

# Prevention C+olumn

ADDICTION – OCTOBER 2021

## Addiction: When you lose your equilibrium

Addiction can take many forms. The life of a person who is addicted, whether to drugs, shopping, alcohol, gambling, the internet or food, can become a nightmare. Most people need help to get back on track.

- Approximately 15% of Canadians who drink alcohol consume more than the recommended quantities.<sup>1</sup>
- Research shows that between 40 and 60% of people who succeed in overcoming an addiction had at least one relapse.<sup>2</sup>
- A deciding factor in 12% of separations is that one of the partners has an addiction.<sup>3</sup>



EXPERIENCE LA CAPITALE'S PREVENTIVE APPROACH



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Workplace Health  
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# A fine margin between pleasure and addiction

Having a drink with friends. Smoking cannabis. Having sex. Shopping. Browsing the internet. Going to the casino. These are some of the small pleasures that many of us enjoy. Our brain rewards these actions by secreting “feel-good” hormones.

However, when these small moments of pleasure are increased to the point where we become unbalanced, we feel overwhelmed and lose control, we are spiralling into addiction. At this point, pleasure gives way to distress. Fortunately, it's possible to overcome addiction and even help others who suffer from it.

## WHEN AN ADDICTION INTERFERES WITH LIFE

We often associate addiction with alcohol, drugs, tobacco or medications. But addiction can take many forms. We can become hooked not only on substances but also on activities such as gambling, sex, the internet, pornography, video games, shopping or certain sports.

Anyone—young, old, rich or poor—can become addicted. Genetics play a role in a person's predisposition to develop an addiction, but there are other factors as well: depression, mental illness, trauma, temporary difficulties, etc.

At what point does the spectre of addiction become apparent? When problematic behaviours hinder our capacity to carry out our daily activities and harms our relationships. When we lose control.

### Warning signs:

- Using most of our money, time and energy on an activity or on procuring substances
- Focusing on a particular activity and neglecting social relationships, health, equilibrium, etc.
- Maintaining the activity or the substance use in spite of negative effects
- Developing tolerance to the effects of the substance or the activity, leading to increased frequency or intensity to obtain the desired effects
- Inability to stop using the substance or doing the activity because the need is too strong ■



## LOSS OF CONTROL = LOSS OF EQUILIBRIUM

When a person is battling an addiction, all aspects of life can be affected. The person may feel shame or guilt, lose confidence in their abilities, experience physical or emotional pain and have financial problems that only get worse until they manage to overcome their addiction.

Some of the consequences an addict may experience:

- promised personal relationships such as withdrawing from friends and co-workers, alienation from family, divorce or separation
- Lack of interest in leisure and other activities previously enjoyed
- Job difficulties: loss of motivation, lower productivity, errors, accidents, conflicts with colleagues, dismissal
- Physical health problems, particularly in the case of addiction to substances such as medication, alcohol or drugs
- Behaviour issues: being aggressive, feeling uneasy, etc. ■

