

Stimulant Misuse

When energy, focus or performance-seeking develops into harmful or compulsive use

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 it can involve

Stimulant misuse may involve prescribed or non-prescribed substances used to stay awake, increase energy, suppress appetite, improve performance or create a high.

The pressure-crash cycle

Periods of intense activity may be followed by exhaustion, low mood, irritability and sleep disruption, which can encourage repeated use.

Risks

High doses can contribute to anxiety, agitation, overheating, dehydration, cardiovascular strain and, in some cases, psychotic symptoms.

Support

Recovery often needs attention to sleep, workload, expectations, nutrition, emotional regulation and underlying ADHD or mental-health needs where relevant. Severe chest pain, collapse or extreme agitation needs urgent medical help.

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.