



# Addiction, dependency and recovery

Addiction hurts people and hurts relationships. It is a powerful disease. Drug and alcohol problems affect:

- Family
- Friends
- Career

## Signs of addiction

- **Defensiveness.** People refuse to discuss their actions. They may be:
  - Aggressive
  - Angry
  - Frustrated
- **Blame.** People make excuses for their actions. Or blame someone else.
- **Lies.** People may tell constant lies. They hide the truth. They think no one knows their secrets. But friends and family know the truth.
- **Isolation.** People avoid their family and friends. They do not:
  - Answer questions.
  - Interact with others.

## Treatment

Many options exist. The first step is to admit having a problem. Here are ways people can get help:

- **Treatment programs.** Many programs help people with substance use disorders. There may be group sessions. The programs can be in outpatient or residential places.
- **Psychotherapy.** People meet with a specialist. This is called counseling or therapy.
- **Self-help groups.** People meet with peers who have the same problems. This helps them focus on recovery.
- **Withdrawal help.** People may stop using a drug or alcohol. But they feel pain. Some doctors can treat the pain.

## Facts about dependency

People who depend on alcohol or drugs cannot control their use of the substance. They may not be able to quit. Or limit what they use.

## Myths

Common images of alcohol- or drug-dependent people are:

- They cannot live without a drink or drugs.
- They use the substance every day.
- They are weak-willed.

But a person can depend on substances and not show signs. Experts believe:

- Genetics affect some people.
- Dependency is an illness. It cannot be cured by willpower alone.

### Signs of dependency

People with a problem may:

- Not be able to cut back. Or quit.
- Have "blackouts" or memory loss.
- Use the substance while alone.
- Hide the evidence.
- Ignore their problems.
- Do things they regret.
- Need the substance to enjoy an event.
- Use more than others in a social gathering.
- Neglect responsibilities.
- Do almost anything to get the substance.
- Have money or legal problems related to substance use.

Family, friends or employers show concern.

### Problems caused by dependency

People act unwisely while using drugs and alcohol. They may:

- Embarrass themselves.
- Lose a job.
- Lose family.
- Endanger their health.
- Endanger their life.
- Endanger others by:
  - Having unsafe sex.
  - Driving under the influence.

### How to help yourself or others

- Admit you have a problem. Or encourage a person to do so.
- Limit time around people who use drugs or alcohol.
- Find support groups. They help with recovery.
- Get help from doctors or therapists.
- Find a recovery program at a hospital or a clinic.

Recovery is not easy. There is no quick way. It requires:

- Support from family and friends.
- Hard work and dedication.

The first step is difficult. Then you can begin your journey of healing.

### Resources

[www.samhsa.gov/treatment](http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment) or 1-800-662 HELP (4357).

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

[www.nar-anon.org](http://www.nar-anon.org) (for families and friends)

*This document is for your information only. It is not meant to give medical advice. It should not be used to replace a visit with a provider. Magellan Health does not endorse other resources that may be mentioned here.*