

## \*\*"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.\*\*