

HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

Catharina Cheung speaks to expats on their struggles with drinks and drugs

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English expat in his thirties working in recruiting, shares his addiction experience

I was addicted to cocaine and sex. My ex-girlfriend often told me I had a problem, but we had a very unhealthy relationship. We would binge on cocaine together and have threesomes with escorts. I was always the driver of the problem, the one with the more serious issues.

She connected me to Dr Seamus over a year ago when she realised I was getting out of control, fast.

I was sober for five months but relapsed in April. My ex and I were set to get married, but I knew I wasn't in the right frame of mind to commit to anything. We broke up and my life unravelled with my dangerous use of cocaine and unsafe sex with escorts. Once more, best friend became cocaine.

I hit rock bottom over a weekend with about 20 grams of cocaine in my system. I was a

hair's breadth away from a heart attack. Just stumbling down a street was too much effort.

I was told in no uncertain terms I was going to die. I quit my job and checked in to primary care. Simply getting on my flight to Chiang Mai was a massive deal.

The Cabin shielded me from my triggers. Addictions are often multi-faceted, and we also worked out my problematic behaviour with sex as part of the root cause.

Aftercare was excellent, especially helpful when you're back in the real world surrounded by your triggers again. I knew I was in good hands with Seamus guiding me through the recovery process.

Seek help even with the slightest doubts or concerns. These progressive illnesses just get worse, and if you catch it earlier on hopefully you can get treated via outpatient clinics instead of primary care.



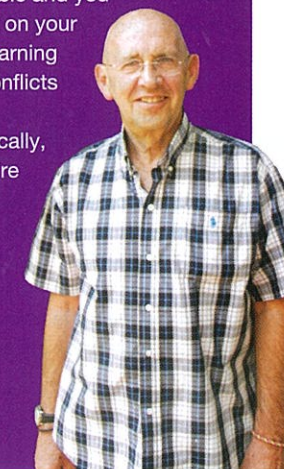
60 seconds with Dr Seamus Mac Auley, Head Counsellor at The Cabin

How does one tell if someone is addicted?

If there is evidence of loss of control. By losing control I mean if things happen to you while indulging that you don't want, anticipate, or expect. The second thing to take note of is, when you do attempt to control—that is, to cut down, quit, or moderate—if you can't or it's extremely uncomfortable. If you qualify in meeting those two criteria, you've most probably crossed the addiction threshold.

What are the challenges and pitfalls to look out for during recovery?

If you cross the addiction threshold, you're never cured but you can recover. Recovery is about changing your identity, and that's a process requiring constant work. It's not like you come to The Cabin for three months and you're cured. We can only escort you to the gates and show you the way for you to stay recovered. The problem is not quitting, the problem is staying quit. It's crucial that people who have the illness get support from people who are attempting sobriety. Addiction is a very secretive condition, and once you start hiding it and don't ask for help, you're on a slippery slope. There is so much help available and you don't have to fight it on your own. Look out for warning signs: if there are conflicts in your life around relationships specifically, and if whatever you're doing has negative consequences but you have difficulty resisting it, then the hook's probably already in you, and you should seek help and support.



Need Help? The Cabin chiefly serves professionals struggling with substance abuse, process addictions or compulsive behaviours.

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