



Emotional Immaturity and Addiction

You may ask what emotional immaturity has to do with addiction. In this uncharted territory we will try to get an understanding of what this entails. Emotional immaturity includes coping skills which every person needs in life, especially when you are faced with stress or difficult emotions. Addicts however struggle with these valuable skills. Many addicts turn to drugs or alcohol as a crutch or our go-to coping mechanism in difficult times, to find some means of comfort. Sadly, this will hinder our ability to develop healthy coping skills. It's like when we try to swim without ever having used floaters.

Emotional immaturity is like being stuck in the mind of a toddler throwing tantrums over a broken toy. It is when we do not really get the "adult" thing, and struggle to regulate your emotions effectively. This plays a huge role in addiction. When we are faced with challenging emotions or conflicts, emotional immaturity can resort to self-destructive behaviour, like turning to drugs or alcohol. The problem may occur because we have probably never learned to handle our emotions in a mature way.

Peer pressure is another clue to identify our emotional immaturity. Without proper emotional skills, we may not be able to stand strong and remain sober, but will fall under peer pressure each and every time. When we are emotional immature, easily influenced, and lacking coping skills it will be hazardous for your long term sobriety.

Conflict avoidance is another behaviour seen when we struggle with addiction. This is a tendency to steer clear of any confrontations or disagreements, opting out to suppress our feelings or withdrawing from challenging situations. Whether we are avoiding difficult conversations with loved ones or sidestepping conflicts at work, we will find that we are frequently resorting to avoiding conflict as a way to maintain your stability. What we have to

learn is that if we want peace in our lives, it will be necessary for us to confront.

One of the primary reasons behind conflict avoidance is emotional immaturity. Many addicts struggle to regulate their emotions effectively, and often end up being impulsive or irrational. We may have been affected because of trauma, neglect, or early substance abuse. As a result, we will find ourselves lacking the necessary emotional tools and coping mechanisms to work through our conflicts in a healthy way. This may even lead to us avoiding certain situations altogether.

It is not necessarily pleasant, but important that we can recognise our emotional immaturity, our vulnerability to be influenced, or our tendency to avoid conflict. If we are uncertain whether we struggle in this area, a therapist or counsellor will be able to assess us in having a simple, open and honest conversation with us. If you can already identify any emotional immaturity within you, please check out the coping mechanism lessons and explore them.

Addiction treatments and programmes primary objective is always aimed at fostering emotional growth. Therefore I cannot stress enough the importance of being engaged in group settings and communities. Our involvement will help us to embrace our personal growth and chase after that, and will help us to be better equipped to confront and resolve conflicts without having to resort to avoidance or escape. Emotional maturity is an important tool to have in our arsenal to recovery.

Developing effective coping strategies, we will also be able to better manage stress, regulate our emotions, and minimize the risk of relapse. By nurturing emotional maturity, we empower ourselves to break free from the vicious cycle of addiction and embark on a path towards a better and fulfilling life. As they saying goes in NA "It works if you work it, so work it, you're worth it!"