

Alcohol and Drug Dependency

Someone who is alcohol or drug-dependent is someone who cannot control the use of a substance. It is usually difficult to quit or limit how much is used.

It is estimated that there are about 3 million new users of drugs each year—or about 8,400 new users per day.¹

Myths

We have all seen the images of an alcohol- or drug-dependent person—someone who cannot live without a drink or drugs and may use one or both every day. This person may appear to be irresponsible and weak-willed. However, a person can be chemically dependent without showing such obvious signs, even though the dependency is causing serious problems.

Experts believe that a person's genetic make-up may affect his or her chances of becoming dependent, and that dependency is an illness that cannot be cured by willpower alone.

Signs of Dependency

Some common signs of alcohol or drug dependency include:

- Failing at attempts to cut back or quit using drugs or alcohol substances.
- Suffering “blackouts” or memory loss, after use.
- Using the substance while alone, or hiding evidence of use.

- Using the substance to forget about problems.
- Doing things while “under the influence” that cause regret afterward.
- Inability to enjoy an event without the substance.
- Using more than other people in a social gathering.
- Neglecting responsibilities in order to use the substance.
- Family, friends, or employer expressing concern about substance use.
- Willing to do almost anything to get the substance.
- Incurring financial or legal problems as a result of using the substance.

1. *Drug Facts, Nationwide Trends. National Institute on Drug Abuse, The Science of Drug Abuse and Addiction. Original study from 2011, revised in December 2012.*



Contact Us

Your program provides access to tools and other resources online or call us directly to speak to a professional counselor who is available everyday at any time to provide confidential assistance at no cost to you.

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Resources

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

www.samhsa.gov

National Institute of Drug Abuse

www.drugabuse.gov

The Partnership® at Drugfree.org

www.drugfree.org

Problems Caused by Dependency

Chemically dependent people often act unwisely or inappropriately while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. They may act in embarrassing ways. They may endanger their health and life, and the lives of others, by having unsafe sex or by driving while under the influence. They may lose their job or family.

What to Do

Recognizing the problem is the first step. Here are some things you can do to help yourself or others:

- Acknowledge the problem or encourage someone to acknowledge the problem openly.
- Limit time spent with people who use drugs or alcohol.
- Find community resources or support groups. These groups can help provide encouragement and support for those recovering.
- Seek professional help from doctors or therapists who deal with drug and alcohol dependency and recovery.

It might be beneficial to seek out counseling or a recovery program at a hospital or a private clinic. Look for the support of people who are recovering from their own dependencies. This can be done by joining a 12-step program like Alcoholics Anonymous.

Recovering from an alcohol or drug dependency problem is not easy. It requires a strong support system from family and friends. There is no quick and easy way to recovery but it can be achieved through hard work and dedication. Taking the first step to recover is extremely difficult but once completed your journey of healing can begin.

Employee Assistance Program
For Professional Consultation

Call 800-424-4485

TTY Users: 800-456-4006