

Cannabis Misuse

Understanding reliance, emotional coping and when use becomes difficult to control

Substance misuse can develop quietly. A substance may begin as a way to cope, sleep, socialise, manage pain, increase confidence or get through difficult feelings. This guide is here to help you notice patterns with curiosity rather than judgement.

What misuse can look like

Cannabis may move from occasional use into reliance when it becomes the main way a person sleeps, relaxes, socialises, eats, manages anxiety or switches off. They may use more than planned, struggle to take breaks, or continue despite problems.

Effects to understand

Cannabis can affect memory, concentration, motivation, coordination and reaction time. For some people it can increase anxiety, panic, paranoia or unusual experiences, particularly with high-potency products.

Dependence and withdrawal

Regular users can develop tolerance and may experience irritability, sleep disturbance, low appetite, restlessness or low mood when reducing or stopping.

Support and recovery

It can help to map triggers, delay use, change routines, reduce access, build alternative regulation strategies and seek professional support. Sudden severe confusion, extreme agitation or psychotic symptoms need urgent medical assessment.

A gentle check-in

Ask yourself: What does this substance do for me? What happens before I use it? What happens afterwards? What has become harder because of it? What support would make change feel more possible?

Notice	Consider
Triggers, cravings, quantity, secrecy, sleep, mood and consequences.	GP support, local drug/alcohol services, counselling, trusted people and practical harm-reduction advice.

Important safety note

This resource is educational and does not replace medical assessment. Some substances can cause dangerous withdrawal or overdose. If there is unconsciousness, severe breathing difficulty, seizure, collapse, chest pain or immediate danger, seek emergency medical help.

You deserve support that looks at the whole person - not just the substance.