

The Addiction Cycle

Match the paragraph to the correct heading.

1. Short-term gratification
2. Long-term pain
3. The start of addictive thinking
4. Increased tolerance
5. Loss of control
6. Bio-psycho-social damage

A. Without your being aware that it is happening, more and more of the drug is required to produce the same effect you felt at the beginning.

B. The long-term pain and dysfunction trigger obsession and compulsion. At this stage, you are constantly thinking about the positive effects of using substances. Compulsion is an irrational urge or craving to use the substance to feel good, even though you know it will hurt you in the long run. This leads to denial and rationalization in order to allow continued use. Denial is the inability to recognize there is a problem. Rationalization is blaming other situations and people for problems rather than substance use.

C. The instant pleasure is eventually followed by suffering. This is partly a result of physical withdrawal and partly from being unable to cope psycho-socially without the substance. This discomfort is the direct consequence of using the addictive chemical/s.

D. At this stage, the substance instantly makes you feel good. This immediate feeling causes you to believe that the substance is good for you.

E. Eventually there is damage to the health of your body, mind, and relationships with other people. As the pain and stress get worse, the compulsion to use the addictive substances to get relief from the pain increases. A deadly trap develops. You need your substance in order to feel good. But when you use the substance you damage yourself physically, psychologically, and socially. This damage increases your pain which in turn increases your need for the substance.

F. The obsession and compulsion become so strong that you cannot think about anything else. Your feelings and emotions become distorted by the compulsion. You become stressed and uncomfortable until finally the urge to use is so strong that you cannot resist it.

Adapted from Staying Sober, by Terrence T. Gorski & Merlene Miller