



# **Nicoletti-Flater Associates, PLLP**

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## ***Substance Abuse***

### **What is a substance abuse?**

Substance use problems can arise as a result of acute intoxication, regular use or dependence and from the way in which substances are used. It is possible for a person to have problems from all of these.

### **How do I know if I am at risk?**

In the past year I have:

- Consumed five or more drinks in a day
- Used any kind of illegal drug
- Used prescription drugs for nonmedical reasons

\*If you answered "yes" to any of these, you may be at risk of substance use problems

## ***What Now?***

### **Coping with Cravings:**

*Sometimes craving cannot be avoided, and it is necessary to find a way to cope:*

- Get involved in some distracting activity, such as reading, a hobby, going to a movie, or exercising. Once you get interested in something else, you'll find the urges go away.
- Talk it through with friends or family members. Talking about cravings can be helpful in pinpointing the source of the craving often helps to relieve the feeling. Craving is nothing to feel bad about.
- Urge surf. Think of your craving as an ocean wave that will soon crest, break, and dissipate. When you ride out the craving, without trying to battle, judge, or ignore it, it may pass more quickly than you'd expect.
- Challenge and change your thoughts. When experiencing a craving, many people have a tendency to remember only the positive effects of the drug and forget the negative consequences. Remind yourself that you really *won't* feel better if you use and that you stand to lose a lot. Sometimes it is helpful to have these benefits and consequences listed on a small card that you keep with you.



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**Activity:** Think about what substance(s) you use and the problems you think it might be causing. You might find that one substance causes several problems. Eg. arguments with your family or partner, problems with your health – like not sleeping properly, feeling depressed, or feeling anxious or agitated. Some people find that using substances can affect their memory and concentration, which can cause problems with work or study.

	<b>Substance</b>	<b>Problem</b>
<b>1</b>		
<b>2</b>		
<b>3</b>		
<b>4</b>		

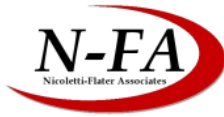
*Change is Possible*



***THE CHOICES ARE YOURS:  
YOU CAN CONTINUE ON AS YOU  
ARE OR YOU CAN CUT DOWN OR  
STOP YOUR SUBSTANCE USE***

<b>5</b>		
<b>6</b>		
<b>7</b>		

**How do these problems interfere with your life?  
What would you gain by changing your substance use?**



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## **Helpful Tips**

- ✓ Set goals for yourself. Do you hope to stop using substances completely, or do you just want to cut back? It is important to check in with yourself and review your goals regularly.
- ✓ Whatever goal you choose, it is a good idea to talk it over with a person you can trust. All change can be challenging and difficult at first, and it helps to get support for your plans.
- ✓ Every time you resist an old habit you come a step closer to overcoming it. If you feel like you have to use, get busy with something else, quickly. The feeling will pass.
- ✓ Don't give up just because you've had a bad day.
- ✓ Remember to reward yourself with something you enjoy. This could be shopping, going for a walk in your favorite spot, having a bath, listening to music, going out with friends, having a nice meal. Reward yourself often instead of saving up and bingeing on one big reward.
- ✓ Be kind to yourself even when you think you haven't done very well. Remind yourself that change does not happen overnight and to be patient. The smallest step in the right direction takes you towards your goal.