



Coachable

Understanding Addiction

Addiction Is About Regulation — Not Weakness

Addiction is **not primarily** about temptation or **pleasure**
(with some exceptions for vulnerable teens).

More often, addiction is about **regulating distress** under **pressure**.

When internal stress, pain, or emotional overload becomes too intense —
and a person does not have enough tools, support, or safety to manage it —
the nervous system looks for **immediate relief**.

Substance use can begin to feel **necessary** when:

- Emotional distress exceeds available coping skills
- Stress accumulates faster than it can be released
- Connection, safety, or support feels out of reach
- Healthier regulation options are unavailable in the moment

In these situations, substance use is **not a moral failure**.

It is an attempt to reduce suffering using the tools that are currently accessible.

A Compassionate Reframe

*“People don’t use substances because they want to struggle.
They use them because distress has exceeded their ability to regulate.”*

Healing does not begin with shame, pressure, or punishment.

Healing begins when **new regulation tools, support, and connection**
are added.

Gentle Reflection (Optional)

When stress or emotional pain feels overwhelming,
what do I usually reach for to cope or get relief?



Coachable.online

