

The Doctor's Opinion

Physical allergy and mental obsession

Printable worksheet · 9 parts

Name _____ Date _____

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PART 1 OF 9

Question 1 of 9

Reflections on the medical model of addiction

Manifestation of an Allergy

"We believe, and so suggested a few years ago, that the action of these chronic alcoholics is a manifestation of an allergy; that the phenomenon of cravings is limited to this class and never occurs in the average temperate drinker."

Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book (4th ed.). (2002). Alcoholics Anonymous World Services.

What does a 'manifestation of an allergy' mean to you? How are you allergic to substances? What does that allergy look like to you? What are some of the symptoms of your allergy?

Describe how your addiction manifests as an allergy and what symptoms you experience...

About This Worksheet

"The Doctor's Opinion" is the preface to the first 164 pages of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. Although it is not called a "disease" in this preface, the medical model of addiction is mentioned for the first time from the medical community. This worksheet explores Dr. Silkworth's groundbreaking insights about the physical allergy and mental obsession of alcoholism. By reflecting on these concepts and how they apply to your experience, you gain deeper understanding of the nature of addiction and why complete abstinence is necessary for recovery.

PART 2 OF 9

Question 2 of 9

Loss of Self-Confidence

"These allergic types can never use alcohol in any form at all; and once having formed the habit and found that they could not break it, once having lost their self-confidence, their reliance upon things human, their problems pile up on them and become astonishingly difficult to solve."

How have you lost your self-confidence? Did you feel judged about your drinking or drugging? Did you hide your addiction from others because you recognized that you didn't drink or drug like others?

About This Worksheet

PART 3 OF 9

Question 3 of 9

Problems Piling Up

"Once having lost their self-confidence, their reliance upon things human, their problems pile up on them and become astonishingly difficult to solve."

What 'problems' piled up as a direct or indirect result of your addiction?

List and describe the problems that accumulated due to your addiction...

About This Worksheet

PART 4 OF 9

Question 4 of 9

The Alcoholic Life as Normal

"Men and Women drink essentially because they like the effect produced by alcohol. The sensation is so elusive that, while they admit it is injurious, they cannot after a time differentiate the true from the false. To them, their alcoholic life seems the only normal one."

What misbeliefs did you have about your drug of choice? How did you attempt to normalize your addiction? Did you surround yourself with people that would co-sign your use?

Examine how you normalized your addiction and the beliefs you held...

About This Worksheet

PART 5 OF 9

Question 5 of 9

Restless, Irritable, and Discontented

"They are restless, irritable and discontented, unless they again can experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks- drinks that they see others take with impunity."

Identify how your drug of choice made you feel restless, irritable, and discontented. Did your drug of choice seem to stop working for you? Would you continue to use substances to get over the guilt and shame you had from using substances. Cause and effect cycle; I use because I'm depressed, I'm depressed because I use.

Describe the restlessness, irritability, and discontentment you experienced...

About This Worksheet

PART 6 OF 9

Question 6 of 9

The Phenomenon of Craving

"After they have succumbed to the desire again, as so many do, and the phenomenon of craving develops, they pass through the well-known stages of a spree, emerging remorseful, with a firm resolution not to drink. This repeated over and over, and unless the person can experience a psychic change there is very little hope of recovery."

What did this look like to you? What does a craving feel like for you? What sort of 'firm resolutions' would you tell yourself about not continuing to use? Would you promise others that you would never use it again? More importantly, would you ever promise yourself that you weren't going to use again?

Describe your experience with cravings and the promises you made...

About This Worksheet

PART 7 OF 9

Question 7 of 9

Attempts to Control

"There is the type of man who is unwilling to admit that he cannot take a drink. He plans various ways of drinking. He changes his brand or his environment. There is the type who always believes that after being entirely free from alcohol for a period of time he can take a drink without danger."

How did you try to control your substance? What strategies did you use and what was the result of those attempts? Did you ever try to control the environment that you used in? Did you ever try to change your geographical location to run away from your disease? What did this look like for you?

Detail your attempts to control your substance use and their outcomes...

About This Worksheet

PART 8 OF 9

Question 8 of 9

Beyond Mental Control

"I do not hold with those who believe that alcoholism is entirely a problem of mental control. I have had many men who had, for example, worked a period of months on some problem or business deal which was to be settled on a certain date, favorably to them. They took a drink a day or so prior to the date, and then the phenomenon of craving at once became paramount to all other interests so that the important appointment was not met. These men were not drinking to escape; they were drinking to overcome a craving beyond their mental control."

Did you ever use your drug of choice knowing that you shouldn't? Did you plan to not use but did anyway because you didn't know how not to? What did this look like for you? Do you believe that you controlled it, or did it control you?

About This Worksheet

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Question 9 of 9

The Only Relief

"All these, and many others, have one symptom in common: they cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving. This phenomenon, as we have suggested, may be the manifestation of an allergy which differentiates these people, and sets them apart as a distinct entity. It has never been, by any treatment with which we are familiar, permanently eradicated. The only relief we have to suggest is entire abstinence."

Are you able to have just one? Once you have that first one in you, how long does it take for the compulsion to have another start? Can you go a period of time without having your drug of choice, but once you do you can't stop?

Examine your ability to stop after one and the nature of your compulsion...

Additional Notes (Optional)

Any additional reflections or insights from working through these questions...

About This Worksheet