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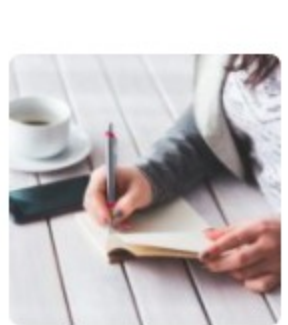
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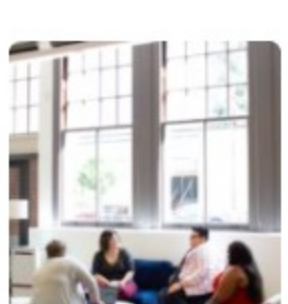
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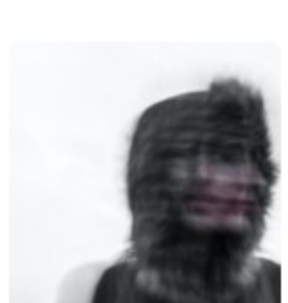
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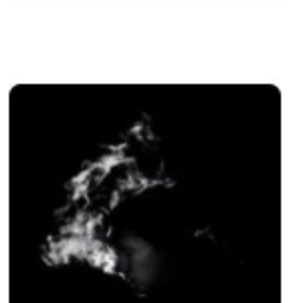
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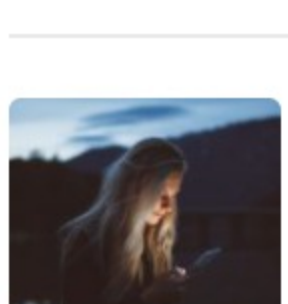
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## Can Anyone Really Be A Functional Addict

Louisville Addiction Treatment Center - November 25, 2021

The phrase functional addict goes against what most people think they know about addiction. When we think of addiction, we picture images of people living on the streets, unable to hold down a job or form lasting relationships with friends and family. This is the reality of addiction for a lot of people, but this depiction that we often see in the media is not how addiction always works.

Addiction can present itself in a number of ways and some people are still able to keep up with their daily responsibilities. But can anyone really be a functional addict?

### What Is The Definition Of An Addict?

An addict is someone who is unable to control their use of a substance, even though it may be hurting them in some way. Addicts tend to spend all their time thinking about how they are going to get the next fix rather than focusing on things that are important in life, such as work or relationships. As much as an addict would like to stop using, they usually cannot without outside support.

There are several specific criteria that are used to define a substance use disorder (SUD). These include:

- Using larger doses or for a longer period of time than intended
- Unsuccessful efforts to cut down on use
- Spending a lot of time getting, using, and recovering from the effects of use
- Craving the drug or feeling urges to use it constantly
- Increasing tolerance for the substance
- Not being able to carry out major roles at work, home or school because of substance use. This might be missing days at work due to hangovers, making excuses so you don't have to go to work, etc. Someone with a SUD might also let their performance slide in these areas
- Continued use even though it is causing problems in relationships with family and friends. It can cause friction if your partner nags you about your habit for instance or if your boss tells you that you

Anybody that exhibits these symptoms is likely an addict and needs to seek [specialist treatment](#) for their issues.

### What Is A Functional Addict?

Functional addicts meet most of the criteria listed above, but they don't necessarily meet all of them. Although they are unable to control their substance use, their tolerance is increasing, and it may be causing them serious mental health problems, it doesn't have an outward effect on them.

A functional addict is still able to hold down a job and often, they perform well at work despite their addiction. They are also able to maintain good familial relationships and have an active social life.

Functional addiction is most common in alcohol but it can be present with other substances. However, people that take hard drugs like Heroin are less likely to be functional. It also depends on how easy it is for people to access increasing amounts of the substance. Those that have high-paying jobs and do not face financial barriers to their addiction are less likely to engage in criminal activity to fund it, so are more likely to keep their job.

So, can anyone really be a functional addict? In the sense that they are able to keep their job and maintain a good outward appearance of living a normal life, people can be functional. However, these people still have a serious SUD and this has far-reaching effects on their mental and physical health. It is also likely to continue getting worse over time and those areas of their life will be harder to maintain. In this respect, they are not truly functional, they simply have not reached a point where their addiction is damaging their life to such an extent yet.

### Do Functional Addicts Need To Seek Treatment?

The problem with functional addicts is that they often don't seek treatment because the signs go unnoticed. But addicts of any kind need to be [admitted to a treatment facility](#).

Common signs of a functional addict include:

- Hiding their substance use
- Trying to justify it, often by comparing themselves to other non-functional addicts
- Being unable to control their substance use
- Having a very high tolerance
- Still maintaining their everyday responsibilities

If you are concerned that you or somebody in your life is a functional addict, there are options. [Intensive outpatient programs](#) are designed for functional addicts that need support but cannot commit to a full-time rehab facility because they are still holding down a job and supporting a family.

There are also [telemedicine options](#) available, so people can seek support from their own homes.

Just because you can hold down a job, that doesn't mean that you don't have a serious addiction problem. So, if you are unable to control your substance use, it's vital that you seek specialist treatment right away.

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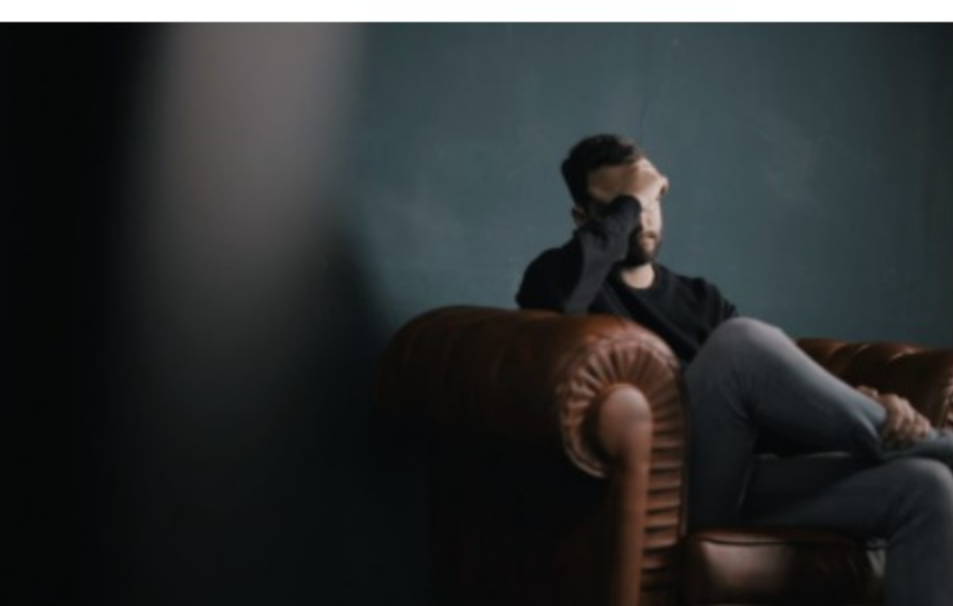


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