



*As an addict,
you are pleasure-
centered and
self-centered.*

Addictive Thinking Patterns

Addictive thinking patterns are very similar to criminal thinking patterns. In most cases, the only differences are in degree or in the particular direction the thinking takes. Remember the definition of criminal thinking patterns? *Criminal thinking patterns* are ways of thinking that say it is okay to violate others or the property of others.

The definition of addictive thinking patterns is similar: *Addictive thinking patterns* are ways of thinking that say it is okay to use as much drugs and alcohol as you want, as often as you want, and to do whatever you need to do to get them.

***Addiction is a **thinking** problem
before it becomes a **drinking** problem.***

Thoughts that suggest, justify, or promote getting drunk and high no matter what the consequences to you or to others will most likely fit into one or more of the addictive thinking patterns categories.

Here are the addictive thinking patterns we've identified:

- self-pity stance
- “good person” stance
- “unique person” stance
- fear of exposure
- lack-of-time perspective
- selective effort
- use of deceit to control
- seek pleasure first
- ownership stance

Denial

The main feature of addictive thinking is *denial*. Denial for the addict and alcoholic refers to the ability to contradict obvious facts, to turn the truth inside out, to look directly at *down* and to believe, with all your heart and mind, that it is really *up*.

One of the interesting features of denial is that you can often see in others what you can't see in yourself. You can't see how your alcohol or other drug use has gotten you in so much trouble that you've lost just about everything. Now you're incarcerated, probably not for the first time.

You haven't been able to see the truth about your own alcohol or other drug use because of your denial. To see that truth would mean you'd have to try recovery. It would mean you'd have to stop using. And that is what your addictive thinking calls you to deny—anything that would suggest you need to stop using.

Self-Obsession

As an addict, you are pleasure-centered and self-centered. That means your thoughts focus on whether or not you feel good. If you don't feel good, you become preoccupied with what you can do to make yourself feel good again as soon as possible. You had a powerful pleasure experience with drugs or alcohol (or with sex or gambling or eating or anything else people get addicted to) when you first used, and your mind became obsessed with repeating that experience. When you feel bad, all you can think about is how to get drugs (alcohol, sex, and so on) so you will feel like you felt that first time you experienced them.

Denial

Denial is used by addicts and alcoholics to keep themselves unaware of the harmful consequences of their use. Though addicts and alcoholics often lie to get what they want, denial is not about lying to others. Denial is a trick the addict's mind plays on itself to excuse the use of alcohol or other drugs no matter what harm it does.

Denial is not a river in Egypt.