



Do You Have an Addiction Here's How to Tell

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Many times people think that they do not have an alcohol or drug problem because they imagine a person in a back alley drinking out of a brown paper bag as the stereotypical alcoholic. As long as they are working and appear to be very functional, they convince themselves that things are okay.

As a Substance Abuse Expert who does assessments on a regular basis, I ask "Do you have any problems that might be associated with alcohol?" and the answer is usually in the affirmative. The client explains that their partner is nagging them about how much they drink, or the boss sent him for an assessment because he smelled alcohol or the police laid an assault charge after a physical fight that was the other person's fault.

I then state that there is an alcohol problem. You see, most people who have an addiction do not see the substance as a problem. They view all the other people in their lives as the problem! They do not have any idea that they might be alcoholic even if they drink every day or have blackouts or have had charges for being over .08. You see they believe that these are "exceptions",

One of the symptoms of addiction is denial. Another is blame - blaming everyone else for causing trouble. It is interesting to know that intoxication is a legal term used to describe a blood alcohol content over .08. Impairment, however, is a term that more accurately describes the individual's lack of ability to perform well and usually lasts a long time after intoxication is reduced.

You might be surprised to learn that a binge is defined as three drinks for a male and two drinks for a woman. Yes, we imagine that binge is passed out or falling down drunk. Not true. Here is how I loosely define an addiction. When you use too much of something for the wrong reasons, you need to get some help.

Is your shopping becoming out of control? Do you gamble so that you are worried about finances? Are you using drugs every week? Are people worried about the amount you are drinking? When a person uses an activity or substance to deal with their feelings because they do not know how to get through the day without help, there is a definite problem.

I cannot do a diagnosis without seeing a person but you know in your heart if there is a problem. I encourage you to have an assessment and learn how to take control back so that you can live a full and healthy life. You will not have one regret!