social: Withdrawing from social circles.

### The Brain and Addiction

Drugs can significantly alter the brain's complex network, essential for understanding addiction.



**Brain Circuits:** Affected by drugs, especially dopamine pathways.

**Neurotransmitters:** Chemical messengers like dopamine.

**Neurons:** Brain's communicative wiring.

**Synapses:** Neuron message exchange points.

### Types of Addiction

#### Substance Addiction:

Includes alcohol, tobacco, many prescription drugs, strong stimulants, calming depressants, hallucinogens, widely used cannabis, and sniffed inhalants.



#### Behavioral Addiction:

Covers addictive gambling habits, overeating behaviors, excessive internet overuse, compulsive sexual activities, and excessive shopping.



### Commonly Abused Drugs

Given the abundance of substances, we've summarized the most abused drugs to keep you informed.

- **Prescription Medications:** Opioids, stimulants, depressants with addiction risks.
- **Recreational Drugs:** Marijuana, cocaine, ecstasy, LSD for various effects.
- **Over-the-Counter Drugs:** Misuse risks for highs or meth production.
- **Natural Substances:** Hallucinogens and pain relievers.

### Consequences & Effects

#### Emotional & Psychological Impact

Drugs, often for escapism, significantly affect long-term emotional and psychological health including:

- Brain-Emotion Dynamics: Highs, lows, and emotional dependence.
- Emotional Repercussions: Depression, anxiety, mood swings, paranoia.
- Psychological Disorders: Exacerbation of mental health issues, drug-induced conditions.
- Cognitive Effects: Impaired judgment and memory.



#### Health Risk

All substances, from caffeine to drugs, have health impacts. These include:

- Respiratory: Tobacco and marijuana damages lungs.
- Cardiovascular: Stimulants, opioids impact heart.
- Liver/Kidney: Alcohol, medicine harm organs.
- Neurological: Drugs affect brain.
- Digestive: Drugs lead to nausea.
- Immune: IV use increases infection.
- Mental Health: Drugs cause paranoia.



#### Societal Impact & Relationships

Drug misuse impacts emotions, psychology, society, and relationships. Explore these effects:

- Societal Effects: Economic burden, public health concerns, and community crime.
- Relationship Strain: Trust issues, social withdrawal, and conflicts in personal relationships.
- Social Stigma: Stereotyping and self-stigma among drug users, affecting social integration.



## Risk of Relapse

**Relapse**, a common part of addiction recovery, is not a sign of weakness or failure but a critical stage in the journey towards recovery.

**85%**

*of individuals relapse within a year of rehab,*

*Often due to insufficient support.*

### 1 Relapse Stages

- ✓ Emotional: Anxiety and mood swings.
- ✓ Mental: Tug-of-war mindset, glamorizing past use.
- ✓ Physical: Actual substance use, from a single instance to a binge.

### 2 Recovering from Relapse

- ✓ Accept relapse as part of the journey.
- ✓ Talk to someone trusted.
- ✓ Identify causes and change coping strategies.
- ✓ Maintain dedication to sobriety.

## Steps to Recovery

Recovery from drug-induced brain changes is achievable with these steps:

- **Acknowledge:** Recognize the addiction and need for change.
- **Seek Help:** Consult professionals and join support groups.
- **Detox:** Choose medical or natural detox methods.
- **Goal setting:** Create short and long-term recovery goals.
- **Healthy Lifestyle:** Adopt exercise, diet, and hobbies.
- **Avoid Triggers:** Identify and avoid personal relapse triggers.
- **Ongoing Support:** Continue receiving support and counseling to sustain recovery.



## Utilize Support Group

Support groups provide a confidential, safe space to share and learn from others in recovery. Types include:



**12-Step Programs:** Like AA or NA, with a spiritual



**Online Groups:** Access support from home.



**Non-12 Step Programs:** Such as SMART recovery, using cognitive behavioral techniques.



**Specialized Groups:** Catering to specific demographics like women, men, teens, or professionals.

## Government Drug Policies

Explore the differences between decriminalization, which reduces penalties for drug use, and legalization, allowing for regulated production and sale.

1

**Decriminalization:** Reduces penalties but doesn't legalize or guarantee quality.

2

**Legalization:** Legalizes production and sale, ensures quality, and enables research.

3

**Policy-Driven Rehab:** Recovery guided by legal policies.

4

**Global Efforts:** UN, WHO, international treaties, and NGOs shape policies and human rights in addiction treatment.

## Drug Addiction Treatment

Choosing drug addiction treatment is a key step towards recovery. Various treatments can be combined to suit individual needs:

- ✓ Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT): Combines medication and therapy, requires commitment.
- ✓ Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT): Talks through triggers, can be intense.
- ✓ Inpatient Rehabilitation: Structured environment, costly.
- ✓ Outpatient Programs: Flexible, less intensive.
- ✓ Support Groups: Peer support, not medical advice.
- ✓ Holistic Therapies: Supplemental, non-addictive methods.



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