



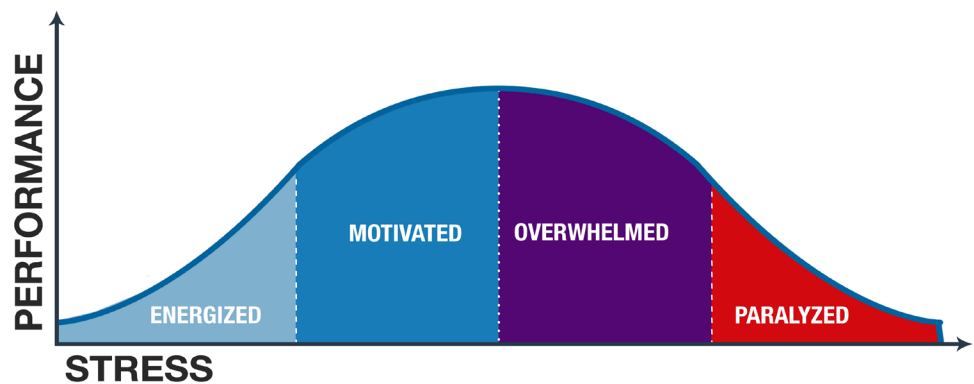
ADDICTION AND STRESS

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Explore the relationship between addiction and stress
- Identify stressors common to chronic substance abuse
- Develop positive, hope-filled statements

Stress is the biological, emotional, behavioral, and social response to a real or imagined event. When anxiety and stress are low, motivation and performance levels remain low as well. As stress and anxiety go up, performance levels also rise, but only to a certain point. Increased stress eventually causes a tipping point, and more anxiety beyond that point actually decreases performance levels. In fact, under high levels of stress, performance plummets and may cause someone to feel paralyzed.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF STRESS



What are some stressors in your life?

Many people use alcohol and drugs when they are under stress, although substance use often **CREATES STRESS** of its own.

NOTES

Write about a time in your life when you felt overwhelmed or paralyzed by stress. How did it affect your substance use?

IDENTIFYING STRESSORS

Stress is common in everyday life and it is important to learn how to manage it. Many people use alcohol and drugs when they are under stress, although substance use often creates problems of its own.

Consider the following stressors common to prolonged substance use and abuse:

- Serious intoxication
- Hangover
- Withdrawal effects
- Ending up in detox
- Overdose
- Blackouts
- Financial problems
- Overspending/wasting money
- Bankruptcy
- Embarrassment
- Guilt and shame
- Remorse
- Lost opportunities
- Feeling fake
- Loss of productivity
- Increased conflict
- Damaged property
- Lost relationships
- Divorce
- Arrest
- Bail
- Having money stolen
- Court dates
- Legal fees
- Jail
- Felony charges
- Prison
- Probation
- Increased car insurance costs
- Being dropped by your car insurance company

Increased emotional problems including:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Worry
- Memory loss
- Aggression
- Mood swings
- Paranoia
- Risky sexual behavior
- Family problems

Consequences of:

- Lying
- Deception
- Manipulation
- Denial
- Minimization
- Self-harm
- Gambling addiction
- Physically harming others

- Job loss/unemployment
- Demotion
- Lost days of income
- House arrest
- UA monitoring
- Inpatient treatment
- Outpatient treatment
- Urgent Care or Emergency Room visits
- Increased physical illness
- Mental health expenses due to use

- Suicidal ideation
- Suicide attempts
- Difficulty finding a job
- Sleep problems
- Community service requirements
- Weight loss
- Weight gain
- Loss of license/suspension
- Restricted license
- Ignition interlock device
- Need to arrange rides

Medical problems from use including:

- HIV/AIDS
- Organ damage
- Hormone imbalance
- Prenatal and fertility issues
- Gastrointestinal disease
- Venereal disease
- Miscarriage
- Stillbirth
- Sexual problems
- Seizures
- Delirium Tremens (DTs)
- Memory problems
- Medical expenses

- DUI on your permanent criminal record
- DUI class
- Cross-addiction
- Needle-sharing fears
- Living in a sober house
- Custody of children
- Domestic abuse and violence

Unintentional injury including:

- Vehicle crashes
- Falls
- Burns
- Firearm injuries
- Fights

Look at the items you checked. What is your reaction to seeing how much stress you have endured?

WORKING HARD TO CHANGE

Many people working through this list are surprised how many items they checked. Over time, substance use can bring an unexpected landslide of consequences. The list is not intended to embarrass or shame, but to highlight the damaging effects and impact of chronic use and abuse.

NOTES

**STRESS IS
COMMON in
everyday life.**

NOTES

NEVER GIVE UP

Second chances are important. And sometimes a third, fourth, or seventh chance is needed. Many of us have experienced multiple setbacks, but the big game is not over. You get another opportunity, another chance, to gain victory. The Bible says “the righteous man falls seven times, and rises again.” Get up! Get up! Get up! Try it again!

Choose several items from the list below that describe your choice to get up and try again.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have people who believe in me | <input type="checkbox"/> I'm worth working on |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I trust that God will help me | <input type="checkbox"/> My story isn't over |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have made up my mind to change | <input type="checkbox"/> My past doesn't determine my future |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am receiving good medical care and treatment for my substance use disorder | <input type="checkbox"/> Failure is not an option |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am getting treatment for my mental health disorder | <input type="checkbox"/> I am not hopeless |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can reach out for help | <input type="checkbox"/> I am making progress |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm still alive | <input type="checkbox"/> The difficulties of the past can serve as inspiration to change the future |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm in treatment | <input type="checkbox"/> Although difficult, this situation is not impossible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can exercise my will | <input type="checkbox"/> I can face this challenge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have accountability and support | <input type="checkbox"/> I will not surrender to my addiction, I can move forward |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm not forced to change, but am choosing to change | <input type="checkbox"/> I can work my recovery plan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I deserve another chance | <input type="checkbox"/> I am able to solve problems |

Write down several items from the list above. Find someone in your group or circle of friends with whom you could share this information. Use these positive statements as inspiration to move your recovery forward.

ACHIEVING LONG-TERM RECOVERY

Difficult and painful consequences follow substance use and abuse, but long-term and stable recovery is the result of positive choices and changed behavior. Many of the negative consequences can be minimized, managed, or resolved. You need to be willing and committed to doing the long, hard work it takes to change. No one can do it for you. As you work your way through problems, you can turn your life around and achieve long-term recovery success.

For additional resources, see the appendix.