

# HELPFUL TERMS

## ABSTINENCE

The Minnesota Model—also known as the abstinence model—of addiction treatment was created in a state mental hospital in the 1950s by two young men, one of whom was to become a psychologist and the other a psychiatrist. Neither had prior experience treating addicts or alcoholics.

The key element to this addiction treatment blends professional and trained nonprofessional (recovering) staff around the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). The individualized treatment plan includes:

- active family involvement
- a 28-day in-patient setting
- participation in Alcoholics Anonymous both during and after treatment.

The education of patients and family about the disease of addiction made this a busy program from morning to night, seven days a week.

Source: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/10234566/>.

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## ADAPTIVE

Adaptive behavior is what everyone needs to learn to perform everyday tasks as part of society, including maintaining independence and meeting cultural expectations in both personal and social responsibility. Adaptive behavior levels are usually assessed through the following:

- self-help
- mobility
- health care
- communication
- domestic skills
- consumer skills
- community use
- practical academic skills
- vocational skills.

When someone shows limits in their adaptive behavior, it is one of the criteria for diagnosis or classification of intellectual developmental disorder and for determining legal competence.

Source: American Psychological Association <https://dictionary.apa.org/adaptive-behavior>.

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## **ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS (A.A.)**

A.A. is a fellowship of people who come together to solve their drinking problem. There is no charge to attend A.A. meetings, and no age or education requirements to participate. Membership is open to anyone who wants to do something about their drinking problem. A.A.'s primary purpose is to help alcoholics to achieve sobriety. A.A. has helped people recover since 1932. It's built on the simple foundation of one alcoholic sharing with another.

There are hundreds of fellowships that have grown out of the A.A. model, i.e., Gamblers Anonymous, Marijuana Anonymous, as well as Al-Anon and Nar-Anon that support the loved ones of people with a substance use disorder.

Source: [AA.org](http://AA.org).

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## **BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER (BPD)**

BPD is a serious mental illness that centers on the inability to manage emotions effectively. Most people with BPD have problems regulating their emotions and thoughts, engage in impulsive and sometimes reckless behavior, and typically have unstable relationships. It usually begins in teen or early adult years and occurs in the context of relationships: sometimes all relationships are affected, sometimes only one. While some persons with BPD are high functioning in certain settings, their private lives may be in turmoil.

Other disorders, such as depression, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, substance abuse and other personality disorders can often exist along with BPD, or the BPD can be missed altogether or misdiagnosed as bipolar disorder. For the person with bipolar disorder, the mood changes exist for weeks or even months. The mood changes in BPD are much shorter and can even occur within the day.

Source: National Education Alliance for Borderline Personality Disorder.

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## **CENTRE FOR ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH (CAMH)**

CAMH is Canada's largest mental health teaching hospital and one of the world's leading research centers in its field.

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## COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT)

CBT is a structured, time-limited, problem-focused and goal-oriented form of psychotherapy. CBT helps people learn to identify, question and change how their thoughts, attitudes and beliefs relate to the emotional and behavioral reactions that cause them difficulty. CBT focuses on the here-and-now—on the problems that come up in day-to-day life. CBT helps people to examine how they make sense of what is happening around them and how these perceptions affect the way they feel.

Source: The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, <https://www.camh.ca/>.

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## CONTINUING CARE/AFTERCARE

Because addiction and mental health conditions have a chronic and progressive nature, it's very important to manage symptoms during the recovery process. While there is no cure, these illnesses can be effectively managed just like other diseases. Continuing care is effective with varying degrees of support for the individual as they recover. Individual counseling, group and positive peer support, plus community mutual aid support groups, medical, psychological and psychiatric aspects of care are all important.

Source: Adapted from <https://www.hazeldenbettyford.org/>.

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## DIALECTICAL BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (DBT)

DBT is an evidence-based model of therapy that helps people learn and use new skills and strategies so that they build lives they feel are worth living. Dialectical means “the existence of opposites.” In DBT, people are taught two seemingly opposite strategies: acceptance (i.e., that their experiences and behaviors are valid), and change (i.e., that they have to make positive changes to manage emotions and move forward). A standard DBT program requires a one-year commitment. Shorter programs, sometimes called “DBT-informed programs,” use some methods or structures of DBT and can be very helpful for certain people. Developed for people with borderline personality disorder, DBT can help people with other mental health problems, including suicidal behaviour, self-harm, substance use, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and eating disorders.

Source: The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health <https://www.camh.ca/>.

# HELPFUL TERMS

## DSM-5

*The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, or *DSM*, is a reference book on mental health and brain-related conditions and disorders. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) is responsible for the writing, editing, reviewing, and publishing of this book. The number “5” attached to the name of the DSM refers to the fifth—and most recent—edition of this book. The DSM is a medical reference book for experts and professionals. Despite the very technical content, people who aren’t medical professionals may still find the book interesting or educational. No one should use either of these books as a substitute for seeing a trained, qualified mental health or medical provider.

DSM-5 no longer uses the terms substance abuse and substance dependence. Rather, it refers to substance use disorders, which are classified as mild, moderate, or severe. The level of severity is determined by the number of diagnostic criteria met by an individual.

Sources: The Cleveland Clinic

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/24291-diagnostic-and-statistical-manual-dsm-5>.

<https://www.naatp.org/resources/clinical/substance-use-disorder>.

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## HARM REDUCTION

A basic principle of harm reduction is respect for patients and their capacity to change. It is an approach to treating those with alcohol and other substance-use problems that does not require individuals to commit to complete abstinence before treatment begins. Instead, an array of practical strategies are deployed to reduce the negative health and social consequences of substance use, and psychotherapy aims to change behavior according to the goals of each patient, whether that means moderation of use or complete abstinence. The harm reduction approach values incremental steps. During the course of treatment, evidence demonstrates, many patients shift their goal to complete abstinence, a target that is often unimaginable or undesired at the outset.

Source: *Psychology Today*

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/harm-reduction>.



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## MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING (MI)

Motivational interviewing is an evidence-based therapeutic technique used in various programs to inspire self-motivation. With the help of a mental health professional, patients will develop the drive to effectively change behaviors and be successful in treatment.

Source: Rogers Behavioural Health, <https://rogersbh.org/resources/motivational-interviewing-wd-40-behavior-change>.

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## NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON DRUG ABUSE (NIDA)

NIDA's primary focus is to "advance science on drug use and addiction and to apply that knowledge to improve individual and public health." NIDA funds and conducts scientific research on drug use and addiction, and is part of the National Institutes of Health.

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## NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH)

The NIH is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and is the federal medical research agency focusing on all aspects of human health in the United States. It is responsible for important medical discoveries and improving the lives of citizens through research and study.

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## SELF-HARM

Self-harm, also called self-injurious behavior, refers to the intentional act of causing harm or injury to oneself. It is often a way for individuals to cope with emotional pain, stress, or difficult feelings. Self-harm can include cutting, burning, hitting, or other methods of physical harm. Self-harm is typically a sign of underlying emotional distress. Anyone engaging in such behavior may require support and professional help to address the root causes of their distress and develop healthier coping mechanisms. If you, or someone you know, is struggling with self-harm, it's crucial to seek assistance from mental health professionals, counselors or support networks.

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## SUICIDE

Suicide is the act of intentionally causing one's own death, and is often related to complex stressors and health issues. Suicide occurs across all ages, incomes, ethnicities and social factors. Most often, people experience suicidal thoughts when they have lost hope and feel helpless. They want their pain to end, and they may see no other way out. Suicide can also be an impulsive act that follows the use of substances. In some cases, people with psychotic illnesses such as schizophrenia may hear voices that tell them to harm themselves. The vast majority of people who have suicidal thoughts, or who have attempted suicide, do not die by suicide. Many people can recover from these experiences and live full and meaningful lives.

Source: <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-illness-and-addiction-index/suicide>.

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## SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY

This form of recovery is based on sustained action. Recovery doesn't travel from Point A to Point B. Instead, it is dynamic, fluid, and not linear. Sustained recovery is set within a framework of accountability. Accountability supports authentic transformation. Accountability is sustainability. Being accountable is needed for sustainability.

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## TEENAGERISM

This is a casual term. Teenagerism is a natural phase of physical and emotional development that happens to humans between the pre-teen years to the late teens and even beyond. It's a challenging time for parents in terms of understanding their children. Parenting a teen in crisis requires a whole next level of understanding and insight. Teenagerism is less about numeric or biological age and more about typical experiences of teenage life. It's about teens perceiving themselves as more grown up, wanting their way and wanting to be treated more as an adult, i.e., rebelliousness, roller coaster of emotions, exploration of identity, a focus on peer relationships, sexual exploration and drugs and alcohol experimentation. Emerging into adulthood is a vulnerable phase of development. From adolescence to the age of twenty-five represents a particularly sensitive time. Teen brains are still under construction and emerging into adulthood is a vulnerable phase of development.

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## TEENAGERISM (CONTINUED)

For our purposes in this book, teenagerism refers to common teenage characteristics. From the pre-teen years to the mid-twenties, the brain is developing. Pruning grey matter and strengthening connections to the prefrontal cortex; the reasoning part of the brain. It's a phase and stage of ongoing development typically observed in teenagers. Common characteristics could include:

- new behaviors and attitudes;
  - emotional rollercoasters, shifting in minutes from highs to lows and back again;
  - unique perspectives;
  - risk taking and puzzling lifestyle choices; and
  - cultural coming of age practices, learning to drive, going out on dates, etc.
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## TWELVE-STEP FACILITATION THERAPY (TSF)

TSF uses a set of evidence-based guidelines for treating substance abuse that is based on the 12-step model used by Alcoholics Anonymous. It's a form of intervention for therapists and clinicians, using a manual that describes treatment that has shown successful outcomes on abstinence, sustained recovery, and other aspects of quality of life.

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## WELL-BEING

The American Psychological Association, Dictionary of Psychology describes "well-being" as follows: "n. a state of happiness and contentment, with low levels of distress, overall good physical and mental health and outlook, or good quality of life." *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries* describes "well-being" as "general health and happiness."

**Author's note: I would also suggest that you define your own sense of well-being—what it looks and feels like to you—and let that be your goal in the days, weeks and months ahead.**