

From the book Beyond Addiction Workbook for Family and Friends by Jeffery Foote, PhD, Kenneth Carpenter, PhD, and Carrie Wilkens, PhD

Behaviors Make Sense

Read the list below and check the boxes that apply to you.

Things I want/need in my life:

- ☐ To feel less or no anxiety
- ☐ To not feel depressed
- ☐ To feel good/happy
- ☐ To feel engaged and not bored
- ☐ To not suffer from physical pain
- ☐ To feel excited/inspired
- ☐ To have friends
- ☐ To feel part of something
- ☐ To be able to unwind after a brutal week
- ☐ To be able to focus and concentrate on important things in my life
- ☐ To lose weight
- ☐ To be seen as funny
- ☐ To appreciate others
- ☐ To have a satisfying sex life
- ☐ To get a reasonable amount of sleep
- ☐ To feel capable of taking on new challenges of each new day

Now consider these questions:

- Did you check at least one item?
- When you look at this list, do any of these wants not make sense?
- If there were an easy way to achieve the items you selected, would you be interested in it?

These are all basic and reasonable things to want; and these wants and needs are exactly what substances do a great job of providing. Substances offer an answer to the struggles and longings that we all have, and they work well.

Using this same list, how do you think your loved one would answer the question “What does substance use or other compulsive behaviors do for me?”

- ☐ Helps me feel less anxious
- ☐ Helps me feel less depressed
- ☐ Makes me feel good/happy
- ☐ Takes away the boredom
- ☐ Lessens my physical pain
- ☐ Makes me excited/inspired
- ☐ Helps me socialize
- ☐ Lets me feel part of something
- ☐ Helps me unwind after a brutal week
- ☐ Helps me focus and concentrate on important things
- ☐ Helps me lose weight
- ☐ Makes me funny
- ☐ Helps me appreciate others
- ☐ Lets me enjoy sex
- ☐ Helps me get to sleep
- ☐ Makes it easier to face the day
- ☐ Other

If you put them in order, which do you think are your loved one’s top two reasons for using alcohol or drugs (or other compulsive behaviors)?
