

## Definition

# Addiction

**Addiction Ontology**

**Definition:** A mental disposition towards repeated episodes of abnormally high levels of motivation to engage in a behaviour, acquired as a result of engaging in the behaviour, where the behaviour results in risk or occurrence of serious net harm.

**Comment:** This entity focuses on extent of need to engage in a behaviour and includes potential serious net harm as a feature. The reason is to limit the class to things that merit a public health response. It is a quantitative dimension that may vary in severity and a fuzzy set because there can be varying thresholds set for degree of harm and strength of motivation. As a result, it is essential to operationalise the term for it to be meaningful.

**Curator note:** The aim is to include dispositions about which there is a consensus that they constitute addiction while avoiding making a disputed statement about whether addiction necessarily involves disordered brain mechanisms (e.g. cases where a person's addiction may be considered an adaptive response to very challenging life circumstances but may nevertheless benefit from treatment).

*This definition was imported from the Addiction Ontology (see <https://addictovocab.org/>). Comments and suggestions for improvements are welcome using the Qeios review system.*

*Definitions imported from the Addiction Ontology (AddictO) are what are known as 'ontological definitions'. See this article in Qeios for an explanation <https://www.qeios.com/read/YGIF9B>.*

*Ontological definitions can sometimes be hard to read. In those cases we also include an informal definition.*

*Definitions also often require elaboration to make it clear how they should be used and what they include. In those cases we include a comment.*

*Also, definitions sometimes require an explanation as to how they came about to help users understand how they relate to alternative definitions. In those cases we include a curator note.*