

Chapter 31 Understanding Illegal Drugs (Narcotics)

Many drug abusers start experimenting with drugs out of curiosity, seeking excitement, escaping pressure and setback, or under pressure from others, etc. Once a person is addicted, then life becomes miserable. Life is priceless, so do not make the fateful and wrong decision. At the beginning of drug use, one will become excited, have illusions, and experience joy. However, long term use will produce tolerance effect, psychological and physical dependence. To stop use, other than the withdrawal reactions at the physical level, the desire at the psychological level is the hardest for drug addicts to overcome.

What happens to drug users

1. Damaging one's health and creating social problems, such as theft, robbery.
2. Tolerance: the need to increase drug amount to reach the same effect previously.
3. Dependence: physical and psychological dependence.
4. Withdrawal symptoms: When suddenly cut off, discomfort at the physical level.
5. The earlier one contacts addictive drugs, the greater the bodily harm.
6. When mothers takes drugs: children born with abnormalities, insufficient intellectual capability, damages coming from mother's drug addiction.
7. Sharing a needle in intravenous drug administration can be easily transmitted with AIDS, B-type hepatitis, C-type hepatitis and other infectious diseases.

Common forms of drugs

1. Opium, morphine, heroin:

The most typical sensation is excitement and joy, but followed by exhaustion. Long term use will lead to tolerance and psychological and physical dependence. Withdrawal symptoms include yawning, tears, Runny nose, "cold turkey." etc.

2. Amphetamines:

In the beginning, effects include refreshing, uplifting, euphoric, satisfaction, etc. Long term use will lead to tolerance, psychological and physical dependence. Withdrawal symptoms after cutting use include suicide or violent attacks and behaviors.

3. Cocaine, marijuana:

In the beginning, effects include subjective feeling such as euphoric, energetic, keen attention, clear thinking. After increasing amount used, tolerance, psychological dependence, illusions, Sensory distortions, suspicion will appear.

4. MDMA:

The toxic effects on the central nervous system include degradation of the nerve ends, depression, mental confusion, panic anxiety, and even suicidal tendencies, tolerance and psychological dependence, creating an addiction.

5. Ketamine:

Ketamine can affect sensation, coordination and judgement, and cause nausea, vomiting, blurred vision, image distortion, temporary onset of amnesia, loss of balance and other symptoms. A long-term use will enhance tolerance and psychological dependence, resulting in compulsive use and difficult to quit. Recent studies have shown that Ketamine abuse will cause chronic interstitial cystitis, resulting in bladder wall thickening and smaller capacity to generate frequent urination, urgent urination, painful urination, hematuria, lower abdominal pain and other symptoms. In more severe cases, there are the occurrences of urine output reduction, edema and other symptoms of renal insufficiency, and even up to the extent of performing bladder reconstruction surgery.

Four core actions to reverse narcotic harms

1.Action 1:Cherish life - love yourself

Every life is precious, but we tend to encounter various forms of stresses and temptations in our life. If we do the right decision, we will get a complete different result.

- (1)Be a master of yourself: Establish and maintain a healthy lifestyle without relying on drugs to refresh your mind and lose weight. Choose a rational way to relieve emotion, and take a positive thinking attitude to increase your self-confidence. Establish a close and harmonious family relationship.
- (2)Learn the technique of making friends: Make friends with good conducts and right behaviors. Engage yourself in healthy recreational activities to build up your correct life goals and values.
- (3)Enhance self-resilience: Train up your social skills through school, community and religious activities, and strengthen your toughness to face challenges.

2.Action 2:Avoid and reject narcotics – keep away from tobacco, alcohol and narcotics

Adopt a tactful and firm way of rejection to avoid harms and injuries. Once you try on narcotic, you will spend your whole life quitting it.

- (1)Keep away from unhealthy places: Such as Internet cafes, pubs and nightclubs, etc. Stay alert and do not simply accept drinks and tobacco from strangers. Pay special attention to your friend's friends even if they are females or people you familiar with. If you are unfortunately being sexually assaulted or suffered other injuries, you should take the time to call 1996 and other hotlines, or seek help from friends and relatives.
- (2)Refuse additive substances: Adopt a healthy way to make friends. The use of tobacco, alcohol, betel nut or any other

narcotics is likely to cause addiction to affect your physical and mental health. You should avoid contacting them.

- (4) To get high without taking narcotics: Do not try alcohol and narcotics but seek health in a positive self-satisfied and relaxed manner. You should engage yourself in physical and intellectual activities such as ball matches, extreme sports and art appreciation, etc.

3.Action 3: Understanding and rejecting narcotics – fighting and refusing narcotics

There is no different in severity of narcotics as they will anyhow damage the user's physical and mental health. By all means, DO NOT take the wrong step!

- (1) Understanding the actions of narcotics: Based on their effects to human body, narcotics can be classified into central nervous system depressants (such as opiates and Ketamine), central nervous system stimulants (such as amphetamines and MDMA), and hallucinogens (such as marijuana, glue and sand).
- (2) Understanding the emerging drugs: Marijuana, MDMA, Ketamine and FM2, etc. are also known as club drugs. These drugs have new names and appearances to attract people, and once consumed, people can be easily addicted. Meanwhile, the natures of the narcotics themselves will force users to seek for even more intense narcotics.
- (3) Fight against illegal: The manufacturing, trafficking, application, allowing people to use or lure people to use narcotics are all illegal. If the narcotic users surrender themselves to qualified medical institutes for professional treatment, they can be reduced with other legal responsibilities.
- (3) Learn refusal skills: If you face with peer pressure to try on tobacco, alcohol, betel nut or any other narcotics, you should refuse directly, look for an excuse, leave the scene

quickly, try to mock yourself or take a friendly persuasive approach to explain your stringent family background, and say in a tactful and firm attitude to refuse.

- (4) Prevent drug hazards: Narcotics can cause great harms to personal health such as the risks of nerve damage, bladder atrophy, sexual dysfunction, respiratory depression, cardio vascular toxicity, AIDS or other infectious diseases. Further more, a mixed use of the drugs may create interactions, and the commonly seen crimes such as robbery, self-injury, injuring other people, etc. that derived from using the drugs.

4.Action 4:Care and help – positive referral

In additional to avoid narcotic harms yourself, you should also extend a helping hand to concern and assist the friends around you to prevent them from narcotic harms.

- (1) Discovering the sign of drug addicts: Drug addicts often appear to have a chaotic schedules, trance, skin covered with rashes, special smell on their body or room, increase in money spending, stealing and lying, irritable and hot-tempered, decline in paying attention, poor appetite or weight loss and carrying drug-related appliances with them, etc.
- (2) Provide professional assistance and referral: Support from the family, friends and society is the best help to assist drug addicts to face their own self frankly, face with reality positively and get away from drug dilemma. The channels that provide referral and professional service include the relevant unit of Department of Health, medical institutions, Drug Abuse Prevention Center and drug counseling agencies (such as Operation Dawn), etc.