

Benzodiazepine Misuse

Understanding dependence, tolerance and why stopping suddenly can be unsafe

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 they are

Benzodiazepines are medicines that may be used for anxiety, insomnia, seizures or other conditions. With ongoing use, tolerance and physical dependence can develop.

Why stopping needs care

Abrupt withdrawal after regular use can cause severe symptoms and, in some circumstances, seizures. A gradual, clinician-led reduction may be needed.

Signs of difficulty

Needing higher doses, taking extra tablets, sourcing medication elsewhere, memory problems, daytime sedation, or feeling unable to cope without the medicine can indicate dependence.

Support

Speak with the prescribing clinician or GP. A careful review can consider the original symptoms, current dose, other substances and a personalised reduction plan.

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.