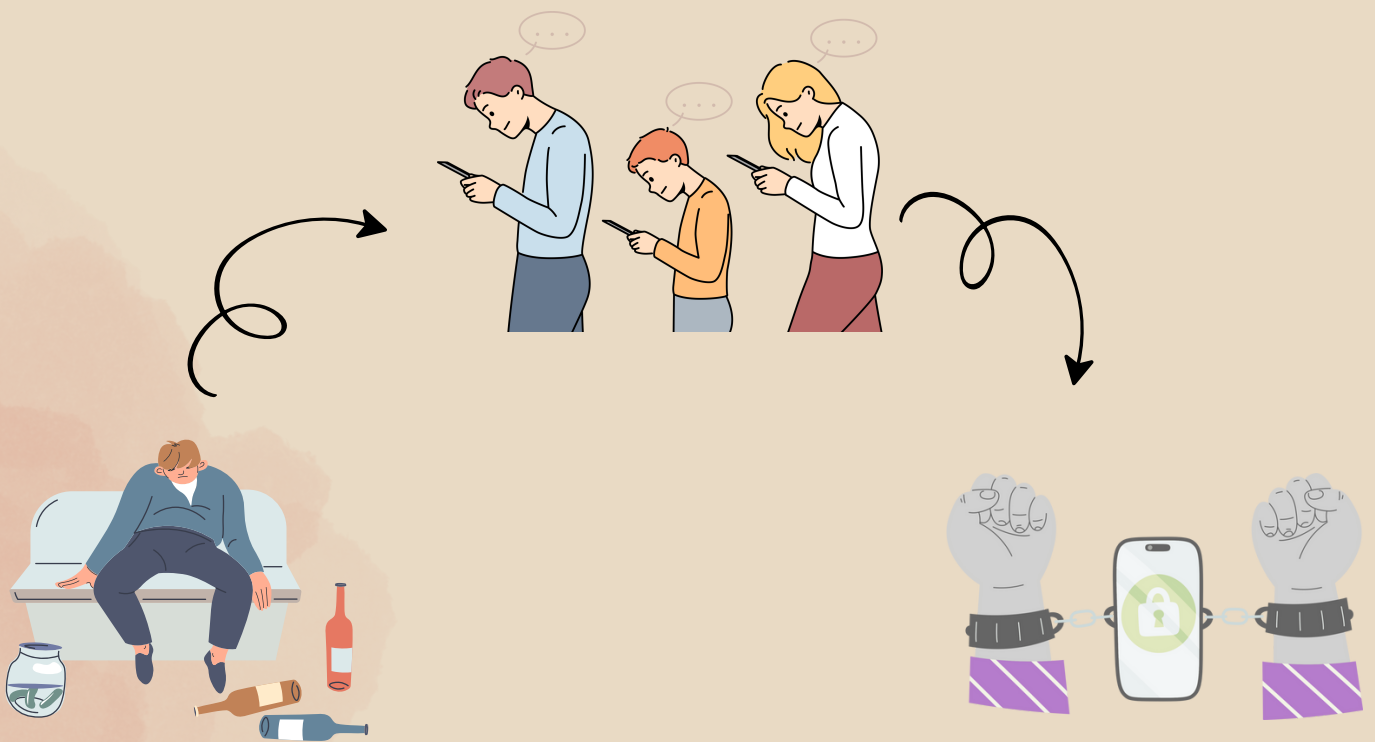


OVERCOMING ADDICTION

A SELF-HELP GUIDE



Self reflecting questions on addiction

- What am I addicted to?
- When did it start, and what triggered it?
- How often do I use or engage in this behavior?
- How is this addiction affecting my mental, physical, and emotional health?
- What situations, thoughts, or feelings lead me to use?
- What relationships have been impacted by my addiction?

THIS WORKBOOK AIMS TO HELP YOU TO:

- Recognise whether you may be experiencing problems due to addiction.
- Understand what addiction is, what causes due to addiction and what keeps it going.
- Find ways to understand, manage or overcome your issues with addiction.

2. Do I have symptoms of Addiction?

Here's a structured breakdown of addiction symptoms categorized into feelings, physical signs, thought patterns, and behaviors. This format helps understand how addiction affects the entire mind-body system:

Please tick the boxes which regularly apply to you.



Feelings

- ° Guilt or shame after using ☐
- Feeling anxious, restless, or irritability ☐
- Depression or hopelessness ☐
- Emotional numbness or detachment ☐
- Euphoria during or immediately after use ☐



Physical symptoms

- Increased tolerance (needing more for same effect) ☐
- Withdrawal symptoms (sweating, shaking, nausea, insomnia) ☐
- Fatigue or low energy ☐
- Changes in appetite or sleep patterns ☐
- Unexplained physical issues (headaches, stomach problems, etc.) ☐



Thinking patterns

- “I can stop anytime” – denial of the problem ☐
- Obsessive thinking about the substance/behavior ☐
- Rationalizing or justifying use (“I deserve this” or “I’m stressed”) ☐
- Underestimating the consequences ☐



Behavioural patterns

- Lying, hiding, or being secretive about use ☐
 - Neglecting responsibilities (work, school, home) ☐
 - Avoiding friends or activities unless the addiction is involved ☐
 - Repeated failed attempts to quit ☐
-

If you have ticked a number of these boxes you may be experiencing symptoms of any form of addiction.

However don't be alarmed, this is very common and there are things you can do to improve your situation. You will find some useful strategies in this workbook.

3. What is Addiction?

Addiction is a chronic condition where a person becomes physically or psychologically dependent on a substance (like alcohol, drugs, nicotine) or behavior (like gambling, gaming, or social media), even when it causes harm.

Key Features of Addiction:

1. Loss of Control – You keep using or doing something even when you try to stop.
2. Craving – A strong urge or compulsion to use the substance or repeat the behavior.
3. Tolerance – Needing more of the substance or behavior over time to feel the same effect.
4. Withdrawal – Feeling anxious, irritable, or physically sick when you stop.
5. Neglecting Responsibilities – Prioritizing the addiction over work, relationships, or health.
6. Continued Use Despite Harm – Using it even when you know it's hurting you or others.

3. What is Addiction?

Types of Addiction:

Substance Addiction – e.g., alcohol, nicotine, drugs, caffeine.

Behavioral Addiction – e.g., gambling, internet, shopping, consuming sexual content, food.

Addiction usually begins as voluntary use, which over time turns into a habit and then dependence. This progression happens due to:

Dopamine release: The brain releases dopamine (a feel-good chemical) when you use a substance or engage in a behavior.

Brain rewiring: With repeated use, the brain starts craving that dopamine release and loses sensitivity to natural rewards.

Loss of control: Eventually, the person may feel they need it to function or feel "normal."

4. Effects of Addiction?

Here's a comprehensive breakdown of the effects of addiction, organized into physical, psychological, social, emotional, financial, and legal categories for clarity:

1. Physical Effects

- Damage to organs (e.g., liver, lungs, heart, brain)
- Weakened immune system
- Sleep disturbances
- Weight loss or gain
- Increased risk of infections or diseases
- Accidents or injuries (due to impaired judgment)

2. Psychological Effects

- Depression, anxiety, or panic attacks
- Memory loss or difficulty concentrating
- Paranoia or hallucinations (in severe cases)
- Increased stress and emotional instability
- Lower self-esteem and self-worth

3. Social Effects

- Damaged relationships with family and friends
- Social isolation or withdrawal
- Loss of trust from loved ones
- Conflict or abuse in personal relationships
- Poor performance at work or school



4. Effects of Addiction?

4. Emotional Effects

- Guilt, shame, or self-hate
- Feeling emotionally numb or disconnected
- Hopelessness and suicidal thoughts
- Emotional dependence on the substance or behavior

5. Financial Effects

- Spending excessive money on substances or addictive activities
- Borrowing or stealing money to support the addiction
- Job loss or unstable employment
- Accumulating debt or legal fines

6. Legal Effects

- Arrests or criminal charges (e.g., possession, DUI)
- Probation or imprisonment
- Losing driving license or custody rights
- Legal battles or court-ordered rehab

5. Substance Abuses

Substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and drugs, leading to physical, mental, social, or legal problems. It's often the first stage of addiction but can also exist without full dependency.

1. Alcohol

Most widely abused legal substance.

Effects: Slurred speech, lack of coordination, liver damage.

Risks: Addiction (alcoholism), accidents, liver disease.

2. Tobacco/Nicotine

Found in cigarettes, vapes, chewing tobacco.

Effects: Increased alertness, stress relief.

Risks: Cancer, heart disease, addiction.

3. Cannabis (Marijuana)

Often perceived as harmless but can be addictive.

Effects: Relaxation, altered perception.

Risks: Memory issues, dependency, impaired judgment

4. Prescription Drugs (when misused)

Opioids (e.g., oxycodone, morphine) – for pain relief.

Benzodiazepines (e.g., Xanax) – for anxiety/sleep.

Stimulants (e.g., Adderall, Ritalin) – for ADHD.

Risks: Overdose, dependency, withdrawal symptoms.



5. Substance Abuses

5. Cocaine

Powerful stimulant.

Effects: High energy, euphoria.

Risks: Heart attack, paranoia, severe crash after use.

6. Heroin

Illegal opioid derived from morphine.

Effects: Intense euphoria, pain relief.

Risks: High overdose potential, collapsed veins, infections.

7. Inhalants

Solvents, aerosols, gases inhaled for a quick high.

Effects: Short-lived euphoria.

Risks: Brain damage, organ failure, sudden death.

8. Hallucinogens (LSD, MDMA, Psilocybin)

Alter perception and mood.

Effects: Visual/auditory hallucinations.

Risks: Psychosis, bad trips, long-term mental health effects.

14-Day Addiction Recovery Activity Plan

Day 1 Acceptance & Commitment

- Activity: Write a letter to yourself admitting the addiction and committing to recovery.
 - Journal Prompt: “Why do I want to change?”
 - Support: Tell one trusted person about your decision (friend, family, mentor, or therapist).
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Day 2 Identify Triggers

- Activity: List your top 5 emotional, environmental, or social triggers.
 - Journal Prompt: “What usually leads me to use or relapse?”
 - Tip: Start a trigger log on your phone or journal.
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Day 3 Create a Recovery Routine

- Activity: Make a basic daily schedule (wake-up, meals, exercise, journaling, bedtime).
- Include: 7–8 hours of sleep, at least one self-care activity.
- Goal: Reduce idle time.

14-Day Addiction Recovery Activity Plan

Day 4 Detox Your Space

- Activity: Remove substances, paraphernalia, or triggering items from your environment.
 - Tip: Ask someone to help if needed.
 - Journal Prompt: “How do I feel now that these items are gone?”
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Day 5 Mindfulness & Grounding

- Activity: Try a 10-minute guided meditation or deep breathing.
 - App Suggestion: Insight Timer, Calm, or YouTube videos.
 - Journal Prompt: “What thoughts came up while I was still and quiet?”
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Day 6 Body Movement

- Activity: Go for a 30-minute walk, stretch, or light workout.
- Goal: Reconnect with your body and release stress naturally.

14-Day Addiction Recovery Activity Plan

Day 7 Reflection & Progress Check

- Activity: Write about your progress, challenges, and wins from the past week.
 - Journal Prompt: “What am I proud of this week?”
 - Optional: Reward yourself with a small healthy treat or activity (movie, bath, book).
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Day 8 Learn About Your Addiction

- Activity: Watch a short documentary or read an article about addiction and recovery.
 - Suggestion: TED Talks, “Pleasure Trap” (YouTube), or The Science of Addiction.
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Day 9 Replace the Habit

- Activity: List 3 healthy alternatives when cravings hit (e.g., call a friend, journal, go for a walk).
- Tip: Practice one today when a craving shows up.
- Journal Prompt: “What worked best to handle my urge?”

14-Day Addiction Recovery Activity Plan

Day 10 Connect With Support

- Activity: Attend a support group (AA, NA, online SMART Recovery) or talk to someone who supports you.
 - Tip: Online groups available on Zoom or Facebook.
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Day 11 Emotional Release

- Activity: Write about the emotions that come up when you think about your addiction.
 - Optional: Create a drawing or voice note expressing how you feel.
 - Journal Prompt: “What feelings am I avoiding when I use?”
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Day 12 Visualize a Better Future

- Activity: Write or draw what a healthy, addiction-free version of you looks like.
- Journal Prompt: “How will my life improve without this addiction?”

14-Day Addiction Recovery Activity Plan

Day 13 Rebuild Trust

- Activity: Reach out to someone you've hurt or distanced due to addiction. Just listen, don't expect instant forgiveness.
 - Journal Prompt: "What relationships do I want to heal?"
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Day 14 Set Long-Term Goals

- Activity: Create a 30-day plan for what comes next: support systems, activities, therapy, and relapse prevention strategies.
 - Journal Prompt: "What will keep me strong in my recovery?"
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Conclusion

Overcoming addiction is not a one-time event but a continuous journey of self-discovery, healing, and resilience. These 14 days are just the beginning—a foundation to rebuild your life with strength, clarity, and purpose. Each step forward, no matter how small, is a victory over the past. Be patient with yourself, celebrate progress, and remember: you are not alone, and recovery is always possible.

"Recovery is not a race. You don't have to feel guilty if it takes you longer than you thought it would." ✨

