

Addictions and Substance Use Support Guide

A stigma-aware guide for noticing impact and taking a first support step.

1. Start with curiosity

Substances or behaviours can become coping tools for pain, sleep, stress, trauma, social connection, habit, or escape.

2. Notice impact

Ask how the pattern affects sleep, mood, money, relationships, attendance, safety, secrecy, or recovery time.

3. Make the first conversation smaller

You do not need a label or complete plan. A first counselling conversation can focus on what you have noticed and what feels realistic.

4. Use urgent support for safety

If there is immediate safety risk, withdrawal concern, risk of harm, or impaired driving/workplace safety risk, seek urgent medical or crisis support.

One thing I have noticed is:

This resource is educational and not a substitute for crisis, emergency, medical, or individualized clinical care. If there is immediate risk, seek urgent support.