

# Substance Abuse in the Workplace

When we hear the word addiction, we often think of substances like alcohol or drugs. However, addiction is not limited to these substances. Non-substance addictions, such as gambling, sex, cell phone usage, and social media, are becoming increasingly prevalent in society. These addictions can have a significant impact on our mental health and overall well-being. In this blog post, we will explore the world of non-substance addiction, the impact it can have on our lives, and what we can do to minimize the impact of its effects.

The rise of non-substance addictions is a growing concern in society. According to recent statistics, 8.5% of the US population have a behavioral addiction, compared to 8.3% with substance addiction. Non-substance addictions are often referred to as behavioral addictions because they are driven by behavior that becomes compulsive and obsessive. These behaviors can be just as powerful and impactful as substance addictions.

One of the most significant differences between substance addiction and non-substance addiction is the way they affect the brain. Substance addiction creates an intense dopamine response in the brain, which makes individuals crave drugs. Non-substance addiction, on the other hand, creates a dopamine response in the brain through a deep-seated psychological belief that the behavior will be rewarding in some way. The brain is powerful, and when we engage in addictive behaviors, we feel a sense of stimulation because of what our brain tells us the activity will do for us.

Non-substance addictions can take many forms, from social media addiction to gambling addiction. Social media addiction, for example, can lead to feelings of anxiety, depression, and isolation. By constantly scrolling through our social media feeds, we can become numb to the world around us and lose touch with our emotions. Gambling addiction can lead to financial problems and strained relationships. When gambling becomes compulsive, individuals can become consumed with the desire to win, and this can be destructive to their lives and the lives of those around them.

**Group therapy** can be an effective tool for those struggling with non-substance addiction. Groups like Gamblers Anonymous or Overeaters Anonymous provide people with the support and accountability they

need to stay sober from their particular addiction. In these group settings, individuals can share their struggles, learn from others, and gain strength from their shared experiences.

**Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)** is a recognized tool for managing non-substance addictions. By focusing on thought patterns that lead to compulsive behaviors, CBT helps individuals identify triggers and develop healthier coping mechanisms. Mindfulness practices like meditation and yoga increase self-awareness, helping individuals address addictive behaviors before they escalate. Building a support network of family and friends who understand the struggle provides emotional support and accountability. Lastly, structured time management replaces addictive behaviors with healthy and productive activities, breaking the cycle of addiction.

Loved ones are crucial in supporting a person with non-substance addiction. They should educate themselves about:

- The Addiction
- Maintaining open communication
- Encourage seeking professional help
- Promoting healthy lifestyle changes.

Consistent support and understanding from family and friends can significantly facilitate the journey towards recovery. It is critical that we understand the nature of these addictions and work to minimize the impact they have. By becoming aware of our addictive behaviors, seeking help, and working with others, we can overcome these challenges. Whether you struggle with social media addiction or gambling addiction, know that there is hope, and there are resources available to help you. Remember, you are not alone, and with the right support, you can overcome your addictive behaviors and live a fulfilling life.

## Resources

Promoting mental health awareness can be achieved through programs like [Gateway to Hope's Empower training](#). This standout offering enhances community understanding of mental health, equipping individuals with tools to identify and respond to challenges.

The Hope and Healing Center & Institute also offers a warm line operated by [the Hope Line](#) team, and if relief is just a talk away you can call from 5-8 PM for a free 30-minute peer-counseling session with a Hope line operator (832-832-7337). For those who require immediate assistance, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK) and the Crisis Text Line (text HOME to 741741) are available 24/7. Both are free, and confidential and provide immediate support for people in distress, as well as prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones.