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FORMAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

(A CHARTERED UNIVERSITY)

Lahore- Pakistan



Campus Counseling Center

Drug Addiction

“It’s not the drugs that make a drug addict, it’s the need to escape reality.”

Addiction is a condition where people develop a bio-psycho-social dependence on alcohol or any form of drugs. People usually start consuming drugs and alcohol for psycho-social reasons. They consume it because it either makes them feel good, gives them a sense of belongingness or because they are pressurized to do so.

Individuals develop addiction owing to physical reasons as well. Their body tends to develop tolerance towards the substance. They need more of a drug to experience the same high. The cells of the body become used to higher levels of the drug in the system and start functioning normally when it is present. An absence of the substance in the body causes physical withdrawals that lead to discomfort and illness.

What are Psychoactive Drugs?

Psychoactive drugs directly affect the central nervous system and are responsible for altering a person’s mood, thoughts and behaviors. They can be classified as:

- **Uppers: (Caffeine, nicotine, cocaine, crack, methamphetamine, ecstasy, speed, etc.)**
These drugs otherwise known as stimulants temporarily increase mental or physical function or both. They temporarily increase alertness and energy but consumption is usually followed by exhaustion and emotional disturbance.
- **Downers: (Alcohol, heroin, benzodiazepines, etc.)**
Also known as depressants, these drugs decrease mental or physical activity. Common misconception is that downers make you feel relaxed or laid back. Regular consumption can severely affect your functionality at work, school and home.
- **Hallucinogens: (LSD, PCP, mescaline, magic mushrooms, etc.)**
These are drugs that can alter perceptions and cause hallucinations, such as seeing or hearing things that aren’t present.
- **Others:** Drugs that may have properties of more than one of the above categories fall under this umbrella. For instance, cannabis has hallucinogenic, stimulant and depressive properties.

Why do People Use Drugs?

- To attain pleasure
- To socialize
- Out of curiosity

- To gain confidence and lessen inhibitions
- To relieve stress and kill boredom
- To celebrate or commiserate
- As self-medication for coping with problems
- As a means of relaxing and escaping mental turmoil

Preparing for Change

Giving up drug consumption require a lot of effort, motivation and support. It is normal to feel conflicted about quitting your drug of choice but certain steps can help you make the commitment to change.

- Keep a record of your drug consumption which will help you determine how much you use and how it affects your life.
- Make a pro and con list of your drug usage in order to uncover your motivations to quit.
- Evaluate and list down all the things that are important to you in life. Determine your priorities and identify how your drug consumption comes in the way of them.
- Set realistic and measurable goals about quitting such as setting a start date or imposing a limit on your drug intake.
- Remove any and all reminders of your addiction from your surrounding environment either at home, school or work so as to manage your cravings. Also make an effort to identify and avoid all high risk situations that may trigger consumption.
- Reach out to people whom you trust and seek help. Ask them how they feel about your drug use.
- Let you friends and family know that you are committing to making a change. Enlist their support and explore further options for treatment.

Remember! Drug consumption per se does not represent a defect of character but it can slowly turn into a devastating disease if left unchecked. However, rest assured that with consistent effort and resolve, you can effectively manage your addiction. There are many different treatment options available out there. With professional help and support of your loved ones, you can find a treatment plan suitable for yourself.

For further information contact:

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<http://open.lib.umn.edu/intropsvc/chapter/5-2-altering-consciousness-with-psychoactive-drugs/>

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/addictions/overcoming-drug-addiction.htm>