

Substance Misuse

Substance use disorders capture a wide array of substances, and people can misuse one or multiple drugs at a time. Commonly misused substances are alcohol, cocaine, sedatives, benzodiazepines, prescription drugs, hallucinogens, marijuana, methamphetamines, and heroin.

Substances such as opioids and methamphetamines might be prescribed by a doctor, and when used appropriately can be helpful. However, some prescribed drugs are highly addictive, and when misused can have destructive consequences.

Facts about substance misuse:

- About 5.1 million young adults age 18 to 25 battled a substance use disorder in 2017, which equates to 14.8% of this population and about 1 in 7 people, according to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2018.
- Men are twice as likely as women to be diagnosed with a substance use disorder.
- Self-medicating with substances is common for people who have anxiety, mood, and psychotic disorders.
- Using substances can increase the risk of suicide and suicide attempts.

Substance misuse does not discriminate: individuals of any age, race, ethnicity, or socio-economic status can abuse drugs and alcohol. The consequences of substance misuse can negatively affect work performance, family stability, and social functioning and result in legal or financial problems. In some cases, people who may be suffering from a diagnosed or undiagnosed behavioral health concern will use substances to self-medicate and cope with life's stressors.

Treatment Can Help

The first step in addressing any substance addiction is recognizing the problem and being open to engaging in treatment. There are various options for substance misuse treatment so that you can find one that is the best fit. Some interventions have a medical component.

- **Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)** can be very effective in treating substance misuse and addiction.
- **Integrated care**, which addresses both substance abuse and mental health, can be helpful in supporting a person's recovery.
- **Behavioral therapy** focuses on breaking the cycle that leads to substance misuse and the urges to use.
- **Other forms** of treatment include medications for withdrawal symptoms or to address behavioral health issues.

Detox centers and inpatient rehabilitation centers can support a person in receiving the medical and behavioral healthcare they need. It is important to speak to a behavioral health professional or your doctor to connect with professionals who specialize in addiction treatment. Utilizing self-help materials and support groups can also be helpful.

Resources

National Institute on Drug Abuse: <https://nida.nih.gov/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, available 24 hours everyday: 1-800-273-8255

Crisis Text Line, available 24 hours a day by texting "HOME" to 741741