

The process of assessment for substance use disorders is a process of creating a positive, trusting relationship with clients to maximize their comfort level in telling the full extent of their use. The use of cards involves a non-judgmental approach which eliminates during a significant part of the assessment process any overt or covert reactions or responses by the therapist which may sabotage the results or undermine the trust level and validity of the assessment. Given this novel approach clients often find doing this assessment, which might normally be stressful, to be interesting and non-threatening. They find it much easier to selecting a card than to verbally admit to items in the categories.

Factors to Consider When Assessing Each of the Four Categories

Types of Substances Used

Full assessment of this category cannot be accomplished until the results are entered on the Assessment Form and the ages of use and length of use has been determined.

- Occasional/experimental use is obviously less problematic than continued use.
- Early use of a variety of substances, especially the more serious substances, indicates more serious situation.
- Use of psychedelic drugs are more problematic if there is a co-occurring mental illness.
- IV use of drugs indicate a progression of use that is significantly serious and potentially fatal.

Feelings I Get When Using

- The use of substances that result in negative feelings are more indicative of a problem.
- Feelings, which arise from use, can indicate what the person is repressing or covering up such as anger, sadness, or even rowdy/rebellious.

Reasons for Using

- If mostly positive reasons are listed, this may indicate early stages or non-problematic use.
- If reasons are more negative in nature, this may indicate an unhealthy dependency or poor coping skills.
- Good possibility that if person did not pull card, "To get high" they are probably not being fully honest, but you need to check it out.

Effects of Using

- If the effects of using have been a deterrent to future use or a motivation for recovery, this may indicate a more positive prognosis.
- A more serious situation exists if there is a preponderance of adverse effects or the person continues to use despite the adverse effects.

- It is important to know the chronology of these effects to determine whether they are increasing or decreasing.

For Intake Forms to be used with the cards, go to: lovingheartpress.com