



## Control

Definition – Control; verb:

- *To exercise restraint over*
- *To hold in check*

As humans, we like to believe we are in control, but unfortunately quite often we aren't. Addiction is defined in a large way by a loss of control of the use of substances and related behaviors. In this exercise we will consider some ways that problematic substance use can lead to a loss of control which can then lead to experiencing negative consequences

**DIRECTIONS** – Everyone should get a copy of the picture of the “Wall of Control” on the last page of this exercise. Together as a group, go through the list below of various examples of how one may lose control when it comes to use or abuse of substances.

**GROUP MEMBERS** – Be honest – When something applies to your life and your substance use personally, then darken out at least one brick in the protective wall of control on your picture. If something mentioned was really as serious issue for you, then darken out two bricks. Do this for each item reviewed in the list below:

Review the list below and **HONESTLY** consider which have applied in your case. (Some examples provided)

- Progression:
- Using more frequently than you used to \_\_\_\_\_
  - Using more types of drugs than you used to \_\_\_\_\_
  - Using larger amounts to get high or combining \_\_\_\_\_
- Attempts to regulate:
- Attempts to cut down (I'll only use one bag this time) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Scheduling days (“I'll only use on weekends”) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Scheduling times (“no more getting high before 5:00”) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Switching (“no more hard liquor, just beer”) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Or (“just weed and booze for me, no more hard stuff”) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Going on the wagon but falling off in a few weeks or days \_\_\_\_\_
- Unpredictable use:
- Using on days or at times when you didn't plan on it (Planning not to use on work or school nights but failing) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Using more or for longer periods of time than you planned (Stopping for just a few beers becomes an all-nighter) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Use invades on other activities/responsibilities (Late or missed days at work or school because of use) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Blackouts: Inability to remember all or part of the night \_\_\_\_\_



Taking risks that you never would take sober  
(Getting into dangerous situations, sleeping around, intox. driving,  
crimes, fights, other wild behavior,) \_\_\_\_\_

Embarrassing yourself \_\_\_\_\_

Hurting others or going off on others for dumb reasons \_\_\_\_\_

Doing things you regret \_\_\_\_\_

Saying things you regret \_\_\_\_\_

Never being totally sure how you'll act or what'll happen when using \_\_\_\_\_

Getting into fights/arguments when high with friends/relationships \_\_\_\_\_

Cheating in relationships when using \_\_\_\_\_

Destroying property when high/drunk \_\_\_\_\_

Being aware of or being told that you undergo a personality change when high  
(Jeckle and Hyde Syndrome) \_\_\_\_\_

Feeling suicidal when intoxicated or high \_\_\_\_\_

Using even though you know there is a chance you'll get caught  
(Drug test coming up but use anyway in spite of the risk) \_\_\_\_\_

### Increased desire for "high"

No longer just using in social situations, using alone \_\_\_\_\_

Craving the high \_\_\_\_\_

Looking forward to the high when not high \_\_\_\_\_

Finding excuses to get high (bad day/good day...every day) \_\_\_\_\_

Losing interest in people, places and things not associated with getting high \_\_\_\_\_

Thinking about or fantasizing about using or getting more \_\_\_\_\_

Planning ahead to make sure you have a stash \_\_\_\_\_

Getting high becomes an important part of your regular routine \_\_\_\_\_

Not feeling "normal" without the drug in your life \_\_\_\_\_



Feeling bored or disinterested when not high \_\_\_\_\_

Difficulty having fun without being high \_\_\_\_\_

Finding friends that like to use as much as you do \_\_\_\_\_

Increased difficulty relating to non-users \_\_\_\_\_

Attempts to conceal: Lying to parents, relationships, teachers, employers and others about how much or how often you really use \_\_\_\_\_

Planning ahead to make sure you don't look too intoxicated \_\_\_\_\_

Faking drug tests or making up lies to avoid them \_\_\_\_\_

Being able to use large amounts but not show it when you need to \_\_\_\_\_

Having a set of lies, alibis, excuses and cover-up schemes for your behavior \_\_\_\_\_

## **DISCUSSION:**

1. Hopefully everyone understands the illustration represented by the wall: When we lose control then consequences start to invade and impact the important things in our lives (behind the wall). With that in mind, what did your wall look like at the end of this exercise? (Share with the group)
  - When you look at your wall is there a chance consequences start to can sneak in? (it only takes a few holes in the wall) – *or*
  - Are consequences already starting to get behind your wall and impact your life? (Most likely if you are in a treatment program then you have experiences some consequences already) -
2. What are some ways people try to convince themselves that they are in control when perhaps they really are not in full control? Consider some examples: Have you ever thought or said any of these? –
  - *“I’ll quit tomorrow”*
  - *“I’ll just be smarter next time and I won’t get caught”*
  - *“I can stop any time that I want to (I just don’t want too)”*
3. What does this tell you about control over drug/alcohol use?
4. Why do people have difficulty admitting that they are not in full control?
5. What is one [or more] change you can make today to stop or reduce drugs/alcohol level of control your life?

**“Addiction - When you can give up something any time, as long as it's next Tuesday.”**

- Dr. Lemuel Pillmeister



STABILITY

FAMILY

FUTURE GOALS AND DREAMS

PEACE OF MIND

MOTIVATION AND FOCUS

CAREER

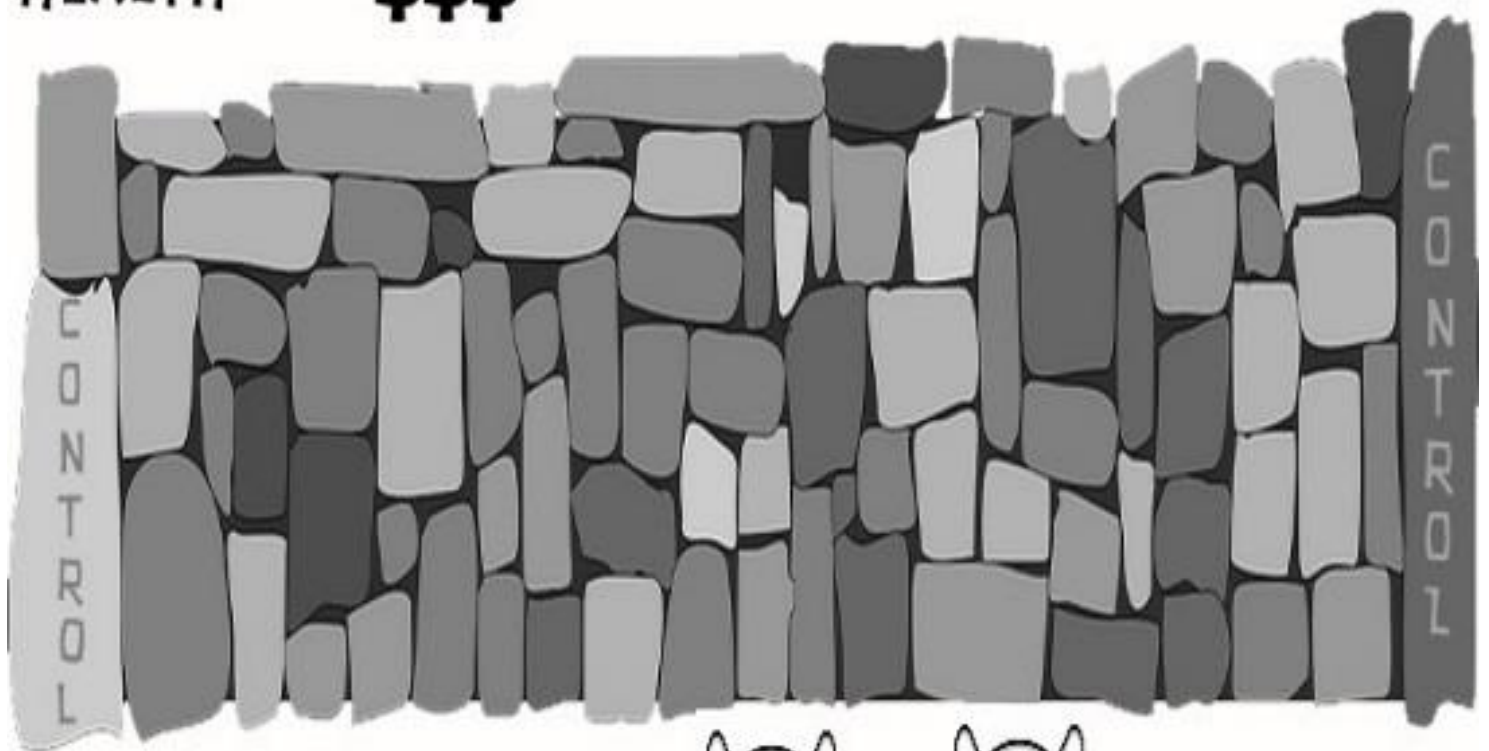
HAPPINESS

HEALTH

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RESPECT FOR SELF AND OTHERS

FREEDOM



CONSEQUENCES

