

Alcohol addiction

Alcohol is widely consumed and a socially accepted part of western social culture. Many myths and attitudes towards drinking exist, some positive, some negative, which sometimes serve to confuse when it comes to the question of whether you are a problem drinker, or not.

At CHARTER we take a simple approach to the complex subject of alcoholism: if you drink and trouble follows, then there's a problem. It's not always about how much you drink, how often, or if you have to drink in the mornings or get the shakes. Although these are sure fire signs that alcohol is a problem, sometimes the clues are subtler. They come in the form of unshakeable anxiety, depression and sleeplessness; relationship breakdown or stress. Sometimes people change when they drink, and not for the best. If you suffer from any of these symptoms it's certainly worth having an assessment as the sooner you get the support the more choice you have.

Where large amounts of alcohol are being consumed on a daily basis (which is where most untreated drink problems end up), a further element of risk is introduced: physical dependency. This is where the body requires alcohol in order to function at all. Withdrawal symptoms from alcohol are **potentially fatal**, and need to be managed in a medically supervised way. At Charter we can advise you on your best options for a safe detox either at home or in a clinical environment.

Alcohol addiction or alcoholism is a condition suffered by a significant proportion of adults in the UK (as many as one in twelve, according to some studies). Alcoholic drinking patterns vary, but almost always involve an element of compulsion (an irresistible urge to drink), loss of control (of drinking, behaviour and life manageability) and feelings of shame, guilt and anger associated with the use of alcohol. The alcoholic or problem drinker frequently drinks to find some kind of 'solution' for life's difficulties and without it the person usually experiences anxiety and loss; life seems next to impossible.

Distinctions exist between behaviours variously described as 'problem drinking', 'alcohol abuse', 'alcohol addiction', 'binge drinking' and so on, whereas in casual conversation

these phrases are often used interchangeably. There are many different manifestations of 'having a drink problem'. But this is a secondary consideration. If you are seeking help for yourself or someone you know and you suspect alcohol is part of the problem, you are likely to be right. In fact, most alcoholics, though outwardly and inwardly full of denial of their condition, know in their hearts that they are in the grip of a serious problem which they have lost the ability to control.

The plain fact is this: what causes problems, is a problem. If alcohol is fuelling distress and causing trouble in your life, whether in relationships or in the family, at work, financially, physically or emotionally, then your relationship with alcohol needs to be addressed. In the vast majority of cases, the problem is not going to go away on its own: in fact, alcoholism is a progressive condition that worsens over time.

In addition to the effects of alcohol in destroying lives and families through the behaviours and consequences of addiction, the health risks of alcohol abuse are serious. Cognitive and emotional impairment results from the start, including impairment of judgement which increases the risk of serious accident and involvement in dangerous situations. Long-term consumption of alcohol in excessive quantities is capable of damaging almost every organ and system in the body.

At your assessment at Charter we can help you to look carefully at your drinking, understand where things are going wrong, and advise what treatment options will be best for you.

Some facts

1. You are high risk if:
 - You have a family history of addiction and alcoholism
 - You are under significant stress and using alcohol to cope
 - You are not good at self care
 - You are not good at handling your emotions
2. It can take between three months and a year to fully recover from the effects of alcohol withdrawal

If you think you suffering from alcohol addiction then give us a call, we can help

Call 020 7323 4970

www.charterharleystreet.com