Cross-Addiction

Participant Workbook | Recognizing patterns without judgment

People can experience difficulties with more than one substance or with certain behaviors. “Cross-addiction” is an informal phrase, not a diagnosis. This workbook focuses on patterns, consequences, and choices—not labels.

Understanding the idea

More than one substance: Some people experience substance-use problems involving multiple drugs or alcohol. Shifting patterns: A person may also begin relying on another activity in ways that cause problems. Neither possibility is inevitable.

Important: Enjoying exercise, hobbies, work, friendships, or relationships does not by itself mean someone has an addiction.

Activity 1 — Compare the scenarios

Lee: Attends exercise classes regularly, enjoys them, rests when needed, and keeps other commitments.

Sam: Gambles online, hides growing losses, borrows money, and cannot follow through on plans to stop.

Pat: Stops one substance but starts drinking heavily to sleep, leading to missed work and arguments.

Which scenario shows a rewarding activity without obvious harm? What makes it different?

_____

_____

Which situations raise concerns about impaired control or significant consequences?

_____

_____

What additional information would you want before drawing conclusions?

_____

_____

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Activity 2 — Pattern, Impact, Choice

Use a fictional character or an experience you feel comfortable considering. You may skip any prompt.

1. What is the behavior or pattern?

_____

_____

2. What need might it meet (comfort, connection, excitement, relief, structure)?

_____

_____

3. What are the immediate benefits?

_____

_____

4. Are there consequences, lost choices, or conflicts with personal values?

_____

_____

5. What is one alternative, boundary, or safer response?

_____

_____

6. Who or what could support a change?

_____

_____

My early-warning and support plan

One sign I may need to reassess a behavior:

_____

One healthy activity I want to keep in balance:

_____

One person or service I can ask for help:

_____

One small step I can try this week:

_____

Closing reflection

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How can we notice harmful patterns without turning normal enjoyment into a problem?

_____

_____

This is a non-diagnostic educational worksheet. If a behavior is difficult to control or is causing significant harm, consider discussing it with a qualified professional.

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