



10 Steps
to
Overcome
Drug
Addiction

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS OF ADDICTION

CHAPTER 2: PHYSICAL VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL DEPENDENCY

CHAPTER 3: WHY EARLY TREATMENT IS IMPORTANT

CHAPTER 4: UNDERSTANDING HOW DRUG ADDICTION WORKS

CHAPTER 5: OVERVIEW: REALITY THERAPY-LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

CHAPTER 6: USEFUL RESOURCES IN CANADA



CHAPTER 1: RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS OF ADDICTION

NO ONE GETS INTO ALCOHOL OR DRUGS WITH THE IDEA OF BECOMING DEPENDENT OR ADDICTED. IT'S NOT SOMETHING PEOPLE THINK WILL EVER HAPPEN TO THEM. YOUNG ADULTS, ESPECIALLY, ARE AT RISK WHEN USING DRUGS OR ALCOHOL RECREATIONALLY BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT AS AWARE OF THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DEPENDENCY.

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU ARE BECOMING DEPENDENT?

SIGNS OF CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY CAN OCCUR THROUGH BEHAVIOURAL, EMOTIONAL AND COGNITIVE CHANGES. FOR EXAMPLE, BEHAVIORALLY AN INDIVIDUAL MAY EXPERIENCE AN INCREASE OF IRRITABILITY, AGGRESSION AND/OR ISOLATION. EMOTIONALLY, INDIVIDUALS MAY EXPERIENCE DYS-REGULATION AND INCREASED ANGER, SADNESS OR EVEN HOPELESSNESS. IN ADDITION, COGNITIVE CHANGES ARE QUITE SIGNIFICANT AND CAN INCLUDE NEGATIVE SELF-TALK, SUICIDAL IDEATIONS, PARANOIA AND PSYCHOSIS.

THAT'S THE RISK OF SUBSTANCE USE, MOST INDIVIDUALS ARE NOT AWARE OF THE IMPACT OF THEIR SUBSTANCE USE UNTIL THE CONSEQUENCES ARE SIGNIFICANT SUCH AS A LOSS OF JOB OR SPOUSE, AN ACCIDENT THEY CAUSED, OR OTHER CRISIS. IT IS OFTEN OUR LOVED ONES AND FAMILIES WHO NOTICE THE CHANGES FIRST BY SEEING SMALL CHANGES IN ATTITUDE OR MOOD, RELATIONSHIP ISSUES OR A STRUGGLE IN DAILY ACTIVITIES.

ADDITIONALLY, PSYCHIATRISTS AND TREATMENT EXPERTS FOR CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY REPORT THAT YOU MAY NOTICE THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS WHEN YOU BECOME DEPENDENT ON ALCOHOL OR DRUGS:

- **BLACKOUTS, DIZZINESS, TREMORS, SWEATING, ETC.- CONSISTENT SIGNS OF WITHDRAWAL**
- **ABDOMINAL DISCOMFORT**
- **FEAR OR PARANOIA NOT PRESENT BEFORE-CONSISTENT WITH SIGN OF PSYCHOSIS**
- **ANXIETY**
- **NAUSEA AND/OR DECREASED APPETITE**

NOTICE THAT SOME OF THESE SYMPTOMS ARE RATHER SEVERE, ESPECIALLY THOSE INVOLVING THE NEUROLOGICAL SYSTEM.

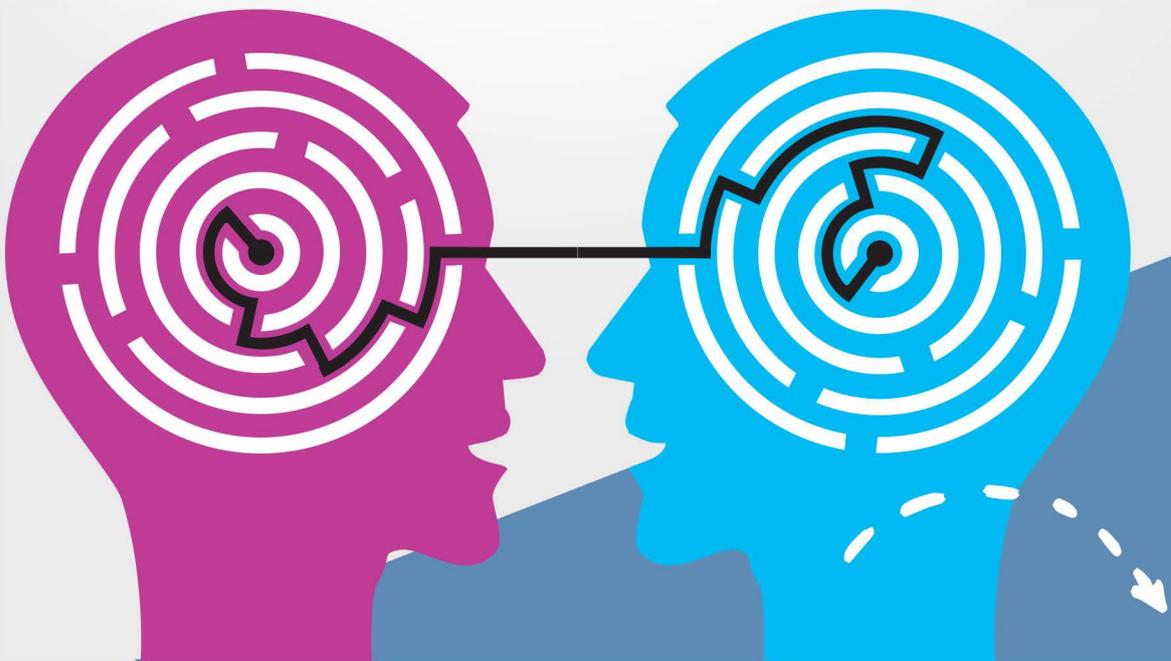


CHAPTER 2: PHYSICAL VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL DEPENDENCY

ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCY DON'T HAPPEN OVERNIGHT. IT TAKES A LONG TIME TO DEVELOP SYMPTOMS OF THE DISORDER. THE FIRST THING THAT HAPPENS IS THAT YOU START TO DEVELOP A PSYCHOLOGICAL DEPENDENCY ON THE DRUG. YOU MAY START TO THINK YOU NEED IT MORE, OR FIND YOURSELF DRINKING ALONE OR SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE DAY. IF IT IS A DRUG DEPENDENCY PROBLEM, YOU MAY FIND YOU THINK YOU NEED MORE OF THE PRESCRIBED MEDICATION YOU ARE TAKING OR TRY TO GET MORE OF THE DRUG BECAUSE THE PREVIOUS DOSAGE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ENOUGH, THIS WOULD BE CALLED "DRUG-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR".

IF YOU THINK YOU MAY HAVE A DRINKING OR DRUG PROBLEM, BELOW ARE SOME OF THE MOST COMMON PSYCHOLOGICAL DEPENDENCY SYMPTOMS.

- **MENTAL CRAVINGS FOR A SUBSTANCE**
- **ANXIETY WHEN YOU TRY TO ABSTAIN (NOT USE/DRINK)**
- **RESTLESSNESS AND IRRITABILITY**
- **DENIAL OF DEPENDENCY ISSUES I.E IMPACT OF BEHAVIOURAL CONSEQUENCES ON SELF OR OTHERS**
- **OBSESSION WITH THE SUBSTANCE-ALL-CONSUMING THOUGHTS SURROUNDING USING SUBSTANCES**
- **MOOD SWINGS AND DEPRESSION**
- **COGNITIVE DIFFICULTIES SUCH AS JUDGMENT OR THINKING SKILLS**



CHAPTER 3: WHY EARLY TREATMENT IS IMPORTANT

ONCE YOU HAVE REACHED THE LEVEL OF ADDICTION, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU SEEK HELP IMMEDIATELY. THERE ARE SOME SERIOUS WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS THAT MAY EVEN BE LIFE THREATENING IF YOU WAIT TOO LONG TO SEEK TREATMENT SUCH AS:

- HEART ATTACK OR STROKE
- SEIZURES AND COLLAPSE
- COMA AND DEATH
- RESPIRATORY DEPRESSION CAUSED BY AN OVERDOSE

YOU DON'T WANT TO RISK YOUR HEALTH AND OVERALL WELL-BEING BY ALLOWING YOUR SUBSTANCE USE TO GET TO THIS STAGE. IF YOU OR A LOVED ONE ARE EXPERIENCING ONE OR SEVERAL OF THESE SYMPTOMS PLEASE SEEK HELP IMMEDIATELY.



CHAPTER 4: UNDERSTANDING HOW DRUG ADDICTION WORKS

ONCE YOU EXPERIENCE DEPENDENCY, THE PROGRESSIVE IMPACT ON YOUR HEALTH IS FAST AND SEVERE. THEREFORE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO SEEK HELP AND TREATMENT. THIS CAN BE CHALLENGING AS IT MAY BE MORE DIFFICULT TO TREAT. THE BODY MAY BECOME IMMUNE TO A DOSAGE AND REQUIRE AN INCREASED AMOUNT TO SATISFY CRAVINGS. THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS MAY INDICATE **A PHYSICAL DEPENDENCY PROBLEM.**

- THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACTUAL PHYSICAL NEED TO TAKE THE DRUG
- PHYSICAL WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS SUCH AS SHAKING OR STOMACH DISORDERS
- DIZZINESS, HEADACHES
- PALPITATIONS, RACING HEART, ETC.
- STOMACH DISORDERS
- SWEATING, TINGLING

YOU WILL NOTICE THAT THERE IS A BIT OF A CROSSOVER IN SOME OF THE PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS. THAT IS BECAUSE IT IS OFTEN DIFFICULT TO SEPARATE SOME OF THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL ISSUES THAT ARE EXPERIENCED BY PEOPLE WHO HAVE BECOME DEPENDENT ON DRUGS OR ALCOHOL. SHAKING, ANXIETY AND STOMACH DISORDERS OFTEN OCCUR TOGETHER BUT, EVEN THOUGH MANY PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERTS TODAY WANT TO INCLUDE THE SYMPTOMS IN ONE GROUP RATHER THAN PHYSICAL VS. MENTAL, IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE WHICH STAGE SOMEONE IS IN ORDER TO PLAN THEIR TREATMENT. IT IS STRONGLY SUGGESTED TO FIND A TREATMENT CENTRE WHICH TAKES A "WHOLE PERSON" APPROACH WHEN TREATING ADDICTION, IN OTHER WORDS, TREATING PHYSICAL AND MENTAL SYMPTOMS.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS? IF SOMEONE IS EMOTIONALLY DEPENDENT ON A SUBSTANCE, MEANING THEY USE SUBSTANCES PRIMARILY TO SUPPRESS ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, TRAUMA OR GRIEF, THEY ARE ENCOURAGED TO SPEAK WITH A COUNSELLOR OR PSYCHOTHERAPIST TO HELP GUIDE THEM THROUGH PROCESSING THESE EMOTIONS IN A SAFE SPACE. SOME INDIVIDUALS MAY NEED A MORE INTENSIVE PROGRAM THEREFORE IT IS STRONGLY SUGGESTED THAT IF THESE NEGATIVE EMOTIONS ARE CHRONIC OR PERVASIVE IN NATURE, THE INDIVIDUAL SHOULD SEEK TREATMENT. IF SOMEONE IS PHYSICALLY DEPENDENT, MEANING THEY EXPERIENCE ONE OR MORE OF THE WITHDRAWAL OR DEPENDENCY SYMPTOMS MENTIONED ABOVE, IT IS STRONGLY SUGGESTED TO SEEK TREATMENT IN A REHAB FACILITY SO THAT THEY CAN DETOX SAFELY.



STEP 3: BE MOTIVATED TO CHANGE FOR THE GOOD OF YOUR HEALTH AND MENTAL WELL-BEING.

TO MOVE ON WITH YOUR LIFE AND AVOID THE PITFALLS OF THE PAST, YOU MUST BE MOTIVATED TO BE A BETTER VERSION OF YOURSELF THAN YOU WERE BEFORE. REMEMBER THE BAD THINGS THAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU LET DEPENDENCY TAKE OVER YOUR LIFE. VOW TO NEVER LET THAT HAPPEN AGAIN.

STEP 4: TRY TO WEAN OFF GRADUALLY IF POSSIBLE.

IF YOU ARE PHYSICALLY DEPENDENT, YOU WILL NEED TO SEEK THE HELP OF A CLINIC OR DETOX CENTRE. IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW WHETHER YOU ARE IN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL OR PHYSICAL DEPENDENCY PHASE. IF YOU FEEL THAT YOU CANNOT DO IT ALONE, DO NOT HESITATE TO REACH OUT TO A THERAPIST OR DRUG ADDICTION CENTRE TO ASK THEIR ADVICE. YOU ARE BETTER OFF TO FIND HELP THAN TO CONTINUE TO STRUGGLE WITH YOUR ADDICTION UNTIL IT GETS WORSE.

STEP 5: DETOXIFICATION (FOR PHYSICAL DEPENDENCY)

IF YOU ARE TRULY ADDICTED TO OR DEPENDENT ON A SUBSTANCE SUCH AS ALCOHOL, OPIOIDS, PRESCRIPTIONS DRUGS, OR OTHER SUBSTANCES, YOU NEED TO SEEK HELP IMMEDIATELY. IF YOU TRY TO QUIT "COLD TURKEY" IN THIS STAGE, IT COULD BE DANGEROUS DUE TO THE SHOCK YOUR BODY MAY EXPERIENCE AFTER YOU WITHDRAW FROM IT TOO QUICKLY. CARE MUST BE TAKEN TO WITHDRAW GRADUALLY WHEN YOU ARE DEPENDENT SO THAT YOUR BODY SYSTEMS HAVE A CHANCE TO GET USED TO THE ABSENCE OF THE CHEMICAL.

THIS IS WHAT PROFESSIONAL REHABILITATION CLINICS AND DETOX CENTERS ARE FOR. THERE, YOU CAN TRUST THE DOCTORS AND DRUG REHAB EXPERTS TO HELP YOU WEAN OFF OF THE DRUG GRADUALLY SO THAT YOU WILL NOT EXPERIENCE DANGEROUS WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS.

STEP 7: THROW AWAY ALL REMNANTS OF THE DRUG OR SUBSTANCE

IN CASE YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE THIS, YOU SHOULD GO THROUGH YOUR HOME OR APARTMENT AND THROW AWAY ANY REMNANTS OF THE SUBSTANCE YOU MAY HAVE USED. EVEN IF IT IS JUST A FEW PILLS FROM AN OLD PRESCRIPTION THAT YOU WERE DEPENDENT UPON, YOU NEED TO REMOVE ALL TRACES OF IT. THIS WAY, YOU WILL AVOID ALL TEMPTATIONS TO COMPROMISE WITH YOURSELF IN A WEAK TIME WHEN YOU FEEL YOU NEED IT AGAIN.

SO POUR OUT EVERY SINGLE BOTTLE OF ALCOHOL, EVERY BOTTLE OF PILLS OR DRUGS THAT YOU DON'T NEED FOR MEDICAL REASONS, AND DON'T JUSTIFY KEEPING THEM "JUST IN CASE" YOU NEED THEM IN THE FUTURE.

LIFE HAS NORMAL STRESSES AND CHALLENGES BECAUSE OF WORK, RELATIONSHIPS, AND OTHER FACTORS. EVEN A STRESSFUL DAY OF DRIVING OR TRAFFIC CAN MAKE PEOPLE LOSE THEIR COMPOSURE AND TRY TO RECONNECT WITH THEIR "OLD FRIEND," THE DRUG. BUT REMEMBER THE PROBLEMS THIS "FRIEND" GOT YOU INTO BEFORE AND JUST WALK AWAY.

STEP 8: CONTINUE YOUR OUTPATIENT THERAPY.

ONE IMPORTANT STEP YOU SHOULD TAKE ONCE YOU ARE RELEASED FROM YOUR ALCOHOL OR DRUG DEPENDENCY TREATMENT PROGRAM IS THAT YOU SHOULD CONTINUE ANY THERAPY THAT WAS PRESCRIBED BY YOUR DOCTORS OR SPECIALISTS OUTSIDE THE REHAB TREATMENT CENTRE.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU CONTINUE TO SEEK TREATMENT OUTSIDE OF THE FACILITY BECAUSE YOU ARE REMOVED FROM THE SAFETY AND CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT OF THE CLINIC ONCE YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE PROGRAM. THE WORLD OFFERS MANY SITUATIONS THAT CAN LEAD YOU RIGHT BACK WHERE YOU CAME FROM WHEN YOU FEEL STRESSED OR OVERWHELMED. WHAT YOUR TREATMENT LOOKS LIKE MAY VARY FROM WHAT ANOTHER PERSON'S TREATMENT LOOKS LIKE HENCE THE IMPORTANCE OF CLIENT-CENTERED CARE. EACH TREATMENT SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE DIFFERENCES IN A PERSON'S PERSONALITY, THEIR AGE, MEDICAL HISTORY, AND GENETICS, AS WELL AS OTHER INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS AND FACTORS THAT AFFECT A PERSON'S LIFE.

FIND A TREATMENT PLAN THAT INCLUDES A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO TREATMENT. AS MENTIONED ABOVE, THESE CLINICS FOCUS ON A COMPLETE APPROACH TO TREATMENT THAT TREATS THE WHOLE PERSON IN A REALISTIC WAY THAT GOES BEYOND THE REHABILITATION THEY RECEIVE AT THE CLINIC.

STEP 9: MEDICATION AND HOLISTIC COUNSELLING

IN SOME CASES, MEDICATIONS MAY BE PRESCRIBED. THESE SHOULD BE TAKEN CAREFULLY AND ONLY ACCORDING TO YOUR DOCTOR'S DIRECTIONS. BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY, COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY, AND DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY MAY BE EFFECTIVE FOR SOME TO HELP THEM COPE WITH THE CONTINUING CHALLENGES OF YOUR ADDICTION.

STEP 10: LONG-TERM FOLLOW UP

THE PURPOSE OF LONG-TERM FOLLOW UP IS TO CONTINUE TO IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH AND MENTAL STATE AND TO HELP YOU COPE WITH CHALLENGES THAT YOU MAY FACE THROUGHOUT YOUR RECOVERY WHICH IS A LIFE-LONG PROCESS. HAVING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE FUTURE, KEEPING A DAILY SCHEDULE AND JOURNAL ON YOUR PROGRESS, AND OTHER TECHNIQUES HAVE PROVEN TO BE EFFECTIVE IN INCREASING THE CHANCES OF YOUR SUCCESS.

CHAPTER 5: OVERVIEW

ONCE YOU HAVE WITHDRAWN FROM THE DRUG YOU ARE DEPENDENT ON, IT IS TIME TO LOOK AT SOME OF THE HABITS THAT GOT YOU INTO SUBSTANCE USE IN THE FIRST PLACE. IT IS STRONGLY SUGGESTED TO LOOK AT YOUR "PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS" I.E. YOU MAY HAVE TO AVOID ANY PLACES THAT YOU WENT TO TO GET ALCOHOL OR DRUGS, THOSE WOULD BE YOUR **PLACES**; YOU MAY HAVE TO CREATE NEW FRIENDSHIPS IN HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES WHICH WOULD BE **PEOPLE**; AND YOU MAY HAVE TO AVOID SOME ROUTINES OR ACTIVITIES WHICH REFER TO **THINGS**.

REMEMBER ANOTHER CREDO OF ALCOHOLICS' ANONYMOUS: "ONCE AN ALCOHOLIC, ALWAYS AN ALCOHOLIC." THIS APPLIES TO DRUG ADDICTION ALSO. EVEN WHEN YOU ARE "RECOVERED," YOUR BODY AND YOUR MIND ARE STILL VULNERABLE TO YOUR PRIOR ADDICTION. THERE ARE MEDICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL REASONS FOR THIS. SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT YOU MUST AVOID ANY OF THE SUBSTANCES THAT CAUSED YOU PROBLEMS IN THE PAST AT ALL COSTS. YOU SHOULD NEVER BUY THE MYTH THAT YOU CAN DRINK "JUST A LITTLE" ALCOHOL OR TAKE "JUST A LITTLE" OF YOUR ADDICTION DRUG. YOU MUST AVOID ANY TYPES OF DANGEROUS OR ADDICTIVE SUBSTANCES THAT CAUSED YOUR DEPENDENCY PROBLEM.

JUST WALK AWAY. THIS MUST BE YOUR NEW MOTTO.

THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE



ONE OF THE PRIMARY REASONS THAT RECOVERY ADDICTS OR ALCOHOLICS OFTEN GET BACK "ON THE WAGON" IS BECAUSE THEY GO BACK TO THEIR OLD LIVES THAT WAY THEY WERE BEFORE THE ADDICTION AND OFTEN FALL INTO THE SAME HABITS THAT THEY HAD BEFORE. THIS OPENS UP THE DOOR TO FURTHER PROBLEMS.

THE CHALLENGE THAT MANY RECOVERING ADDICTS OFTEN REPORT IS THAT THEY DON'T WANT TO LOSE FRIENDS THAT THEY HAD PRIOR TO THE ADDICTION PROBLEM. IF YOU CAN KEEP YOUR FRIENDS WITHOUT BEING EXPOSED TO DRUGS OR ALCOHOL, THAT'S FINE. BUT DESPITE THEIR GOOD INTENTIONS, MANY FRIENDS OF ADDICTS WANT RECOVERING ADDICTS TO ACCOMPANY THEM TO OUTINGS THAT INVOLVE GOING BACK TO THE SAME PLACES WHERE THESE SUBSTANCES ARE FOUND AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE SUCH AS BARS.

THE PEOPLE WHO ARE PART OF YOUR **SUPPORT SYSTEM** WILL WANT TO HELP YOU GET OVER YOUR ADDICTION BY NOT ASKING YOU TO DO THINGS THAT WILL PUT TEMPTATION IN YOUR WAY. BUT SOME STILL DO NOT UNDERSTAND. THIS IS WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO FIND A TREATMENT CENTRE WHICH OFFERS ADDITIONAL COMMUNITIES FOR YOU TO VISIT OR MEETINGS TO ATTEND. THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY FOR YOUR RECOVERY IS YOU!

CHAPTER 6: USEFUL RESOURCES IN CANADA

THIS FINAL CHAPTER IS DEVOTED TO OFFERING YOU SOME HELPFUL RESOURCES IN CANADA FOR OVERCOMING AND DEALING WITH DRUG ADDICTION. THIS EBOOK HAS OUTLINED TEN STEPS TO RECOVERY THAT HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVE FOR MANY PEOPLE WHO ARE DEALING WITH ADDICTION. SOME SYSTEMS INVOLVE A 12-STEP PLAN OR A HOLISTIC PROGRAM THAT FOCUSES ON THE INDIVIDUAL TO FIND A CUSTOM APPROACH TO YOUR DRUG ADDICTION PROBLEM. DO SOME RESEARCH OF YOUR OWN USING THE RESOURCES BELOW TO GET STARTED.

AMERICAN DRUG ADDICTION 12-STEP PLAN

[HTTPS://AMERICANADDICTIONCENTERS.ORG/REHAB-GUIDE/12-STEP](https://americanaddictioncenters.org/rehab-guide/12-step)

DEALING WITH WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

[HTTPS://WWW.ADDICTIONSANDRECOVERY.ORG/WITHDRAWAL.HTM](https://www.addictionsandrecovery.org/withdrawal.htm)

ADDICTION TREATMENT HOTLINES IN CANADA

[HTTP://WWW.CCDUS.CA/ENG/PAGES/ADDICTIONS-TREATMENT-HELPLINES-CANADA.ASPX](http://www.ccdus.ca/eng/pages/addictions-treatment-helplines-canada.aspx)

CHANGING YOUR LIFE HABITS AND UNDERSTANDING WHAT GOT YOU INTO YOUR ADDICTION IN THE FIRST PLACE IS A GOOD PLACE TO START WHEN OVERCOMING ADDICTION.

ONE STEP AT A TIME, AS THEY SAY. EVERYONE HAS THE GIFT OF TODAY. AND IT'S A PRETTY GOOD PLACE TO START.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

IF YOU ARE SUFFERING FROM A DRUG OR ALCOHOL ADDICTION PROBLEM, OR IF YOU THINK YOU MAY BE, DON'T WAIT. TIME IS A VALUABLE THING. THE EARLIER YOU RECEIVE TREATMENT, THE BETTER YOUR CHANCES ARE FOR SUCCESS.

VISIT US AT **[ADDICTIONREHABTORONTO.CA](http://addictionrehabtoronto.ca)** TO LEARN ABOUT OUR SPECIFIC TREATMENT PLANS AND THE VARIOUS TYPES OF TREATMENT WE USE TO HELP PEOPLE WORK THROUGH THEIR ADDICTION AND TO GET YOUR LIFE BACK. WE ARE HERE TO HELP ANYTIME.

LEAVE US A NOTE ON OUR **CONTACT PAGE**, AND SOMEONE WILL GET BACK TO YOU AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. TODAY CAN BE THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE. DON'T WAIT TO GET YOUR LIFE BACK.

COUNSELLORS ARE WAITING TO TALK TO YOU AND HELP YOU ON YOUR PATH TO RECOVERY.