

According to the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), addiction is often characterized by **ABCDE** (although not necessarily all 5):

*a. Inability to consistently **Abstain***

- 1) Persistent recurrence of relapse, after periods of abstinence; and
- 2) Problems with compulsivity and judgment.

*b. Impairment in **Behavioral** control*

- 1) Excessive engagement in addictive behaviors at higher frequencies and/or quantities than intended, often associated with unsuccessful attempts at control;
- 2) Excessive time lost in use or recovering from behaviors, with significant adverse impact (e.g. the development of relationship problems or the neglect of responsibilities at home, school or work);
- 3) Continued recurrent physical or psychological problems, which may have been caused or exacerbated by behaviors;
- 4) A narrowing of focus to rewards that are part of addiction; and
- 5) An apparent lack of ability and/or readiness to take consistent, ameliorative action despite recognition of problems.

*c. **Craving**, or increased “hunger” for drugs or rewarding experiences*

- 1) External cues have the power to trigger use; and
- 2) There’s an increase in frequency of use [or extremeness of material viewed];

*d. **Diminished** recognition of significant problems with one’s behaviors and interpersonal relationships*

- 1) Preoccupation with use;
- 2) Altered evaluations of the relative benefits and detriments associated with use; and
- 3) The inaccurate belief that addiction-related problems are attributable to other causes.

*e. A dysfunctional **Emotional** response*

- 1) Increased anxiety, dysphoria and emotional pain;
- 2) Increased sensitivity to stressors; and
- 3) Difficulty in identifying feelings, distinguishing between feelings and the bodily sensations of emotional arousal, and describing feelings to others; and
- 4) Impairment of ability to relate to others.

For more, visit <http://yourbrainonporn.com/asam-radical-new-view-of-addiction-stirs-scientific-2011>