

# ADDICTION



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## Section 1: Overview

There is a slight difference between substance abuse and addiction. **Substance abuse** means using a substance, illegal or legal, in the wrong way. **Addiction** begins as abuse and is marked by when the user becomes dependent on the substance.

When addicted, a person has no control over substance use. Addiction can be physical, psychological, or both. Addiction is a mental illness.

People can get addicted to all sorts of substances. Whether you are drinking alcohol, smoking or using tobacco, taking illegal drugs, or even sniffing glue, you are causing damage to your body.

## Section 2: How Drugs Work

Drugs are a name for chemicals that change the way our bodies work. So, drugs can be medicines that help when prescribed by doctors. Or drugs can have no medical use or benefits. Some substances are more addictive than others. Drugs like crack or heroin are so addictive that they might only be used once or twice before the user loses control.

Whether by swallowing, inhaling, or injecting, drugs find their way into the bloodstream. From there, they move to the brain where drugs can intensify or dull the senses, change how alert or sleepy people feel, and sometimes decrease physical pain.

**Substance abuse can cause physical and mental damage.**



Drugs affect the ability to make healthy choices and decisions. Even drinking makes people more likely to get involved in dangerous situations.



## DID YOU KNOW?

There are *two main types* of addiction treatment.

- **Behavioral.** Helping a person change behaviors.
- **Pharmacological.** Treating with medicine.

## NEED HELP?



If you think you are addicted, talk to a parent, your doctor, school counselor, or nurse. They can help you get the guidance you need.

It can be hard to overcome drug addiction without professional help and treatment. It takes time and isn't something that can be done alone — everyone needs support.

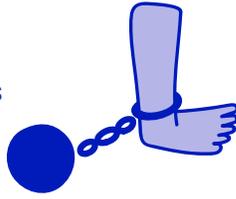
To find a drug treatment center in your area, search online, check out the SAMHSA Treatment Locator, or ask a doctor or counselor for advice.

## Addiction

A person crosses the line between abuse and addiction when they depend on it to function normally. Their whole life centers around the need for the drug. They no longer feel like there is a choice in taking the drug.

Addiction means a person has no control over whether they use a drug. Those suffering of addiction have grown so used to the drug that they need it to function normally. Addiction can be physical, psychological, or both.

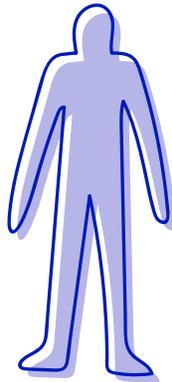
The most obvious sign of an addiction is the need to have a particular drug or substance. However, there are other signs that can suggest an addiction, such as changes in mood or weight loss or gain.



## Physical Addiction

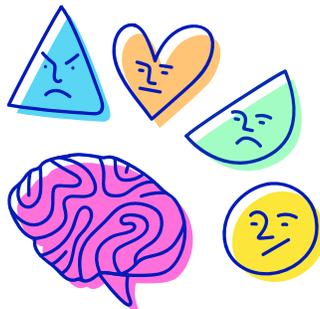
Physically addiction means one's body is dependent on a particular substance. Often times, the body builds a tolerance to the substance, so they need larger and larger doses to feel the same effects.

When people have an addiction and stop substance use, they experience withdrawal symptoms. Common withdrawal symptoms are diarrhea, shaking, headaches, and generally feeling awful.



## Psychological Addiction

Psychological addiction is when the cravings for a drug are mental or emotional. They think that they need the drug to live. People who are psychologically addicted feel overcome by the desire to have the drug or substance they are addicted to.



## DID YOU KNOW?

90  
DAYS

It takes at least 90 days to break an addiction habit.

Even after breaking the habit, addiction is a life-long enemy, and recovery is a daily battle—even after years of sobriety.

## SIGNS OF ADDICTION



### Psychological:

- use of a substance as a way to forget problems or to relax
- keeping secrets from family and friends
- loss of interest in activities
- problems with schoolwork
- changes in friendships, such as hanging out only with friends who use drugs
- spending a lot of time figuring out how to get drugs
- stealing or selling belongings to purchase drugs
- failed attempts to stop
- anxiety, anger, or depression
- mood swings

### Physical signals:

- changes in sleeping habits
- feeling shaky or sick when trying to stop
- needing to take more of the substance to get the same effect
- changes in eating habits, resulting in weight loss or gain

## Section 3: Study Drugs

Sometimes students feel overwhelmed with the amount of school work they have to complete. As a result, they feel like they need help concentrating and staying focused on the tasks. They may turn to **study drugs** because they think it can help them concentrate and stay focused.



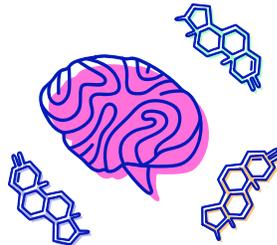
Medicines like Adderall and Ritalin treat conditions like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), however some people get or steal these medicines from a friend or relative who has a prescription.

Study drugs are very addictive and do not actually increase learning or thinking ability.



### How do study drugs affect the brain?

Nerve cells in the brain send messages back and forth by releasing chemicals called neurotransmitters. Prescription stimulants can mimic the effects of neurotransmitters.



In the first few hours, there is increased brain activity, resulting in higher focus and concentration. After the effects wear off, people crash and feel sluggish, disconnected, or even depressed. They are disappointed at the poor quality work they did while on drugs.



### Stimulants can also cause serious medical problems like:

- high blood pressure
- irregular heartbeat
- heart failure
- seizures
- stroke
- paranoia
- heart problems
- mental health problems



## DID YOU KNOW?



- It is against the law to take medicine that isn't yours.
- You can get suspended from school, pay fines, and even go to jail.



## ALTERNATIVES

Increase focus, beat stress, and boost concentration by:

- **Meditation.** A few minutes every day reduces stress and quiets the mind.
- **Sleep.** Getting good rest at night is crucial for the brain to focus, think clearly, and be alert.
- **Exercise.** This increases blood flow which boosts learning, memory, concentration, improves mood and reduces stress.
- **Healthy eating.** Good nutrition is key to a healthy body and mind. Eating a variety of healthy foods fuels the brain and helps keep energy levels high.



## Section 4: Marijuana

### What Is Marijuana?

Marijuana is a shredded, green-brown mix of dried flowers, stems, and leaves from the plant *Cannabis sativa*. The amount of active ingredient is commonly called *THC* (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol).

Marijuana is usually rolled and smoked like a cigarette (joints or doobies), or put in hollowed-out cigars (blunts), pipes (bowls), or water pipes (bongs). Recently, it has become increasingly popular for people to inhale marijuana or stronger marijuana extracts using a vaporizer (called “vaping” or “dabbing”). Some people mix it into food or brew it as tea.



### Quitting Marijuana

- Quitting can cause withdrawal symptoms like irritability, anxiety, depression, loss of appetite, and sleep trouble.
- Marijuana withdrawal is usually worse a day or two after stopping, and then gradually decrease.
- 1 in 10 people who use develop a “marijuana use disorder.”
- If you or someone you know is having trouble quitting, try talking to a counselor. A combination of group and individual therapy sessions is proven to have the best results.



## EFFECTS OF MARIJUANA



### Short-Term Effects

When used, THC goes from the lungs into the bloodstream, and travels through the body. The “high” results from THC’s effects on the nerve cells that control sensory perception and pleasure which affects thinking, memory, coordination, and concentration. Impaired mental abilities can be very dangerous.

#### Side effects include:

- trouble thinking and problem solving
- problems with memory and learning
- loss of coordination
- distorted perception
- an increased appetite
- feeling lightheaded or drowsy
- a decrease in inhibitions

### Long-Term Effects

Research has found that people who use marijuana over a long period of time can have more lasting side effects.



- **Changes in the brain.** It can affect our ability to remember, and pay attention.
- **Fertility issues.** Long-term marijuana use can cause decreased sperm count or delayed ovulation. If used while pregnant, it can cause problems in the baby.
- **Respiratory problems.** People who smoke can develop respiratory problems like a chronic cough, and bronchitis.
- **Immune system problems.** It can make it harder for the body to fight off infections.
- **Emotional problems.** People become more likely to notice signs of depression or anxiety. If someone has a condition like schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, marijuana can make symptoms worse.

## Section 5: Alcohol

### What is alcohol?

Alcohol is created when grains, fruits, or vegetables are fermented. Fermentation is a process that uses yeast or bacteria to change the sugars in the food into alcohol.



### How does it affect the body?

When people drink alcohol, it's absorbed into their bloodstream. It affects the central nervous system (the brain and spinal cord), which controls body functions.

Alcohol is a **depressant**, which means it slows the function of the central nervous system. Alcohol actually blocks some of the messages trying to get to the brain. This alters a person's perceptions, emotions, movement, vision, and hearing.



### Coordination and Processing

More alcohol causes greater changes in the brain, resulting in **intoxication**. People who have overused alcohol may stagger, lose their coordination, and slur their speech. They will probably be confused and disoriented because their brain is having a hard time processing what is happening.



### Mood and Emotions

In very small amounts, alcohol can help a person feel more relaxed or less anxious. Depending on the person, intoxication can make someone very friendly and talkative or very aggressive and angry. Reaction times are slowed dramatically. People who are intoxicated may think they're moving properly when they're not. They may act totally out of character.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Alcohol abuse is the third highest cause of death in the U.S. There are more than 80,000 deaths that are related to alcohol abuse every year.

1 IN 8

Adults are addicted to alcohol.

## WHY SHOULDN'T I DRINK?

- It is illegal.
- It negatively affects performance in school and sports.
- You can do embarrassing and regrettable things.
- The risk of injury is higher when under the influence.
- It can cause longterm health problems.



**Alcohol poisoning** is when the body is poisoned from large amounts of alcohol consumption in a short period. Violent vomiting is usually the first symptom of alcohol poisoning. Extreme sleepiness, unconsciousness, difficulty breathing, dangerously low blood sugar, seizures, and even death may result.

### How Can I Avoid Drinking?

If all your friends drink and you don't want to, it can be hard to say "no, thanks." No one wants to risk feeling rejected or left out.

Some people find it helps to say no without giving an explanation, others think offering their reasons works better. Some things you can say are:

- "I'm not into drinking."
- "I have a game tomorrow."
- "My parents are coming to pick me up soon."
- "I already got in major trouble for drinking once, I can't do it again."

Make plans to do something that doesn't involve drinking. Plan a trip to the movies, the mall, a concert, or a sports event. You might also organize your friends into a volleyball, bowling, or softball team – any activity that gets you moving.



**It's okay not to drink and it's okay to say no.**

Feel confident in your decision and don't let your peers force you to do something that you don't want to do.

### What If I'm Concerned About Someone Else's Drinking?

When someone drinks too much around you, this can make you angry, scared, and depressed.

Many people can't control their drinking and need professional help. This doesn't mean that they love or care about you any less. People with drinking problems can't stop drinking until they are ready to admit they have a problem and get help. This can leave family members and loved ones feeling helpless.

The good news is there are many places to turn for help such as a supportive adult, guidance counselor, or older sibling who will understand what you're going through.



If you're going to a party and you know there will be alcohol, plan ahead. For example, you and a friend can develop a signal for when it's time to leave.



## DRINKING AND DRIVING

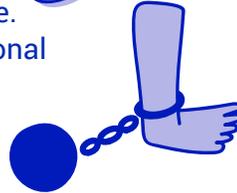
Don't let your friend drink and drive. If you can, try to keep friends who have been drinking from doing anything dangerous, such as trying to walk home at night alone or starting a fight.

Protect yourself, too. Don't get in a car with someone who's been drinking, even if that person is your ride home. Ask someone who is sober and hasn't drunk to drive you, or get an uber.

## Section 6: Getting Help

### Getting Help

If you think that you or someone you care about is addicted to drugs or alcohol, recognizing the problem is the first step in getting help. Many people think they can kick the problem on their own, but that rarely works. Find someone you trust. A supportive and understanding adult is your best option for getting help, you can approach a school counselor, other adult relative, doctor, favorite teacher, or religious leader.



### Overcoming addiction is not easy.

Quitting drugs is probably going to be one of the hardest things you or your friend have ever done. It's not a sign of weakness if you need professional help from a trained drug counselor or therapist. Most people who try to kick a drug or alcohol problem need professional assistance or a treatment program.

### After you start a treatment program, try these tips to make the road to recovery less bumpy:

- **Tell your friends about your decision.** Find and keep friends who will support you and your recovery.
- **Ask friends and family to be available when you need.** You might need to call someone in the middle of the night just to talk. If you're going through a tough time, don't try to handle things on your own.
- **Only go to events that won't involve drugs.** Plan activities that don't involve drugs like going to the movies, bowling, or an art class with a friend.
- **Have a plan.** The temptation for drugs will be there. Make a plan with your family, friends or other support figures, if you find yourself in a situation.
- **An addiction doesn't make you bad or weak.** If you slip up, talk to an adult as soon as possible. There's nothing to be ashamed about, but it's important to get help again so that all of the hard work of your recovery is not lost.



## HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR FRIEND

Being there for them is most important. Here are some ways:

- Let your friend know that you support them.
- If you notice a friend backsliding, ask what you can do to help.
- Don't judge them for their addiction.
- Offer a friend who's battling an addiction lots of support and encouragement.
- If your friend is going back to drugs or drinking and won't accept your help, talk to an understanding adult, like your parent or school counselor.

*It is not snitching, when you are concerned about a friend's safety or well-being.*

### For kids with parents with addictions

Substance use disorders harm a person's health, and change the way they act. They cause problems at home and work. It's not easy living with someone who has a substance use problem. Especially if it's your parent.



If you're living with a parent who has a substance use problem, you are probably having a tough time. Reach out to others for safety, help, and support.



Remember, you're not alone. Tell someone what it's like for you. Living with a parent who has a substance use problem is hard. Get the support you need and deserve.



### When your parent is addicted, you can feel...

- scared, alone, or unsafe at home
- overwhelmed and anxious
- sad and depressed
- angry and embarrassed
- that it's hard to relax or trust their parent
- like you have to be the adult for their parent
- worried about the safety and health of your parent, and other family members
- frustrated when your parent doesn't change
- relief when your parent takes steps to recover

## WHAT CAN I DO?

- **Open up to someone.** Talk to a good friend or an adult you trust. They may be able to help you.



- **It's not your fault.** Some people blame themselves for their parent's substance use, but you are not the problem

- **Know and name your emotions.** Notice how a parent's addiction makes you feel. It's OK to feel the way you do. Use words to express how you feel and why.



- **Find a support group.** Talk with others who are or have been in similar situations. Call Al-Anon/Alateen 24-hr hotline - 1-800-344-2666 or find an online support group.



- **Find a safe place.** If you feel unsafe at home, call the Domestic Violence Hotline at (800) 799-SAFE. If you think you or someone else is in danger, call 911.



- **Build good habits.** Being able to speak up, say how you feel, and show emotion helps you have good relationships in the future. You may need therapy to unlearn bad habits you developed to cope and build new good habits.



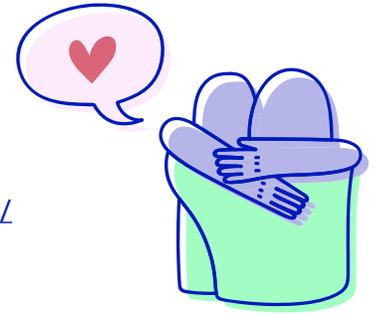
- **Stop the cycle.** People who have parents with substance use problems are at higher risk of having these problems too. A support group or therapy can help you learn how to avoid this.



## Section 7: Drug and Alcohol Programs

**Cap 4 Kids provides a list of resources that are available to you!**

[www.cap4kids.org/philadelphia/parent-handouts/behavior-counseling-addiction/drug-and-alcohol-programs/](http://www.cap4kids.org/philadelphia/parent-handouts/behavior-counseling-addiction/drug-and-alcohol-programs/)



### Comprehensive Listing of Drug and Alcohol Programs for Youth and Adults

A resource that can help you connect to available local programs.

*Call 1-800-304-2219*

[www.addicted.org/drug-rehab-pennsylvania.html](http://www.addicted.org/drug-rehab-pennsylvania.html)

### Drug and Alcohol Helpline

Center for Substance Abuse Treatment hotline.

*Call 1-800-662-4357 to find a resource near you.*

[www.samhsa.gov/](http://www.samhsa.gov/)

### Prevention Point Philadelphia

Provides harm reduction especially in substance abuse, to Philadelphians.

*Call 215-634-5272*

[www.ppponline.org](http://www.ppponline.org)

### Start Your Recovery

Support for overcoming substance misuse tailored toward a persons needs. Their website has resources in your neighborhood and for your needs.

[www.startyourrecovery.org](http://www.startyourrecovery.org)

### Crisis Text Line

Crisis Text Line serves young people in any type of crisis, providing them access to free, 24/7, emotional support and information they need via the medium they already use and trust: text.

*Text "HOME" to 741-741*

[www.crisistextline.org](http://www.crisistextline.org)

### Marijuana Anonymous

Marijuana Anonymous is a fellowship of people who share our experience, strength, and hope with each other that we may solve our common problem and help others to recover from marijuana addiction.

*Call 1-800-766-6779*

[www.marijuana-anonymous.org/meetings/find](http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org/meetings/find)

### PA Opioid Prevention Project

The PA Opioid Prevention Project is a youth-developed, multi-media opioid misuse prevention campaign to empower youth with education, knowledge and resources to make healthy choices. Info for teens and parents.

[www.paopioidprevention.org](http://www.paopioidprevention.org)

### Narcotics Anonymous (NA)

Support groups for both clean addicts and active users.

*Call 215-NA-WORKS*

[www.naworks.org/](http://www.naworks.org/)

### Alcoholics Anonymous

*Call 215-923-7900 for information.*

[www.aasepia.org](http://www.aasepia.org)

### Nar-Anon

Support for families of addicts.

*Call 1-800-477-6291*

[www.naranon.com](http://www.naranon.com)

