

## WPCS Youth Autobiography

Please read this carefully before starting. You will need to allow more than one sitting to complete this. Remember that the purpose of this is to examine all of the effects of your substance use without denial.

### **Signs and Symptoms of Chemical Dependence List:**

Please place a check mark next to any of the following statements that apply to you since you began using substances:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increase in the amount of alcohol or other drugs used  | <input type="checkbox"/> Arrested for MIP (Minor in Possession)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dramatic change in mood when drinking or using         | <input type="checkbox"/> Denial of any problem                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dishonesty with peers about drinking or using          | <input type="checkbox"/> Failed attempts to quit or cut down on chemical use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Association with known heavy users                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent excuses for chemical use                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Protecting supply of chemicals                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Low self-image                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hangovers or bad trips                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> School suspension because of chemical use           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent mood changes                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Deterioration of school grades                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stealing money or other items to get drugs             | <input type="checkbox"/> Using drugs while alone                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health problems  | <input type="checkbox"/> Suicidal thoughts or behaviors                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dropped by girlfriend or boyfriend because of drug use | <input type="checkbox"/> Violent behavior when high or drunk                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preoccupation with drugs                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Increase in frequency of drug use                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increase in tolerance                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Memory loss   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Using drugs in the morning before school               | <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of friends                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent broken promises                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Defensive when confronted                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Truancy from school                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Going in for a chemical dependency evaluation       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entering a chemical dependency treatment program       |  |

### **Lying to yourself**

It doesn't seem helpful when some people get in other people's faces and accuse them of being in denial. It usually boils down to a shouting match: "You're in denial" "No I'm not" "Yes you are" It is true, however, that people sometimes lie to themselves about their use of alcohol or other drugs. People who are lying to themselves usually don't realize what they're doing. Try now to be totally honest. Really challenge yourself. Are there ways you've been lying to yourself? Put a check mark next to any of the ways listed below that you may have lied to yourself.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Underestimated the amount of drugs you were using   | <input type="checkbox"/> Minimized your use of drugs (said it wasn't so much) by comparing yourself to bigger users               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Downplayed the trouble you were getting in  | <input type="checkbox"/> Said everyone is doing the same things as you, so it's no big deal                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Said it would be easy to control your drug use when really it wasn't that easy                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Said you haven't been hurt by drugs even though you secretly worried that you were                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Said you could stop whenever you wanted to stop, but probably it would be harder than you admitted. | <input type="checkbox"/> Said you don't care because you're only hurting yourself and no one else                                 |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Blamed your drug use on someone or something else  |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Minimized your drug use (said it wasn't so much) by saying you only used in certain limited situations   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Ignored your drug use because you kept thinking you would do something about it in the future            |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Excused your drug use by saying "no one's perfect"   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Argued that the drugs you used were harmless, when really they were hurting you and had some bad effects |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Felt drug problems couldn't happen to you, they only happen to other people                              |

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- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Made jokes about your drug use so that you wouldn't have to deal with reality  | <input type="checkbox"/> Used because you felt the people complaining about your drug use were hypocrites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Got high so you would stop thinking about how serious your drug use had become |   |

**Substance Use:** We ask you to place your substance use in a category: abuse or dependence. The following will walk you through that process. Remember that you can meet the criteria for abuse for one substance (ex: Alcohol) but dependence for another (ex: Cannabis).

List all of the mood altering substances that you have used in your life. Rank them according to preference.

First choice:

Second choice:

Third choice;

Fourth choice:

Now answer the following criteria questions for all of your choices above by placing a check mark in the box for each substance if the answer to the question is YES.

- | 1 <sup>st</sup>                             | 2 <sup>nd</sup>                             | 3 <sup>rd</sup>                             | 4 <sup>th</sup>                             |  |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                    | Did you have tolerance to the substance?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                    | Did you have withdrawal effects from the substance?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                    | Did you ever attempt to cut down or fail to stop the use of the substance?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                    | Did you ever use more than you had planned?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                    | Did you spend a great deal of time in activities necessary to obtain, use, and recover from the use of the substance?  |
| 1 <sup>st</sup><br><input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <sup>nd</sup><br><input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <sup>rd</sup><br><input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <sup>th</sup><br><input type="checkbox"/> | Did you reduce or give up important social, work related, or recreational activities because of substance use?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                    | Did you continue using the substance despite knowledge of having continued physical, emotional, or psychological problems caused or made worse by the Substance? |

If you answered Yes to three or more of the above then you meet criteria for dependence. Do you agree with this? Why or why not?

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- | 1 <sup>st</sup>          | 2 <sup>nd</sup>          | 3 <sup>rd</sup>          | 4 <sup>th</sup>          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Has the use of any substance caused problems in your life more than once in the last year?                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have you used any substance in dangerous situations more than once in the last year?                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Has your substance use resulted in failure to fulfill obligations at school, work, or at home in the last year? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you have legal problems as a result of your use in the last year?  |

If you answered Yes to any of the above questions you meet the criteria for abuse. Do you agree with this, why or why not?

### **Unmanageability**

Unmanageability has something to do with how we are coping with our life's problems as well as how we are coping with and facing the problems or consequences related to our substance use. It must be remembered that life's problems and coping abilities don't just take care of themselves simply because we stop drinking and using.

Consciously or unconsciously, frequently we decide to use drugs and/or alcohol when we are engaged in thinking habits or are experiencing certain feelings. This section is designed to shed some light on the thinking habits you most commonly use, as well as the feelings that you typically use over, in order to self-medicate. It is important to look closely at your thinking habits and emotions because not only will knowing about them help you learn about your reasons for past use, but will help you with preventing future relapses. Thinking habits are unconscious means of protecting yourself from the anxiety of confronting painful fears or problems. They keep you stuck in addiction or addict behaviors.

Read over the list of thinking habits below and mark the ones that you use most often.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lying: Three types:<br><input type="checkbox"/> By Omission: A lie that is told when you only tell part of the truth and intentionally leave out important details.<br><input type="checkbox"/> By Commission: A lie that is told when you completely make something up.<br><input type="checkbox"/> By Assent: A lie that is told when you attempt to make someone believe one way about what you think or feel, when you really feel something completely different. | <input type="checkbox"/> Blaming: When you want someone to believe that it was not you who "caused" whatever to happen.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Justifying: When you are trying to explain the reasons for your actions to avoid accountability.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Assuming: When you take something for granted or believe what someone tells you without checking to see if it's true or not.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Minimizing: When you want things to sound smaller, less significant, or less serious than what they really are. Key words to listen for are "just", "hardly", "ever", and "only".<br><input type="checkbox"/> Uniqueness: A thought you might have when you believe that you are better than others, believing that you are not responsible for following the same rules as everyone else, and/or believing that you can make up your own rules as you go along.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Vagueness: When you are intentionally trying to avoid giving a specific answer to someone's question. Your goal is to be unclear and to confuse others, perhaps hoping that whoever is questioning you will let it go at that. |
|---|---|

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Key phrases to listen for are “I’m not sure”, “It might have...”, “I can’t remember”, and “I don’t know”.

**Putdowns:** When you think you have to be better than someone else. They’re used to build yourself up in front of other people at someone else’s expense. Mimicking, bragging, or name calling are also forms of putdowns. For whatever reason putdowns are used, there is an intentional attempt to be cruel.

**Redefining:** Changing the meaning of events or situations so that they seem different than they really are. This is a great way to avoid responsibility.

**Lack of empathy:** When you say or do something to someone regardless of how it may hurt or upset them. You do not stop to think of how your behavior or attitude may affect others, or that you don’t really care.

**Ingratiating:** When you are trying to make people think that they are different from the way they really are. It is also a useful way for people to hide their motives. Other terms for ingratiating are “brown nosing” and “sucking up”.

**Suggestibility:** Allowing yourself to be easily misled into doing something that you know you shouldn’t do and at the same time, not putting much effort into trying to talk yourself out of doing whatever you’re going to do.

**Entitlement:** Believing that you have the right to have something just because you want it. Though stealing is a typical example of entitlement,

those who use others to get what they want are also using the entitlement thinking habit.

**Victim Stance:** This is a way to get people to feel sorry for you instead of them holding you responsible for your decisions or actions.

**Power Play:** This is a way to get others on your side for you to get your way. Often people will manipulate others as a form of power play, or use aggression to intimidate others.

**Closed Channel:** This is used when you use the following techniques: tuning out your surroundings, not answering when spoken to, turning up your music, plugging your ears, etc. This is used when you intentionally do not want to be confronted about your attitude or behavior, or when you are not receptive to feedback and you do not express that in a courteous way.

**Black and White Thinking:** This is a way of seeing things as one extreme or another. You can also take a singular incident and globalize it into a general rule. Listen for words like “always”, “never”, “totally”, and “completely”.

**Denial:** This is used when you refuse to believe or accept something that is true.

**Rescuing:** This is used when you “rescue” others from their difficult feelings and don’t allow them to deal with their own problems.

**Intellectualization:** This is when you use excessive reason as an unconscious means of protecting yourself from the anxiety of confronting painful fears or problems.

After reviewing this list, you may have realized that you have used these thought patterns while you were using drugs and alcohol or to avoid consequences. You may have also realized that you still continue to use these thinking habits though you are in recovery. This is important because once you are able to identify which thinking habits you use, and how you use them, you will be able to address each one and repair that lapse in logic. In the following section, please list your three most frequently used thinking habits and include an example of how you have used it.

Now that you are able to identify some of your thinking habits, what do you think you need to do in order to stop using them? What help do you need to be able to stop using them?

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While you were using alcohol or drugs, your behavior tends to become inappropriate or destructive (Assault, drinking and driving, verbal abuse, stealing, destruction or property)

a.) List two specific examples of how you have been destructive when using alcohol or drugs.

b.) What were your feelings at the time while you were under the influence? Did your feelings change once you sobered up?

Family, Friends, and others (coaches or teachers) may have complained about your drinking or using drugs. Younger children may have been affected but not said anything.

a.) Give one specific example of how your substance use has affected a girlfriend, family member, parent, other. Include your feelings then and now.

b.) Describe a specific incident in which you were affected, as a child, by someone else's drug/alcohol use? Include your feelings then and now.

In what ways have I lost self-respect due to my substance use? What do I think of what my reputation is amongst my family and friends? What would I guess (based on my behavior) that they would say about me when I'm not around? Be specific.

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Which do you think will be harder to cope with: internal relapse triggers or external relapse triggers? Why?

In order to best help you, what is the most important thing we need to know about your addiction/use history or pattern of use?

What feeling and/or thoughts are you having as a result of completing this 1<sup>st</sup> step?

The Future: If you have used drugs or alcohol, how do you plan to remain abstinent in the future?

If you choose abstinence, how do you plan to do this?

If you choose to use again, how will you know that your use has become a problem? (Remember all drugs are illegal and therefore the assumption is abstinence).

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*Timeline*

**Birth**

**Now**

**Key: Please choose a different color for each event and plot them on the time line above.**

**Positive Life Event**

**Negative Life Event**

**Using Event**

**Recovery Event**

**Other:**

