

Substance Use Disorder & Addiction

What is Substance Use Disorder and Addiction?

Substance use disorder is using drugs or alcohol even though doing so causes problems in your life. Addiction is a physical or mental dependence on drugs or alcohol. This means when you stop using drugs or alcohol you could get sick. Addiction can also mean that you cannot stop thinking about substances.

It's Bad for your Health

Substance use disorder affects you and those around you. Substance use disorder problems can lead to poor health, violence and arrest. It can also lead to you injuring others or even suicide. Studies show people with a substance addiction may also suffer from other mental health problems like depression. A person with a substance use disorder problem is not a bad person. They may need help from an expert. Without help, problems can get worse.

Signs of a Possible Problem

- Drinking in risky situations (while driving, swimming, etc.)
- Continued use of alcohol or drugs despite personal or social problems
- Obligations at work, home or school are neglected due to drinking or drug use
- Legal problems related to drinking or drug use (domestic violence, assault or DUI)



Who Offers Substance Use Disorder Services?

Your Doctor: They can treat you or refer you to a specialist.

Nurse Practitioner: They can be experts in substance use disorder and addiction, and can give medicine in most states.

Therapist: Can provide psychotherapy, but cannot prescribe medicine. Some types of therapists are Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMCH), and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFT).

Psychologist: Are therapists than can provide psychotherapy and/or mental health testing, but cannot prescribe medicine.

Support Groups: People who suffer from the same illness as you and support you in the recovery process. Alcoholics Anonymous is one example.

First Appointment: What to Expect

Your provider will want to get to know you. They will want to know the problems you want to work on. They may ask about your family background. They want to help you find strengths and skills that will help you recover.

Providers are bound by strict rules to keep your personal information private. What you tell your provider helps them create the right treatment plan for you.

Your Role in Treatment

A treatment program is made by you and your provider and may include:

- Group and personal therapy
- Family therapy
- Peer support groups
- Residential or day programs
- Medication

Take the First Step

- Talk to friends, family and peers
- Don't be afraid to ask for help
- Avoid people or places that make you feel the urge to use drugs or alcohol

Feeling Better

The key person in recovery is YOU. You and your provider should make a treatment plan based on your goals for your health.

Help your provider by:

- Talking about your feelings and progress. Tell them as much as you can.
- Writing down how the medication makes you feel. This will help you both make better choices about your treatment.

Call us if you feel unhappy or not seeing results with your treatment. We can help you find a new provider to work with.

Resources

National Institute on Drug Abuse from National Institutes of Health

www.nida.nih.gov
information@nida.nih.gov
(301) 443-1124

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

www.samhsa.gov

Substance Use Disorder

www.aa.org



1-866-912-6285 (Relay 711)

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