# Severity Levels of Substance Use Disorder

The American Psychiatric Association diagnoses the severity of Substance Use Disorders by identifying the presence of problematic patterns using the criteria below occurring over a 12 month period.

## Amount
Take the substance in larger amounts & for longer than intended.

## Control
Want to cut down or quit but are unable to.

## Time
Spend large amounts of time obtaining the substance.

## Cravings
Experience cravings or strong desires to use the substance.

## Obligations
Repeatedly unable to carry out major obligations at work, school or home due to substance use.

## Social
Continuing to use the substance despite persistent or recurring social or interpersonal problems or harm to relationships.

## Activities
Stopped or reducing important social, occupational or recreational activities due to substance use.

## Hazard
Continually using the substance in physically hazardous situations such as driving under the influence.

## Harm
Consistently using the substance, despite knowledge of the substance causing persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problems.

## Tolerance
Building a tolerance — the need for markedly increased amounts of the substance to achieve the desired effect, or a markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of the substance.

## Withdrawal
Feeling withdrawal symptoms — as either a characteristic syndrome or when the substance is used to avoid withdrawal.

## Mild
Meets 2 to 3 criteria

## Moderate
Meets 4 to 5 criteria

## Severe
Meets 6 or more criteria

---

For more information visit [www.recoveryanswers.org](http://www.recoveryanswers.org)