

# *Medical Aspects of Substance Use Disorders*

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## Participant Worksheet

1. The National Institute on Drug Abuse describes addiction as a brain disease. What does it mean to you that you have a brain disease?

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2. What was the most interesting thing you learned about brain chemistry and addiction from this video?

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3. Have you ever experienced withdrawal symptoms? If so, please describe them.

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4. Neurotransmitters send chemical messages between the brain's neurons. This is how neurons "talk" to each other. When you used, what was your drug of choice "saying" to your brain?

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5. A person is powerless to control the effects of alcohol or other drugs on his or her brain. Does knowing this help you better appreciate Step One in the Twelve Step program: "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol [and other drugs]—that our lives had become unmanageable"? Please explain your answer.

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6. What was your drug of choice: alcohol, an opioid, sedative, stimulant, hallucinogen, or cannabinoid? In your own words, please describe how your drug of choice may have affected your brain and body.

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7. Step Two says, “Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” After watching the video, how do you now understand the word “sanity” in relation to your brain chemistry?

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8. A severe substance use disorder or addiction is characterized by compulsive use, loss of control, tolerance (needing more of the drug to get the same effect), continued use despite negative consequences, and withdrawal. Which of these characteristics did you experience? Please describe them.

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9. Craving is in part a physical, neurobiological response—your brain wants what it was used to getting. How does knowing this help you better handle cravings?

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