
Mixed Feelings

★ *What do you think? Circle "true" or "false," then see the answers at the bottom of the page.*

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| 1. It's best to wait until you feel motivated to give up substances. | True | False |
| 2. Most people have mixed feelings about giving up substances. | True | False |
| 3. There's something wrong with you if you still want to use substances. | True | False |
| 4. People who recover are totally sure they want to give up substances. | True | False |

◆ **You may have mixed feelings about giving up substances.** You may alternate between wanting to recover from substance abuse and then not wanting to. Such mixed feelings are called "ambivalence." This is a very common stage in early recovery. Despite all the suffering you go through with substance abuse, it is familiar. Giving up substances can feel like the loss of a close friend. *Most* people who give up substances frequently have mixed feelings about it. If you talk to people who have succeeded in achieving long-term abstinence, they too felt mixed about it when they were in early recovery.

◆ **With PTSD, there may also be mixed feelings about getting better.** PTSD can feel very familiar, and can even become your identity. It can be scary to move forward and let go of it: "If I keep feeling pain, this shows how bad the trauma was," "If I get better, it's like my abuser has won," "I don't have a right to get better when my buddies died on the battlefield." To let go of such suffering may feel as though it invalidates what happened to you.

◆ **How can you cope with mixed feelings?** You can have lots of mixed feelings; it is normal to have them. But always remember that no matter what you *feel*, you need to focus your *actions* on safety. This means not using substances, sticking with treatment, and talking about your mixed feelings openly. You don't have to *feel* like giving up substances or PTSD symptoms. Isn't that a relief?

[Answers to questions: F, T, F, F]
