Understanding Addiction

What is addiction?
Addiction is a disease which is predictable and progressive. As defined by the American Psychiatric Association, addiction is the maladaptive pattern of substance use (alcohol or other drugs), leading to clinically significant impairment or distress. In other words, a person is considered to be addicted when the pattern of use continues despite negative effects on his or her personal, social, spiritual, physical, and/or economic status.

Signs & Symptoms

- Increased tolerance - an increased amount needed to produce same effect or diminished effect with same amount of use of substance
- Withdrawal symptoms - the physical symptoms beginning after reduction in or stoppage of prolonged drinking
- Loss of control - addicted person cannot control amount or duration of drinking; the substance is taken in greater amounts or more for longer periods of time than intended
- Use is excessive - persistent desire or unsuccessful attempts to stop
- Much time is spent in activities related to the substance - either obtaining, using, or recovering from the substance
- Use becomes priority - other enjoyable social or recreational activities are given up or reduced because of the pattern of substance use
- Using despite negative outcomes - substance use is continued despite knowledge of persistent physical or psychological problems

Where to get help
Student Development & Counseling Center
Administration Building, Room 230
318-797-5365

Council on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse of NW Louisiana
2000 Fairfield Avenue
Shreveport, Louisiana 71101
318-222 - 8511

The Center for Families
864 Olive Street
Shreveport, Louisiana 71101
318-222 - 0759

Developed by the Student Development & Counseling Center
Administration Building, Room 220
797-5365