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THE STUDY OF SUD

DIFFERENT LEVELS OF USE

Here's an overview of 4 stages of substance use to help you understand the levels that people may be experiencing (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration/SAMHSA)

- **Experimental use.** This often involves friends and peers who share a substance experience for recreational purposes.
- **Regular use.** In this phase, the person misses work. He or she is preoccupied about their supply. Isolation is common and usage often increases as tolerance for the substance increases.
- **Problem use.** Motivation to work declines, and behavior changes become obvious. Preoccupation with substance use eclipses other interests, such as relationships. In problem use, users often become secretive. Sometimes they start dealing to ensure a steady personal supply.
- **Addiction.** In addiction, denial of the problem is present, and physical, emotional and mental declines are noticeable. Family and friends may be alienated. Financial and legal problems often occur, and suicidal or self-destructive behaviors are present.

A MEDICAL CONDITION - NOT A PERSONAL FAILURE



Addiction was once considered a moral failure, a family curse, or a personal weakness. Today it is not considered to be any of these things. Instead, it is a medical condition.

Drug addiction literally changes the way the brain functions. That's why organizations such as the American Medical Association define it as a disease.



Many of the biological and environmental risk factors that contribute to SUD have been identified, but even experts in the field cannot determine why some people become addicted to drugs.

Final point: SUD is treatable and beatable. It's a medical condition that can be overcome. According to SAMHSA, more than 20 million Americans have a substance use disorder (2018), and many of them are working to restore their health, relationships, and their jobs.