

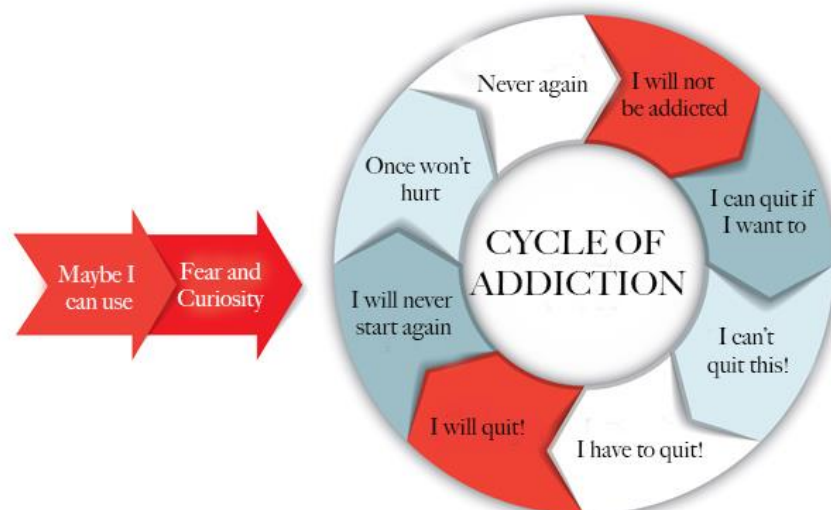
GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING DEPARTMENT MARCH 2019

Addiction is the dependency to an object or behavior despite their detrimental consequences. The person loses control over the object or behavior to which he / she is dependent, cannot live without it and loses functionality in daily life.

Nowadays, children and adolescents are often faced with addictive substances (tobacco, alcohol, substance, technology, etc.) more often than their parents. New computer games, phone applications, tobacco products that are not very similar to cigarettes are emerging every day. Naturally, parents are worried about how they will behave when they face unfamiliar materials that they don't recognize. We know that parents need to get the right information from the right source. Protecting children and young people from harmful habits is a long-term process that requires attention. With these thoughts in mind, we hope that this newsletter will be useful for you.

Addiction Process

Addiction develops through a process. The person passes through some stages until dependency develops. First, he is curious about the substance thinking, "I wonder what happens if I use this?"; but he is also afraid of the effects of the substance. If curiosity comes in front of fear, the person convinces himself by saying "one time won't hurt" and tries the substance. Every time he uses it, he believes that he will not be dependent, that he can control his behavior or quit it if he wants to and tells himself that "this is the last time". However, he continues to use it because the inner talk to persuade himself puts him in a similar vicious cycle every time. After a while, the person starts to experience the harmful effects of substance use. This time the sentence will be "I can't quit this!". When the detrimental effects of the substance abuse increases the person begins to lose their functionality completely in everyday life, then realizes that he can no longer continue to use it and finally quits. However, as the person begins to feel more confident, he then begins to forget the difficulties of using the substance and tries again, saying, "I've quit before, I can quit again whenever I want." Unfortunately, he tries again, and continues to use it as before. This vicious circle is indicative of the development of addiction.



Major Addictions

- **Tobacco Addiction:** Smoking a cigarette, smoking a hookah, smoking a cigar and/or breathing in their smoke causes psychological and physical addiction. Tobacco has a high potential to be addictive because it contains high levels of nicotine.
- **Alcohol Addiction:** It is not clinically possible to say that everyone who uses alcohol is addicted to it. Long-term, out-of-control, repetitive, and excessive amounts of alcohol consumption, which significantly impair physical health and interpersonal relationships, are indicative of alcoholism.
- **Substance Abuse:** The use of substances that adversely affect the functions of the body and the use of substances despite the damages caused by it is not allowed. The addicted person experiences withdrawal symptoms when he interrupts substance use and increases the frequency and dose of substance use over time.
- **Technology Addiction:** It is a behavioral addiction that causes problems in social life. It causes uncontrollable emotional state when control is lost and usage is discontinued. It has been proven by research that the use of excessive technology is similar to the features seen in the substance or other addictions after some time.

If you notice that your child is smoking...

- If you see him smoking, take his cigarette and put it off and also ask him to give the remaining pack to you. Do the same thing consistently whenever you see it.
- Ask his reasons to smoke. Listen without any criticism, advice, shouting, threat, or punishment.
- Talk to him about the risks of smoking in casual conversations, try to reach a mutual agreement on quitting. If this is a monologue where you only talk, it can lead the child or teenager to lie.
- Become a role model with your own behavior. Keep in mind that the approach "Do as I say, don't do as I do." is far from the solution. Do not allow anybody to smoke in the car, at home or anywhere near children.
- Guide him towards various activities related to sports and / or hobbies. Children who have a passion to pursue something usually stay away from smoking.

Can your child have an alcohol problem?

- The occurrence of several of the following items at the same time, or one of them suddenly appearing more frequently, may suggest the use of alcohol in your child. However, it should be carefully observed before jumping to conclusions and it should be kept in mind that these changes may also be due to age-related adolescence characteristics.
- Decrease in energy, concentration and lower school performance compared to their regular performance.
- Stumble?? of speech
- Frequent headaches, vomiting, excessive sensitivity to sounds in the morning (hangover)

- Feelings of mood changes such as hopelessness, irritability, reflexivity
- The attitude of disregard towards the subjects of interest
- Lying, increasing school absences etc.
- Children especially who have high alcohol consumption in their social environment or who are exposed to abuse, trauma or aggressive, inadequate socialization must be considered in the risk group.
- If you use alcohol as a parent, you should use small amounts and avoid attaching alcohol with emotions like stress, sadness or joy. Social activities of children and young people, places they go, groups of friends should be under control for alcohol use.

How do you know if your child uses drugs?

It is not easy to understand substance use because the specific symptoms of direct substance use are very few and most of the symptoms are similar to those of adolescence. It can be really hard to understand especially in the early period of the addiction process. If you are observing one or more of the following changes, you should consider whether they are due to substance use or other reasons.

•Behavioral Changes

- The differentiation of the places where they hangout
- Aggressive language and aggression
- Changes in the level of introversion, tension, vulnerability, participation in relationships within their home
- Change in personality
- Sudden decline in school success, absenteeism and ditching school
- Spending more money than usual
- Reduced interest in personal appearance
- Lying about the places they go after school and/or on weekends

• Substance-Related Changes

- Difficulty in concentration, memory problems, drowsiness, sleepiness or excessive mobility
- Significant fatigue
- Having a lisp (similar to alcohol)
- Sudden and unexpected weight loss, change in eating habits
- Change in sleep patterns
- Red eyes, growth of pupils, bruises under the eyes, frequent running nose, frequent sore throat
 - Imbalance in movement
 - Scars or bruises in his body that he cannot explain the reason for.

• Laboratory Investigations

- The most precise way of understanding substance use is taking a urine test. Although it varies according to the substance, urine tests provide information on the use of the substance in the last three days. Hair tests can also determine substance use in the last three months. However, asking for a test from your child with the initial suspicion of substance use would not be the right approach as it may damage your relationship, the primary focus should be on looking for the changes above.

What Causes Your Child to Use Substance?

• **Triggering Factors**

- Having a family member with mental health problems or an addiction process (genetic predisposition)
- Inconsistent, overprotective or oppressive family attitudes
- Domestic violence, neglect and abuse
- Lack of communication and understanding between parents and children
- Extremely introverted personality structure
- Insufficient social cohesion and acceptance

• **Reasons to start using a substance**

- Curiosity
- Seeing as a way to escape from existing problems
- Need to attract attention
- Need to be accepted
- False belief that it is widely used among peers
- Search for high excitement (adrenaline?), impulsive behavior
- Seeing substance use as an entertainment
- Convincing oneself that it is “not that harmful”
- Peer pressure

How Can You Help Your Child To Be Protected From Substance Addiction?

Healthy communication within the family, sharing, the clarity of domestic rules, the success of the child at school and in social life are factors that prevent substance use. Parents must consider the age of their children and the characteristics of that age when taking preventive steps on these topics.

• **Preschool period:** Since children at this age are not substance users, it is not necessary to give them specific information. You can only talk about the harms of substances such as cigarettes and alcohol in an appropriate way. The most important thing to know about this age period is that children perceive parents as role models and accept everything they learn from them without question. Therefore, if they see their parents smoking or drinking, seeing them consume these substances can give children the message that they can do it too. In addition, it is important to appreciate the importance of efforts to create agendas (tooth brushing, regular sleep / nutrition etc.) that will emphasize the importance of healthy living. Similarly, creating opportunities to make decisions such as deciding what to wear or what to play will also contribute to their personal development.

• **School Age:** The learning of children at this age is based on the method of trial and error, and when the curiosity that forms the basis of learning arises, they may want to know what different things are, how they work and what they do. Therefore, it would be useful for parents who have children at this age to give information about harmful habits. This way, misinformation gained by friends and / or technology is prevented. Since this is a period to develop friendships, it is also very important to get to know their circle of friends and to teach them the ability to say no which will help them to

cope with peer pressure. Healthy living could also be picked as a topic for family discussions.

• **Adolescence:** The emotions of a young person can change very quickly during this period. Efforts to find their identity can make young people nervous, angry and anxious. At the same time, in this period, family is replaced by friends, and acceptance in social life becomes more important than many things. While informing young people about harmful habits, it is important that parents talk about facts rather than emphasizing their concerns. In this period, it will be impressive to reveal the effects of the substances on their appearance as it is very important for them. The rules of the family should be clear. The teen should be informed about the importance of being able to say no when necessary. Taking responsibility and making decisions for the teenager without giving him the opportunity to express himself will only result in causing a conflict . It will make communication easier for the young person to know that he will always be listened to by his family. It should not be forgotten that a healthy communication in the family is a golden key that opens many doors. Communication without ordering around, judging, lecturing, threatening, or diagnosing (labelling?, jumping to conclusions?) rarely fails.

Does your child use technology correctly?

Today, the role of technology in our lives has reached to undeniable levels. In this case, the aim should be to ensure that the use of technology is a process that facilitates our lives and supports the development of children.

Points to be considered

- Adherence to the rules of technology use for the whole family
- Keeping the screen time at an appropriate level according to the child's age (From 20 minutes a day to maximum 120 minutes, from age 2 to 18)
- Determining the time spent together with the family, preventing technology from getting ahead of these times (meals, play times etc.)
- Making sure that technology does not turn into quick solutions to distract children.
- Careful selection of programs to be watched on TV
- Not using technological devices to reward kids
- Parents should not use technology when it is risky for example while driving, walking, cycling
- Preventing children from communicating with people in virtual environments that they do not know in person.
- Preventing sharing photos or videos of themselves or others

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