



I Don't Have a Problem!

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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For many years I have worked with individuals who were referred for assessment or treatment associated with substance use, abuse, or dependency.

Following are ten statements that I hear over and over again from the clients:

1. I don't have a problem - Then why are you here? If you have any problem in your life that might be tied to alcohol or drugs, then you have a drug or alcohol problem. Check your wallet, weight, health, career or relationships and you'll soon find a chink in your denial armour.
2. It's not my fault - You cannot blame your parents, friends, or associates for the choices that you make when it comes to use of alcohol or drugs. You can always say "No".
3. Maybe I was dependent in the past but now I can manage it - Once an addict, always an addict and a little bit of the substance will only lead to more. Oh, and promises are very easy to make but if you don't have a good support system and a plan to deal with stress in your life, you will likely have future problems.
4. I function well - Except when you don't!
5. I don't binge and I'm not addicted - People tend to have very skewed definitions when it comes to substance abuse. Being passed out in an alley with a bottle in a brown paper bag is NOT the definition of a "binge". The standard definition across North America for a binge is three drinks for men and two for women. (Yes, that was 3 and 2 - not a misprint!)
6. I don't need treatment - Do you really have the tools that will prevent future problems for you? Treatment is a professional and confidential way for you to gain the support that you need so that you will have it when you need it.
7. Others are worse than I am - We can always find someone who is worse (or better) than we are in a specific area. That doesn't mean that we can ignore the things that interfere with our ability to do well.
8. I was "set up" - The lab probably didn't make a mistake with your sample. The co-workers are likely not out to get you. The ones who attended the intervention likely do really care about you.
9. The law and employer need to be changed - Would you think differently if your loved one was killed by someone who was breaking the law or your employer's "zero tolerance" policy?
10. This will never happen again - How do you know? How many times have you said that before? Why is there a pattern that is obvious to others? Do you have a good plan that will support you through both good and bad times?

You don't have to wind up in trouble or in the office of a professional to know that you have a substance abuse problem. You already know it in your heart.

Why not get the best help you can before you just wish that you had?