

MANITOBA ADDICTIONS AWARENESS WEEK

TOPIC:	Levels of involvement
AUDIENCE:	Grades 9 – 12; adult
OUTCOME:	Explain the meaning of addiction (i.e., gambling) and substance dependence, and the possible effects on self and/or others. Examine the use and abuse of substances and potential consequences on personal health and well-being. Analyze issues concerning the use and abuse of legal and illegal substances.

How do I know if someone I care about is experiencing difficulties associated with alcohol, other drugs and/or gambling? AFM's "Levels of Involvement" (LOI) is not an assessment tool but can be used to determine if use/behaviour is becoming harmful or serious.

LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT

NON-INVOLVEMENT

- Never used alcohol, other drugs or gambled OR have chosen a non-involved lifestyle after some involvement in the past

IRREGULAR INVOLVEMENT

- Random or infrequent involvement with alcohol, other drug or gambling that includes experimenting
- Little or no evidence of any problems caused by involvement

REGULAR INVOLVEMENT

- Actively seeking involvement with alcohol, other drug or gambling on a regular basis with some pattern (i.e. daily, weekly, monthly)
- May be some minor or isolated problems caused by involvement

HARMFUL INVOLVEMENT

- Involvement with alcohol, other drugs or gambling causes problems in one or more of the life areas (listed below)

DEPENDENT INVOLVEMENT

- Despite involvement causing problems in life areas, involvement continues plus...
 - There are failed attempt to cut down / quit
 - A lot of time is spent being involved or thinking about being involved
 - Strong urges to be involved are experienced
 - There are uncomfortable feelings when not involved
 - More of the substance / gambling activity is required to get the same altered state

SOME OF THE SIGNS OF SERIOUS/HARMFUL LEVELS OF USE INCLUDE:

LIFE AREAS - Family

- Arguments about use
- Physical fights between parent and child
- Increased tension at home
- Unclear expectations or consequences for use
- Money, drugs, alcohol or other belongings are taken from the home
- Less time is spent with the family
- Being threatened with or asked to leave home
- Lying to cover up use
- Being secretive about activities
- Family/parents/partner disapproves
- Staying out all night

LIFE AREAS - Social

- Loss of interest in non using activities
- Not seeing non using friends as much
- Making new friends who use alcohol/drugs
- Using is considered normal
- Taking risks to use/while using drugs or alcohol (unsafe places, riding with impaired driver)
- Spending most of your money on use
- Debts because of alcohol/drug use
- Doing things you regret under the influence, legal issues
- Loss of interest in regular activities/hobbies
- Getting drunk or high before going out with friends
- Unexplained absences (AWOL from school, work, social events, etc.)

LIFE AREAS- Physical

- Less concern about appearance
- Unhealthy appearance
- Often feeling tired, or having little energy
- Injuries or accidents under the influence
- Getting sick more often
- Memory is not as good as before started using
- Trouble sleeping
- Difficult getting up in the morning
- Increase in headaches, stomach aches, etc.
- Change in eating habits such as skipping meals or bingeing
- Overdose on alcohol, drugs or passing out/vomiting from alcohol use
- Blacking out when using

LIFE AREAS – Emotional/Psychological

- Get upset when comments made about AOD use
- Planning next use
- Increased paranoia, anxiety, mood swings, irritability
- Making up excuses for using or behaviors when using
- Keeps using when others have stopped
- Upset / confused when under the influence
- Uncomfortable when straight
- Suicidal feelings or thoughts
- Using to cope with uncomfortable feelings/situations
- Feels like using is out of control
- Self-destructive behavior
- Using alone

LIFE AREAS – School/Work

- Attendance problems; skipping classes, absences from work
- Late for school/work regularly
- Grades/performance have gone down since starting using
- Difficult to concentrate on tasks
- Falls asleep at school/work
- Frequent job changes
- Dropping extra-curricular activities
- Calls to parents about behavior concerns
- Caught using/dealing at school/work
- School/work order to attend AOD counseling
- School staff/employer has expressed concern about use
- Using at school/work or going to school/work under the influence

Produced by Addictions Foundation of Manitoba