

## Clinical Tool: Substance Use Disorders – Diagnostic Criteria

The DSM-5 outlines specific criteria for diagnosing Substance Use Disorders, based on a pathological pattern of behaviours related to use of the substance. These include:

1. The substance is often taken in larger amounts of over a longer period than was original intended.
2. There is a persistent desire to cut down or regulate substance use, and may report multiple unsuccessful efforts to decrease or discontinue use.
3. A great deal of time is spent in activities necessary to obtain the substance, use the substance, or recover from its effects.
4. Craving, or a strong desire to or urge to use the substance.
5. Recurrent substance use resulting in a failure to fulfil major roles obligations at work, school, or home.
6. Continued substance use despite having persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused or exacerbated by the effects of the substance.
7. Important social, occupational, or recreational activities are given up or reduced because of substance use.
8. Recurrent substance use in situations in which it is physically hazardous.
9. Substance use is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by the substance.
10. Tolerance, as defined by either of the following:

- a. A need for markedly increased amounts of the substance to achieve the desired effect.
  - b. A markedly reduced effect with continued use of the same amount of the substance.
11. Withdrawal, as manifested by either of the following:
    - a. The characteristic withdrawal syndrome for the substance.
    - b. The individual is likely to consume the substance, or a related substance, to relieve or avoid the symptoms.

*Specify if:*

**In early remission:** After full criteria for substance use disorder were previously met, none of the criteria for substance use disorder have been met for at least 3 months but for less than 12 months (with the exception that Criterion A4, “Craving, or a strong desire or urge to use of the substance,” may be met).

**In sustained remission:** After full criteria for the substance use disorder were previously met, none of the criteria for substance use disorder have been met at any time during a period of 12 months or longer (with the exception that Criterion A4, “Craving, or a strong desire or urge to use the substance,” may be present).

*Specify if:*

**In a controlled environment:** This additional specifier is used if the individual is in an environment where access to the substance is restricted.