

# Signs of Addiction to Look out for

The NHS defines Addiction as not having control over doing, taking or using something to the point where it could be harmful to you.

According to the Mental Health Foundation, 3.1% of Adults in England show signs of drug dependence, with 1.2% indicating probable alcohol dependence. In Ireland, one in thirty people have a gambling addiction. On top of this, alcohol use disorders are at 8.5% in Ireland according to the WHO.

**What can we do to help? Here are 4 signs someone might be struggling with addiction and what you can do to help them:**

## 1. Changes in Behaviour

Something to look out for when you are concerned about a loved one if you think they might be struggling with addiction is a change in behaviour. They might be changing who they spend time with, no longer interested in their hobbies. You may notice attendance at work or school dropping too.

## 2. Physical Symptoms

Often when people are struggling with addiction there are some physical signs that become apparent that you can look out for. These include dramatic weight changes, bloodshot eyes, withdrawal symptoms such as shaking/sweating, memory loss and negative impact on skin, hair and teeth.



### 3. Financial Difficulties

Due to the reliance on the substance or behaviour related to the addiction, this leads to an increased financial burden to keep up with the addiction. This may result in them borrowing money off loved ones or even in some cases stealing.

### 4. Psychological Signs

Addiction often leads to mental health issues and challenges. Some psychological signs of addiction you might notice include suicidal thoughts, depression, mood swings, paranoia, defensiveness among many others.

These signs can come from a variety of different causes so may not be addiction but when noticed alongside all or many of the above signs combined can be an indicator that someone you love is struggling with addiction.

### How can you help?

1. Signpost them towards supports available to them such as charities, helplines and friends/family who are happy to speak to them to help if they need someone to talk to.
2. Encourage them to go to therapy, there may be an underlying issue where a person may have tried the substance as a form of stress management for example, by attending therapy they will be introduced to healthier tools and coping mechanisms to keep the challenge under control.
3. Advise them to visit their GP to ensure they are getting the help they need to treat the addiction and help them get better in a way that also prevents relapse.

