



What is an Addiction?

Addiction is also called Substance Use Disorder (SUD).

5 Door Recovery treats individuals addicted to alcohol and/or drugs.

Many also suffer from cooccurring mental health disorders and trauma.

Why an addict can't 'just stop'

When someone is addicted, they don't have the psychological or physical ability to stop using. The chemistry of their brain is altered, it changes physically, to the point they require the substance to feel 'normal'. Similarly, their body, particularly their nervous system, depends on the substance to function, even though there may be organ damage.

Addiction is a lifelong (chronic) disease. Even after treatment and long-term recovery, the individual is susceptible to relapsing. That's why we never say someone has been cured from their addiction.

Some causes of addiction

Most people start using alcohol or drugs voluntarily, many times as a way to cope with trauma or mental health issues like depression, anxiety, schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. More recently, use of prescription opioid medications, often prescribed following medical or dental procedures, has led to opioid addiction.

The difference between Addiction and Misuse.

An individual may misuse but not have an addiction. When someone misuses alcohol or a drug, they are using in an excessive, incorrect or non-therapeutic manner. Addiction is the inability to stop using or even moderating use.

For example, someone drinks alcohol heavily one night out and feels the effects of the using too much. But he doesn't have a psychological or physical need to repeat his consumption regularly. He has misused but is not addicted.

The person with an addiction will have the need to repeat a similar amount of consumption, often with harmful side effects and diminished physical and mental health.

Common Symptoms of Addiction

- Uncontrollable desire and seeking of alcohol and/or drugs
- Neglecting or losing interest in activities that used to be engaging, but don't include the addictive substance
- Stressed relationships, which often involve lashing out at those who identify their user's dependency
- Unable to stop using even though it's causing problems with their health, relationships, employment or in other areas of their lives
- Increased risk-taking behavior, both to access the substance (e.g. stealing) and while using it

- Lying, acting suspicious or paranoid – when asked about their usage, physical appearance, changes in behavior
- Promises are repeatedly broken
- Changes in appearance (eyes, facial puffiness, weight loss, dental, etc.) and a noticeable decrease in personal hygiene

Withdrawal Symptoms

When a person with an addiction stops using, they go into withdrawal and may experience symptoms such as:

- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Tremors and shaking
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite

Withdrawal from Alcohol and Benzodiazepines

If the person is addicted to alcohol or benzodiazepines, stopping usage suddenly without medical supervision, can be fatal.

Takeaway

- 5 Door Recovery treats individuals addicted to alcohol or drugs. They have a lifelong, chronic, disease they need to learn how to manage.
- Addiction changes the chemistry of the brain and body in such a way that they require the substance to feel 'normal'.
- An individual living with an addiction is unable to stop using the substance even though it harms their body, mind, relationships, and other areas of their lives.
- Addiction is different from Misuse. Addiction involves regular misuse of a substance, resulting in dependency.
- Sudden stopping of the substance often leads to withdrawal symptoms, including nausea, vomiting and shaking.
- Do not attempt to suddenly stop using alcohol or benzodiazepines without medical supervision.