

Tip Sheet: Understanding Addiction

Knowing when you or a family member has an addiction to a drug, alcohol or behavior can be difficult. A person experiencing addiction is often in denial that there is a problem, and when confronted, will make excuses or blame others. Family members of someone with an addiction often enable unhealthy behavior by ignoring the problem or by trying to rescue the person when they are in trouble.

To properly deal with an addiction, you must first recognize that there is a problem. Here are some questions to consider:

- Do you feel that you need to use drugs or alcohol, or engage in behaviors (such as gambling, pornography, etc.) regularly or multiple times per day?
- Have you been absent from work repeatedly to engage in the addictive behaviors?
- Have you tried to stop or cut back and been unsuccessful?
- Do you find yourself using or engaging in the behaviors when you are feeling stressed instead of dealing with the problem?
- Has your use of alcohol, the drug or behavior increased?
- Do you find yourself thinking about using or engaging in the behaviors so much that you are unable to concentrate on other things?
- Has your performance at work deteriorated as a result of these behaviors?
- If you are using drugs or alcohol, do find yourself having to use the substance to avoid withdrawal symptoms such as hangover, nausea, and vomiting?
- Have your friends or family expressed concern to you about your drug/alcohol use or behaviors?
- Do find yourself going out of your way to get drugs/alcohol or to engage in the behavior, such as driving long distances?

If you find yourself answering “yes” to most of these questions, then it may be time to consider getting help. A medical or behavioral health professional can assist you in deciding what type of treatment will be most effective.