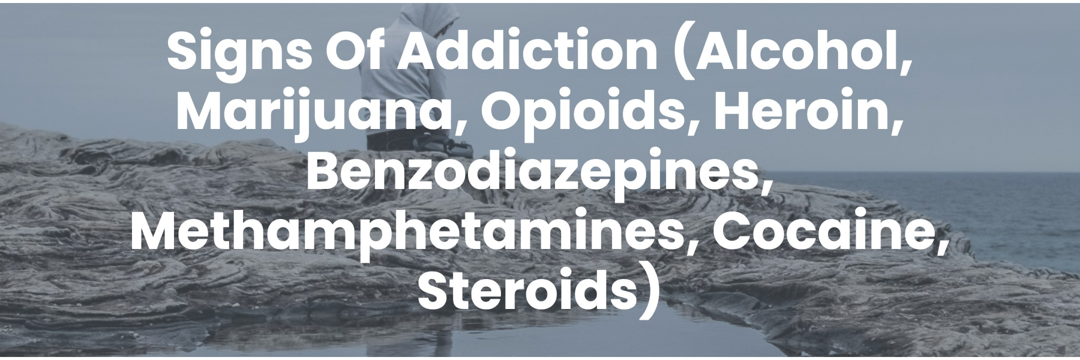

Signs Of Addiction (Alcohol, Marijuana, Opioids, Heroin, Benzodiazepines, Methamphetamines, Cocaine, Steroids)

Addiction can happen to the best of us. No one starts out experimenting with drugs or alcohol intending to get addicted but it happens. You or your loved one could find yourself entangled in a deep web of addiction that keeps dragging you under. The best thing you can do for someone struggling with an alcohol or substance use disorder is to encourage them to get the treatment they need to get clean. However, addicts can be notoriously secretive about their addiction and it can get hard to identify whether someone is indeed using drugs or alcohol. Learning to recognize the signs of addiction can help alert you to your loved one's substance abuse. No matter how hard they try, there are some signs and symptoms they just can't hide.

Here are some signs of addiction to some of the most common substances being abused today.

Marijuana

Billed as a recreational drug, most people mistakenly believe that marijuana isn't addictive. They couldn't be more wrong. The addiction signs to watch for include:

Evidence of using:

- bloodshot eyes, dry mouth, mild euphoria, intense hunger (the munchies), temporary loss of coordination, lethargy
- Anxiety or paranoia triggered by drug use
- Digestive problems from edibles or lung infections from smoking it.
- Ignoring personal responsibilities including work or school in favor of consuming the drug.

- An increasing dependence on marijuana to carry out normal functions or to feel good.

Alcohol

Even though alcohol is a widely used and legally accepted intoxicant, it is no less habit-forming. Alcoholism is widespread and can be quite difficult to detect. Signs of a person with an alcohol addiction include:

Evidence of intoxication:

- slurred speech, uncoordinated movements, poor attention, loss of memory, impaired decision-making skills
- Drinking in secret or otherwise hiding their drinking problem.
- Drinking at odd times e.g. early in the morning
- Preferring drinking to eating food
- Excessive drinking on a regular basis often to the pint o blacking out or throwing up
- A marked decline in health or change in appearance i.e. sudden weight loss or weight gain
- Giving up some of their hobbies and responsibilities to drink

Opioids

Opioid abuse and opioid-related deaths have risen to alarming levels in the country. This group of drugs includes prescription painkillers like Vicodin, Codeine, Percocet, Tramadol and Fentanyl.

Identifying addiction signs include:

- Intoxication evidence: drowsiness, lethargy, euphoria, delirium, constipation, depressed breathing and appetite changes
- Doctor shopping as the individual keeps running out of prescriptions and looks for new doctors to replenish them. The addict might resort to forging prescriptions.
- Prioritizing drug use over other obligations and constantly obsessing on where to get more opioids
- Resorting to stealing and other unethical behaviors to get more drugs
- Changing how the drugs should be taken in order to achieve a quicker high e.g. crushing or snorting them instead of swallowing

Benzodiazepines

Though commonly used as sedatives, benzodiazepines re highly addictive, and the wrong use can result in numerous health problems.

The signs of addiction include:

- Evidence of intoxication are similar to those of drunkenness i.e. slurred speech, memory loss, poor coordination
- Changes in the individual’s weight or appetite
- Difficulties breathing, blurred vision, and persistent headaches
- Mood swings
- Impaired thinking and judgment
- Withdrawal symptoms include panic attacks, insomnia, seizures

Heroin

Heroin is a highly addictive drug that has no medical benefits. Heroin addiction is hard to beat and heroin addicts usually resort to all kinds of behavior to keep their addiction secret and get their next fix.

The addiction signs to look for include:

- Drug use paraphernalia among an individual's possessions e.g. needles, lighters, used spoons, needles
- Clouded or impaired thinking.
- An inability to stop using the drug even if the person wanted to.
- Euphoria after using the drug. This is often followed by slipping in and out of consciousness and a slowed heartbeat
- As the high wears off, the person experiences severe itching, flushed skin, among other serious withdrawal symptoms

Methamphetamines

Methamphetamine, commonly referred to as meth, is a highly potent, synthetic illegal drug in the country. It's highly addictive with serious side-effects.

Signs of meth addiction include:

- Meth mouth characterized by bad breath, dry mouth, extensive gum damage, and rotting teeth.
- Hallucinations and delusions either of grandeur or paranoia
- A reduced need for food or sleep, dehydration
- Mood swings with frequent aggression and irritability
- Elevated body temperature
- Compulsive skin picking or scratching
- Changes in a person's reflexes

Cocaine

Cocaine is another highly addictive drug that works by flooding the brain with dopamine.

The signs of addiction are:

- Intense cravings for the drug and intense withdrawal symptoms if the drug isn't consumed.
- Increased blood pressure and heart rate that often leads to a stroke or heart attack.
- Insomnia and restlessness
- Noticeably dilated pupils after taking a hit
- Increased tolerance for the drug so higher amounts are needed to get high
- Depression or anxiety once the drug wears off

Steroids

Anabolic steroids are widely abused in the country. These drugs work by increasing physical energy and muscle mass. Using them continuously often leads to long-term health consequences including blood clots, endocarditis, stroke, liver cancer, heart attack, vein, and skin infections around the site where the person injects the drugs.

The signs of steroid addiction include:

- Changes in an individual's weight and breast size and a rapid increase in muscle mass
- Changes in skin and body hair including baldness and acne
- Manic behavior including increased extroversion and aggression
- Hallucinations or delusions

Get Started on Your Addiction Treatment Today

Addiction is a lifelong disease but it doesn't have to define your life forever. At Evolve Indy in Indiana, we have a range of alcohol and drug treatment programs aimed at helping you get and remain clean. This includes outpatient, residential, or partial hospitalization programs.

If you're struggling with drug or alcohol addiction, call Evolve Indy to receive assistance on the right treatment program for you. Our lines are open 24/7 so take the first step towards your recovery today.

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