



Determining Severity of Substance Use Disorder

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition (DSM-5) is the resource that is used by the American Psychiatric Association for substance use disorders.

The DSM-5 uses 11 symptoms to determine the severity of a substance use disorder.

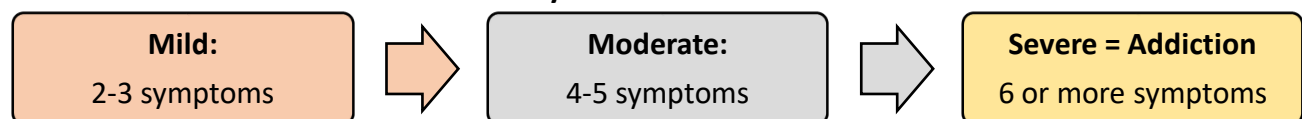
- ◆ Impaired Control
- ◆ Social Problems
- ◆ Risky Use
- ◆ Physical Dependence

Categories of Substance Use Disorder Symptoms			
Impaired Control	Social Problems	Risky Use	Physical Dependence
Using more of a substance or more often than intended	Neglecting responsibilities and relationships	Using substances in a risky setting	Needing more of the substance to get the same effect (Building tolerance)
Wanting to cut down or stop using but not being able to	Giving up activities they use to care about because of their substance use	Continued substance use despite known problems	Having withdrawal symptoms when a substance isn't used
	Inability to complete tasks at home, school or work		

DSM-5 Criteria for Addiction Simplified: Addiction Policy Forum

There are 3 levels of severity for substance use disorders. This is determined by the number of symptoms a person experiences from the table above.

Levels of Severity of Substance Use Disorders



The severity level is important because it helps the healthcare provider determine the best type of treatment. The intensity of the treatment plan will increase as the level of severity increases.

Because of the risk for relapse, treatment may continue for an extended time and changes to the plan of care may be needed to ensure the best treatment and outcome.



References

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