

## **What is addiction?**

We often ask ourselves how an addiction starts. How can someone not prevent him or herself from quitting? Some myths go around that it is due to unintelligence or lack of willpower. This however is not the case. A life with an addiction can start in many different ways. Life's circumstances, social pressure, stress, lack of coping strategies, Childhood abuse, genetics and trauma is only a fraction that can lead to an addiction.

## **How can I tell if I've become addicted?**

The *DSM-IV*, defines substance dependence similarly, as a group of mental, physical and behavioural symptoms, with: "continued use of the substance, despite significant substance-related problems. There is a pattern of repeated self-administration that usually results in tolerance, withdrawal and compulsive drug-taking behaviour."

This manual shows us that a person that is suffering from an addiction (dependency) will do everything in their might to get hold of the substance or to fulfil the need that has built up through time.

## **Are some people more likely to become dependent?**

Research has tried to prove that there is a difference between drug misuse and dependency. A person can use or misuse drugs, but never cross the line in becoming addicted. Another person can use the same and get totally addicted to the substance. If a person can be helped at an early stage, brief intervention can help them to cut back on their usage. Someone who has become dependent needs longer treatment to stay free from substances.

## **Dependent behaviour**

Another aspect of an addiction or dependency is dependent behaviour. This can manifest in many forms, and includes: gambling; eating disorders, such as anorexia; co-dependency (being dependent on other people); emotional dependency, particularly to states of anger, love and lust, which can make people as oblivious to the world as any drug; helping dependency (compulsively taking care of others); internet addiction; obsessive-compulsive disorder; sex addiction; workaholics and exercise addiction.

## **How can addicts stop?**

An addict needs to admit that he or she has a problem. However, for most addicts, it takes an emotional break down to realise that the effects of their addiction is taking the rock bottom. This is a starting point of admitting and cutting down to a stage where usage of a substance doesn't affect their every day existence. Self-help programmes, healthier lifestyles, counselling and rehabilitation is only helpful once there is admittance of an addiction.