



# Discussion points for: Breaking down addiction

## About this episode:

In this episode of Chatter Matters, students from St. John's Regional College discuss the broad spectrum of addiction with their youth worker. They redefine addiction, extending it beyond drugs to encompass smartphone use, gaming, caffeine, and unhealthy eating habits. They discern the line between habits and addiction, explore the dopamine-driven pleasure principle of addictive behaviour, and stress the importance of acknowledging and understanding the root cause of addiction. The conversation provides practical tips for combating addiction, such as setting screen-time reminders and seeking support from loved ones.

## Discussion prompts

- **Understanding Addiction:** Discuss the wide range of things people can become addicted to, not just substances like drugs and alcohol but also technology, food, caffeine, etc.
- **Addiction Recognition:** What are the signs of addiction? How does one identify if they have a problem with addiction? What does it mean to have an addiction disorder versus having an addiction without it being a disorder?
- **The Role of Mobile Devices:** Explore the issue of addiction to mobile phones, especially among younger individuals. Discuss the impact of platforms like TikTok and the challenges in managing screen time.
- **Gaming and Procrastination:** Explore the relationship between gaming and procrastination. Discuss why individuals might choose gaming over completing responsibilities such as homework and the potential consequences of this habit.
- **Social Factors and Peer Pressure:** Discuss how peer pressure can contribute to addiction, such as in situations where alcohol or drugs are present. What are the impacts of normalized addictive behaviour in social groups?
- **Habit Versus Addiction:** Distinguish between bad habits and addiction. Can a bad habit evolve into an addiction? Discuss the example of nail-biting and its potential progression.
- **Substance Abuse:** Discuss the prominence of substance abuse, especially among young people. How do substances like alcohol, cigarettes, and e-cigarettes fit into the addiction conversation?
- **The Highs and Lows of Addiction:** Discuss the cycle of addiction - the high from the addictive behaviour and the subsequent lows. Explore the role of dopamine in reinforcing addiction.
- **Addiction Management:** What strategies can be used to address and overcome addiction? Discuss the role of recognizing the problem, retracing steps, and setting limits.
- **Support Systems:** Discuss the role of support systems in overcoming addiction. Explore resources like Quitline, as well as the importance of having supportive people in one's life to aid in overcoming addiction.