

2026 Mandatory Program

Modern-Day Addictions



Addictions: A Five-Year Retrospective

**Alcohol: A
Reflection on
the
Normalization
of Alcohol Use**



**Maximizing
Performance:
Alternatives to
Stimulants**



**Modern-Day
Addictions**



2021

2022

2023

2024

2025

2026

**Habit or
Addiction?**



**Canada's
Guidance on
Alcohol and
Health**



**The
Mechanisms of
Addiction**



2021

Habit vs. Addiction

Habit:

- Repeated so often that it becomes automatic
- Causes little or no harm to the individual or those around them, although it may be annoying
- Everyone has good habits (e.g., brushing their teeth before bed) and less healthy ones (e.g., eating chips while watching a movie).

Addiction:

- Often develops from a habit that becomes harmful, destructive, or out of control
- An obsession with a single thing that becomes the person's primary source of pleasure
- Negatively affects all areas of a person's life (personal, social, family, and professional).

2021

Habit vs. Addiction

Factors Associated with an Increased Risk of Addiction:

Family history of alcohol or drug use problems

Presence of emotional or mental health problems

Low self-esteem

Feelings of rejection

Negative life events (triggers), such as job loss, relationship breakdown, the death of a loved one, or other major life stressors

History of trauma or exposure to violence

2022

A Reflection on the Normalization of Alcohol

WHY?

- Legal
- Accessible
- Associated with celebrations and social events
- Often linked to food and dining
- Part of our culture
- Trendy and socially accepted

Normalization in Society

- TV shows and movies
- Culture (music, arts, etc.)
- Media columns and lifestyle features
- Loyalty and rewards programs
- Social media and influencers
- Sports Advertising and promotions



2022

A Reflection on the Normalization of Alcohol

Different Forms of Pressure

Direct social pressure

When someone offers you a drink or an opportunity to consume alcohol.

Indirect social pressure

- Feeling tempted to consume alcohol when surrounded by people who are drinking, even if no one offers you a drink.
- A challenge for people struggling with addiction or trying to reduce or stop their substance use.

Some Health Consequences of Alcohol Normalization

In Quebec, alcohol consumption costs more than \$3 billion annually in healthcare expenses and social costs.

May influence the development of risky behaviours among youthEx.:

Adolescents exposed to alcohol advertising tend to start drinking at a younger age than their peers..

The widespread cultural integration of alcohol into celebrations and social media can minimize perceptions of its inherent risks and addictive potential.

2023

Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health

A Continuum of Risk

Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health



Canadian Centre
on Substance Use
and Addiction

Evidence. Engagement. Impact.

Per week

No risk

0 

Low risk

1 
2 

Moderate
risk

3 
4 
5 
6 

Increasingly
high risk

7 
8 
+ 

2024

Maximizing Performance: Alternatives to Stimulants

AN ALTERNATIVE TO EVERYTHING, ALL THE TIME

Fatigue

Boredom

Socializing

Performance

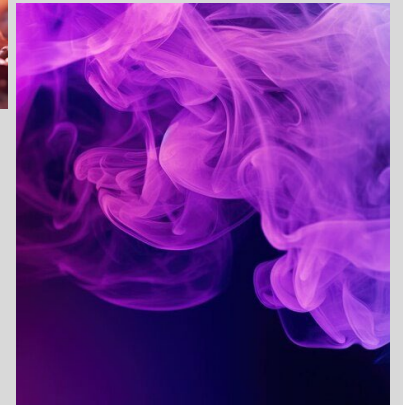
Motivation

Relaxation

Pleasure

Routine

Taste



2024

Maximizing Performance: Alternatives to Stimulants

Alternatives to Stimulants

Needs: Productivity and Energy

- Regular physical exercise
- Quality and sufficient sleep
- Proper hydration and nutrition
- Planning and organization
- Napping

Activation

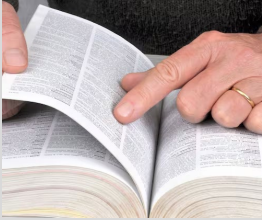
- 5-to-2 Warm-Up
- Energizing breathing techniques
- Motivating music
- A 10-minute specific and progressive warm-up
- Having a workout plan
- A cold morning shower

**NOTHING BEATS
SLEEP, NUTRITION,
AND EXERCISE**



2025

The Mechanisms of Addiction



New Terminology

Substance Use Disorder (SUD)

What Is Severe Substance Use Disorder (SUD)?

An inability to refrain from using a substance despite being aware of its negative consequences.

Severe Substance Use Disorder (SUD) is not a lack of willpower, but rather a complex, multifactorial health condition influenced by a combination of risk factors and reasons for substance use.

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) is, in part, a brain disease involving disruptions in neural circuits and neurotransmitter systems.

It is a chronic, relapsing condition, meaning that periods of improvement may be followed by relapse.

It is a thief of freedom, particularly the freedom to choose not to use a substance.



2026

Modern-Day Addictions

By emerging addictions, we mean addictions that are not caused by the use of substances, but rather by behavioural addictions, often linked to technology, such as cyberaddiction.

- Social media addiction
- Excessive use of online video games
- Online gambling, including sports betting
- Online shopping or auction addiction
- Problematic use of online pornography
- And more...



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Modern-Day Addictions

Exposure to online activities → Dopamine ↑↑↑↑

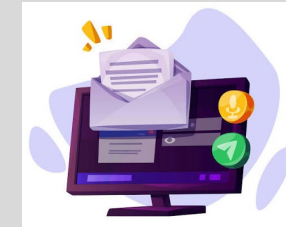
Brain adaptation over time → Dopamine response ↓↓↓

Need for more frequent and longer use to achieve the same effect →
Dopamine ↑↑↑↑



According to recent studies, cyberaddiction now affects nearly half of Quebecers under the age of 45, either personally or through someone close to them.

In 2024, Jeu : aide et référence recorded a 21% increase in requests for help, with more than one-third of cases (36%) involving crisis situations or severe distress.



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Modern-Day Addictions

Even some traditional addictions have taken on modern forms:

Prescription medications (e.g., painkillers, anti-anxiety medications) Substances that are easily accessible online or increasingly normalized



consumption of news, information, or digital content

Video Game Addiction Loss of control over gaming time and social isolation.



Classic Addictions, Modernized



Modern Psychological Addictions



Relational and Emotional Addictions



Work and Performance



Substance Use



Content and Entertainment



Numérique

2026

Modern-Day Addictions

Consequences and Negative Impacts

For Individuals

Physical Health

- Sedentary behaviour and associated health conditions
- Eye and vision problems
- Musculoskeletal disorders
- Sleep disturbances

Mental Health

- Low self-esteem and body image concerns
- Mental health disorders
- Anxiety Depression Suicidal thoughts and behaviours
- Reduced performance at work or school
- Disruption of interpersonal relationships
- Behavioural difficulties (maladaptive, avoidant, or aggressive behaviours)

In the Workplace

Employee Health, Safety, and Job Performance

- Stress
- Physical and cognitive exhaustion
- Anxiety and depressive symptoms
- Inattention and increased errors
- Reduced productivity
- Interpersonal conflicts
- Work disengagement
- Absenteeism and presenteeism

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HELP RESOURCES

Gambling: Help and Referral 24/7 listening, support, and referral service. Call 1-800-461-0140 or visit the Gambling: Help and Referral website.

Le Grand Chemin: Organization providing residential treatment programs for adolescents aged 12 to 17.

Public Health Network (CIUSSS): Your local CLSC offers consultations with professionals to assess your needs. Information can be found through the Québec Health tool.

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Modern-Day Addictions

How to Do a Digital Detox

- Review your social media subscriptions
- Delete old emails
- Remove unused apps
- Limit your time on social media
- No phone 2 hours before bedtime
- Sleep away from your phone
- Do more offline activities
- Charge devices outside the bedroom
- Try going a day without connecting

2026

Modern-Day Addictions

In Summary

Modern Addictions Are Often:

- Invisible (socially accepted)
- Digital or behavioural in nature
- Driven by immediate gratification

**Don't hesitate to seek help for yourself or
someone you care about.**