

A D D I C T I O N

Re-defined:

What is addiction?

The word addiction brings to mind certain images:

- the toothless meth or other drug addict living on the streets begging for change
- the chain smoker obliterated in a cloud of smoke
- the alcoholic wandering around, a paper bag-wrapped bottle in hand

These are extreme examples, but variations of these are what we commonly think of when we think “addiction.” We think of addiction as something that happens to people because they have no will power, or that it’s the substance’s fault. But the newest in addiction research proves that’s simply not the case.

The root of addiction, in a simplified nutshell, is an escape from pain. Period.

The face of addiction is varied, and has extremely little to do with will power and/or the substance of choice in the majority of cases.

What can people become addicted to?

The short answer is: anything.

The longer answer is: anything capable of stimulating a person has the potential to become addictive.

We all know about cigarettes, drugs and gambling, but here are some that don’t get as much attention, such as:

- food
- sugar
- shopping
- the internet
- video games
- television

In short, any behaviour or entity that goes from a habit to an obligation has become an addiction.



How does addiction happen? Is it in the genes?

The existence of an addiction gene has been proven time and again to be a myth. What we now know is that it's not about a gene being present, it's about the expression of a gene, which is determined solely by environment.

That's not to say that there isn't a hereditary component based on our environment, but that the idea of one gene being responsible for our behaviour just isn't possible. Basically, brain development *in utero* and in childhood is the single most important biological factor in determining a person's potential for addiction.

Couple that with the social factors that really determine our everyday behaviours and it gives a basic understanding of where addiction may come from.

What can we do?

The good news is that our brains are unbelievably resilient. Biologically, new pathways and patterns can be created throughout our entire lives, regardless of childhood experiences.

The great news is that because there is nothing pre-determined by genes, we have the power to change their operations and therefore affect our addictive predisposition.

How is Addiction treated?

There are different ways of delivering effective treatment. This is where we look at you, as a person, and create tailored treatment plans to safely and effectively treat your addiction.

Successful addiction treatment is predicted by the person's readiness to quit regardless of the addiction. If you're ready to quit, working with someone who can support you with the mental, physical and emotional consequences is the second most important step.

For more information on our Addiction Cessation Program, give us a call at 519-821-1999 or visit our website at www.healingfoundations.ca.

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