



# Addiction Support Handbook

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Creating safe spaces for you to share



# Substance or Alcohol Addiction



## Warning Signs of Substance and Alcohol use Disorder

- Bloodshot eyes, pupils larger or smaller than usual.
- Changes in appetite or sleep patterns.
- Deterioration of physical appearance, personal grooming habits.
- Runny nose or sniffing.
- Sudden weight loss or weight gain.
- Tremors, slurred speech, or impaired coordination.

## Having the Conversation

Here are some tips to start a conversation with your colleagues about their drug and alcohol use.

Prepare for the chat:

- Preparation is key — It's normal to be anxious.
- Pick the right time — Only start the conversation when the person is not currently affected by drugs or alcohol.
- It's OK to ask someone directly about drink or drug use. But don't make assumptions that the person is even using drink or drugs, or about how much or how often they use drugs.
- Use 'I' statements to express your concerns about the person, for example, "I'm a bit worried because..." or "I've noticed that lately...".
- Give the person a chance to respond and express their views and opinions.
- Try to listen to the person without being judgemental or accusatory.
- Talk about the support available that can help the person reduce or stop their alcohol or drug use.
- Emphasise that you are happy to talk again and provide support. You might ask them if they want to chat again in a week or two.

The person may not agree that their alcohol or drug use is a problem and might become defensive or angry. If this happens, you haven't failed — the person may need more time to think about what you discussed.

Signpost to Six MHA

**SAFE SPACES**  
*for* **EVERYONE**



# Gambling Addiction

## Warning Signs of a Gambling Addiction

- Feeling restless or irritable more than usual.
- Lying to hide the extent of their gambling.
- Experience anxiety and depression.
- Notice changes in their sleeping pattern.
- Have mood swings.
- Struggle to concentrate.
- Lose interest in other activities.
- Neglect personal responsibilities.

## Having the Conversation

To start a conversation with someone about their gambling, you could say:

- “I can see you’re not happy at the minute. Is there anything you want to talk about?”
- “Are you okay, you don’t seem like yourself at the moment?”
- “Do you gamble more than you feel you should? If you want, we could look at what advice and support is out there together?”
- “Do you feel your gambling might be tipping into something less enjoyable?”
- “Do you want to talk about how you’re feeling about your gambling?”

If they tell you they are worried about their gambling you could ask the following:

- Are you preoccupied with gambling, such as constantly planning gambling activities and how to get more gambling money?
- Do you need to gamble with increasing amounts of money to get the same thrill?
- Have you tried to control, cut back or stop gambling, without success?
- Do you feel restless or irritable when you try to cut down on gambling?
- Do you try to get back lost money by gambling more?
- Do you ask others to bail you out of financial trouble because you gambled money away?

The person may not agree that their gambling is a problem and might become defensive or angry. If this happens, you haven’t failed — the person may need more time to think about what you discussed.

## Signpost to Six MHA

“ I want to thank you for all the time and help you have given me to date. Your rapid support and advice is helping already and I am very pleased with the therapy you organised for me so quickly. ”

Kind Regards X



# Food Addiction / Eating Disorders



## Anorexia Nervosa

Restriction of food intake due to fear of weight gain.

## Binge Eating Disorder

Uncontrolled episodes of excessive food consumption.

## Other Specified Feeding or Eating Disorders (OSFED)

Symptoms that don't fit a single diagnosis.

## Bulimia Nervosa

Cycles of binge eating followed by purging.

## Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID)

Fear-based food avoidance.

## Warning Signs of an Eating Disorder

- Severe restriction of food or extreme dieting.
- Binge eating followed by guilt, shame, or purging behaviors.
- Obsession with body image, weight, or food control.
- Frequent bathroom breaks after eating.
- Denial of the seriousness of low body weight
- Anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal.
- Physical symptoms such as weight fluctuations, digestive issues, and fatigue.



## Having the Conversation

Here are some tips to start a conversation with your colleagues about their eating disorder

Choose a calm, quiet and safe environment, not during mealtimes or when the person is stressed or anxious.

Use 'I' statements, not 'you' statements to avoid placing the blame on the individual;

- "I've been worried about you lately"
- "I've noticed you've been a bit preoccupied lately..." Don't focus solely on food or their weight
- Focus on your concern for their health and how they are feeling and behaving.
- "I've noticed that you've been withdrawn and upset lately. I'm worried about XYZ behaviour - What's going on?"

Things to avoid saying and/or doing:

- Offering simple solutions "Just eat."
- Interrupting, disagreeing or blaming, or using "you" statements – "You are choosing to do this to yourself," "You are being unreasonable".
- Forcing a conversation if it's not going well. It's better to try again later.
- Getting into details about food and weight (these are symptoms, not the problem) or diagnosing. Focus on their health, feelings and behaviours.
- Expressing anger if they are not responding.
- Commenting on their body or weight.
- Overwhelming them with information about diagnosis or treatment. Focus on empathy and connection. Take it one step at a time





# Addiction

Addiction is a chronic, relapsing condition that compels individuals to engage in certain behaviours or consume substances despite negative consequences. It affects not only physical and mental health but also personal relationships, financial stability, and overall well-being. Addictions can take many forms, ranging from substance use to behavioural dependencies, each having unique impacts on the individual.

Some other addictions to be aware of, these can be either

**Behavioural**

**OR**

**Substance**

**SHOPPING**

**GAMING**

**SEX OR LOVE**

**NICOTINE**

**Addiction and Mental health issues are often cooccurring..**

**Physical Health** - Addictions can lead to long-term and sometimes irreversible damage to vital organs and systems. This includes everything from weakened immune function and chronic diseases to the risk of fatal overdose or life-threatening complications. Addicted individuals often neglect self-care, leading to malnutrition, exhaustion, and susceptibility to injury or illness.

**Mental Health** - Addictions significantly impact mental well-being, leading to disorders like anxiety, depression, and in severe cases, suicidal tendencies. The obsession with the addictive substance or behaviour becomes central to the person's life, often leading to cognitive distortions, poor decision-making, and an inability to focus on real-life priorities.

**Social Relationships** - Addictions often fracture relationships with loved ones due to deceit, neglect, and erratic behaviour. The individual may isolate themselves or experience alienation from those who don't understand their struggles. Marriages, friendships, and parental bonds often deteriorate as the addiction takes precedence over personal connections.



“ Thank you for organising my counselling so quickly and thank you for taking such time to talk to me - you have made me feel much more confident in asking for help and I have complete trust in your judgement as I know you have my best interests at heart

Kind Regards X

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# Six's Solutions

All of our solutions come with the same strict confidentiality agreement as if you were seeing your personal GP.

- **Addiction Helpline** - We provide a 24 hour, 7 days a week confidential helpline, operated by our dedicated team of Addiction Specialists who are backed up by our Medical Professionals for any safeguarding requirements.
- **Addiction Therapists** - We have a network of over 150 therapists and counsellors across the country. After your conversation with our addiction team, they will proceed to match you with one of our BACP recognised therapists and counsellors.
- **Unique Peer Support System** - Our recovery workers are experienced in supporting you at all stages of your addiction and can identify with your issues having been where you are.
- **Addiction Recovery Meeting** - A 6 Addiction run, online recovery meeting providing you with community and connection.
- **Six MHA Support App** - A powerful online tool, containing plenty of addiction recovery support information that can also signpost you to other holistic support services. Contains questionnaires for MHFA's to signpost to.
- **6 Addiction Recovery Programmes** - 12-week Staying Stopped programme and the 26-day Staying In programme are both designed to aid you in early recovery in a way which suits you best.

## SIX MHA

We provide a diverse variety of treatments and services to aid you in your recovery. At SIX MHA we know that no two people's journeys are the same.

Our team have been where you are now and have many years free from addiction between them, which is why we can provide you with the familiar, friendly, non-judgmental advice and support you need to start your journey to recovery.

Our programmes at SIX MHA encourage not only your abstinence from substances but also furnish you with the mental, physical and emotional support you need on your journey.

With our unique Peer Support Programme we ensure that whilst you find your way in recovery, you are not alone. Available 24/7 we are here to help navigate and support you.

“

Thank you for your encouragement and support when I called you last night in such an upset state. It was not easy for me to ring you as I have been trying to pluck up the courage for weeks as I have imposter syndrome and do not like to tell people how I am feeling. You were so lovely and listened to me for ages even though it was the middle of the night so thank you very much and for organising my counselling so quickly.

”

Kind Regards X

# Support Contact List



## SIX MHA

Barratt Redrow Team  
Phone - 07441 935 913  
Email - [addiction@sixmha.org](mailto:addiction@sixmha.org)  
App Code - BAR-615-869



Download the app

## Crisis Hotlines

The NHS have a specialised Mental Health crisis team, if over 18 you can dial 111 and select option 2, to speak to trained staff 24 hours a day.

Other useful numbers are:

The Samaritans: 116 123 (24/7)

Sane line: 0845 767 8000 (6pm-11pm)

Rethink: 0808 801 0525 (Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm)

CALM: 0800 58 58 58 (5pm-midnight)

Maytree: 020 7263 7070 ([www.maytree.org.uk](http://www.maytree.org.uk))

Text SHOUT to 85258: (24/7, [www.giveashout.org](http://www.giveashout.org))



## Mental Health First Aiders Role

As an MHFAider for Barratt Redrow you are there to listen, and signpost your colleagues to the most appropriate support.

Anything that is shared with you has the same confidentiality laws as when someone is sharing with their GP unless you are concerned there is a risk to life

If you are in any doubt you can call the Six helpline and speak with one of our team, who can support you in any situation.



**IT'S OKAY  
NOT TO  
FEEL OKAY!**

[www.sixmha.org](http://www.sixmha.org)