



Addiction and Recovery

Criteria of addiction

1. **Consequences** - The person experiences negative consequences from his/her use but continues to use anyway.
2. **Progression** - The consequences of use get more severe over the course of time but do not deter the person from his/her use.
3. **Loss of Control** - The person drinks or uses more than he/she intended. The person is unable to quit using despite numerous unsuccessful attempts to do so or the person is only able to interrupt use for a short time.

Family effects of addiction

Addiction results in impaired relationships among family members. A family member's initial reaction is to minimize or deny that a problem exists. The next response involves making excuses for why the addiction continues. Usually, the addicted person is unaware of the extent of the painful consequences his/her use has on the family. This makes it even more difficult for the addicted person to acknowledge the need to make changes.

Stopping an addiction

Addiction warps a person's identity. His/her existence increasingly revolves around the substance of choice. Ultimately, the addiction and the person become indistinguishable from each other. Recovery from addiction involves developing a new identity apart from the substance of choice.

Common misconceptions about addiction and recovery:

- Understanding the cause of an addiction helps one recover from it.
- The addicted person may be able to be "fixed" in a quick and painless way.

There are different approaches to treating addiction, but regardless of the approach, the following aspects are crucial to recovery:

1. **Accountability** - The addicted person becomes accountable for his/her actions, agreeing not to blame them on other people or things. The person is willing to accept the full consequences of those actions.

2. **Support** - The addicted person receives emotional support from others who are aware of the full extent of the addicted person's difficulties.
3. **Acknowledgement** - The addicted person acknowledges and accepts the full extent of his/her addiction and associated problems.
4. **Willingness** - The addicted person becomes willing to make resolving his/her addiction the greatest priority in his/her life.

Often people who successfully recover from addiction do so as a result of their involvement with a support group such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Narcotics Anonymous (NA). They also may seek help through a formal treatment program on an inpatient or outpatient basis. Their willingness to make lifestyle and behavior changes is the single greatest determiner of success.

If you would like more information on addiction and/or recovery or to schedule an appointment, please contact Aspen at [815.399.9700](tel:815.399.9700), info@aspenbh.com or go to www.aspenbh.com.