

Substance Use Disorders



Health and Wellness

Substance use can cause problems at work, home, school and in relationships, leaving the user feeling isolated, helpless, or ashamed. If a person's drug use is causing problems and disrupting daily life, a substance use disorder or addiction may exist.

Definitions

Substance use disorders occur when the recurrent use of alcohol and drugs causes clinically significant impairment, including health problems, disability, and failure to meet primary responsibilities at work, school, or home. These disorders can be mild, moderate or severe and can include both tolerance and withdrawal symptoms.

Addiction is defined as a chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking, continued use despite harmful consequences, and long-lasting changes in the brain. It is considered both a complex brain disorder and a mental illness. Addiction is the most severe form of a full spectrum of substance use disorders and is a medical illness caused by repeated misuse of a substance or substances.

Commonly Misused Substances

- Alcohol
- Nicotine
- Marijuana
- Stimulants such as cocaine, amphetamines, ephedra
- Opioids such as heroin, fentanyl, codeine, oxycodone, methadone, hydrocodone, morphine
- Hallucinogens such as LSD, peyote, ecstasy, mushrooms
- Sedatives such as phenobarbital, Seconal, or quaaludes
- Prescription medications used outside of intended use such as Librium, Valium, Ativan, Xanax, or Rohypnol

Introduction to Substance Use

Social introduction: Users may be introduced to drugs by friends, relatives or even strangers. If the individual tries the drug and finds it pleasurable, use may continue until the

individual is addicted psychologically, physically, or both. Drug use often escalates from "mild" drugs such as alcohol and marijuana to "hard" drugs like heroin or crack cocaine.

Iatrogenic drug addiction: Patients on pain medications for chronic conditions may become addicted to the medication. They may begin "seeking" opportunities to obtain additional medications as they, on their own, increase their dosage.

Treatment Options

Your doctor can help you decide which alcohol/drug treatment is best for you. Options for supportive treatment include:

- **Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous:** These organizations offer support meetings with other people who have a problem with drugs or alcohol.
- **Rehabilitation programs:** These programs can be found in hospitals, outpatient centers and private clinics. Some of these programs are inpatient. For others, you come in each day from home.

Continued on back

June is Men's Health Month - Did you know:

- Men are more likely to turn to substance use to cope—approximately 1 in 5 men develop alcohol dependency during their lives.
- Male veterans, regardless of their form of service, experience twice the rate of alcohol and drug use as women.

Don't continue to suffer in silence: reach out and talk.



Substance Use Disorders *(continued)*

- **Detoxification centers:** Detoxification clears your body of the harmful effects of alcohol or drugs and should be done under medical supervision. You can also present to most emergency rooms, if needed, for detox.
- **Behavioral therapies:** Therapy programs such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Family Behavioral Therapy and Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET) are practical options for promoting recovery. These can be done in outpatient, individual, group, or inpatient settings.

Because abuse of alcohol or drugs can affect many parts of a person's life, multiple treatment approaches may be necessary. Some medications can help control cravings. Individual and group therapy is also helpful for many people. Support groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous, are essential for maintaining a healthy lifestyle after substance abuse has stopped.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse is a fact-based resource on addiction and treatment. Learn more at drugabuse.gov.

Please note: The information provided in this document is intended for educational purposes only. Readers with questions or a need for further assistance are strongly encouraged to contact BHS at the website listed below. ©2022 BHS, All rights reserved.



Better begins today.

844-405-8200

For more information about MyMDCARES services, log on to portal.BHSONline.com | username: **mymdcares**