Prescription Medications, Signs of Dependency

Anytime medication use interferes with normal living activities, it may have become abuse. This includes problems with family and friends. Psychological dependence may have developed when your mind tells you that the medication is needed. This is usually followed by physical dependence. This happens when continuing increases of medications are needed to get the same feeling or “high”. This is known as addiction or chemical dependency. A person's risk is much higher if there is a history of chemical dependency in the family. Prescription medication abuse is similar to “street drug” abuse.

Even though the medication has been prescribed by your caregiver, he/she may not be aware that medications are becoming a problem for you. You would have to let him/her know.

SIGNS OF CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY

- Are told by friends and/or family that medications have become a problem.
- Take your medications more than the amount prescribed by your caregiver.
- Fight when using medications.
- Have blackouts (not remembering what you did while using).
- Feel sick from using medications but continue to use anyway.
- Lie about use or amounts of medications (chemicals) used.
- Need chemicals to get you going.
- Suffer in work performance or school because of drug use.
- Need medications to relate to people or feel comfortable in social situations.
- Use medications to forget problems.

Answering “yes” to any of the above signs of chemical dependency indicates there are problems. The longer the use of medications continues, the greater the problems will become.

If there is a family history of drug or alcohol use, it is best to be aware of possible problems with medications. Medication use may lead to physical tolerance. You then need to use more of the medication to get the same feeling. This is followed by addiction. So medications become the most important part of life. If it becomes more important to take your medications than to participate in the usual activities of life (including relating to friends and family), it is likely that your medications have become a problem. Addiction is followed by dependency. Your medications are now needed just to feel normal.

If you have been prescribed a medication by your caregiver which you feel has become a problem, talk to your caregiver. Let him/her know what your feelings are. Your caregiver can help you and perhaps prescribe a medication which will not make you feel so dependent on it.

Document Released: 11/10/2005 Document Re-Released: 03/16/2010
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