

If you have picked up this brochure most likely you or someone you love is struggling with the damaging effects of drug abuse or addiction. **You are not alone.** Drug abuse and addiction affect people from all walks of life. And although there are no easy solutions, drug treatment *can and does* work for many people.

Other Resources

There are a wide variety of organizations that can assist you in finding the help you need. For more information on drug or alcohol addiction, or to find help in your area contact:

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence
www.ncadd.org

Narcotics Anonymous
www.na.org
818-773-9999

National Intervention Referral
www.nationalinterventionreferral.org
800-399-3612

For More Information:
www.drugabusehelp.com

Anonymous Substance Abuse Treatment
Facility Locator:
<http://dasis3.samhsa.gov>

> **INFOCUS**
RECOVERY

DRUG ABUSE and addiction

Drug Abuse and Addiction

There is a difference between drug abuse and drug addiction. **Drug abuse** (or substance abuse) is the frequent and excessive use of a drug or other chemical substance. Drug abuse often leads to drug addiction.

In **drug addiction** the urge to use becomes more and more powerful until it is irresistible. Addiction can be mental, physical, or both. Those addicted to a drug will have intense cravings and will compulsively seek and use the drug, regardless of the consequences.

One can abuse or be addicted to illegal drugs, prescription medications, or even household products such as paint thinner. Some drugs are more likely to cause physical dependence than others, but regardless of the type of drug or the level of abuse or addiction, *recovery is possible and help is available.*

Signs of Drug Abuse & Addiction

The particular symptoms of addiction vary from drug to drug, but common signs and symptoms of drug abuse or addiction include:

- Needing the drug to feel “normal” or to deal with problems
- Failed attempts to quit using
- Always making sure one has a supply of the drug available
- Intense cravings
- Problems with work, relationships or finances due to drug use
- Engaging in dangerous activities that place yourself or others at risk for harm while using the drug
- Withdrawal symptoms – nausea, shakes, sweats, severe aches and pains, insomnia, agitation, depression and even hallucinations or psychosis – when not using the drug
- Placing the drug at a higher priority than one’s health, family or friends

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Realizing you have a drug problem is a tremendous first step.

WARNING: Quitting benzodiazepines (such as Valium® or Xanax®) can be dangerous or even fatal. If you are addicted to a drug in this category, talk to your physician about quitting safely.

Medical evaluation and treatment. Years of drug abuse can lead to a number of health-related problems that may require treatment. Medical care will depend on one's age, medical history, and history of drug use.

Psychological and/or psychiatric support. Trained substance abuse professionals use a variety of counseling and therapy techniques to address issues related to, or underlying the addiction or abuse. Family members are often encouraged to attend group therapy sessions as part of the recovery process.

Medication. In addition to medication to alleviate withdrawal symptoms, medication may also be given to deal with underlying issues of depression, anxiety, or other psychiatric conditions. There are also medication-assisted therapies in which medications such as buprenorphine, suboxone, methadone, etc. are prescribed by a medical professional to manage ongoing cravings and to support long term recovery.

Continued support. After leaving an inpatient or residential treatment facility many programs offer aftercare or support groups to help one maintain sobriety and avoid relapse. Inpatient treatment must often be followed up with outpatient care to provide the support needed for ongoing recovery.



Treatment & Recovery

There are numerous treatment options for those struggling with drug abuse or addiction. Realizing you have a drug problem is a tremendous first step. The type of treatment required will depend on the level of dependence or abuse. For some an inpatient or residential program is preferable, while others may find success through an outpatient program or self-help group.

Although there is no agreed upon definition of "recovery" from drug addiction, the term is generally used to refer to the ongoing process of *overcoming dependency, maintaining sobriety, and improving your overall personal health.*

Inpatient and Residential Programs

Inpatient programs provide treatment in a hospital setting. Residential programs take place in a non-hospital setting, such as an addiction treatment center or psychiatric treatment center. Inpatient or residential treatment facilities provide round the clock care that may last more than 30 days. These programs generally include:

Detoxification and treatment for withdrawal symptoms. Detoxification services are an important preliminary step to the recovery process. The duration of detoxification depends of the type of drug to which one is addicted, but generally lasts between 3 to 14 days. Withdrawal symptoms may be managed with medication.

Outpatient Programs

Outpatient treatment programs are designed to help develop abstinence skills and interrupt patterns of addictive behavior. However, unlike residential programs, the patient is generally able to continue with normal activities, such as work or school, while receiving treatment.

Outpatient programs provide counseling and various other services. They may meet on a weekly basis or, for more intensive programs, several times a week for several hours at a time. As with inpatient and residential programs, counseling sessions often include family members to help the individual in treatment with their recovery process.

Assistance in Paying for Treatment

For many, the cost of inpatient, residential, or even outpatient treatment can seem daunting. Many people don't realize their private insurance covers drug treatment, or that there are a variety of other options for full or partial assistance, including:

- Military insurance
- Medicare or Medicaid
- Employer sponsored programs
- Sliding scale or reduced payment options
- Loans
- Federal, state, or local assistance

Self-Help Groups

Self-help support groups, such as Narcotics Anonymous (NA), are essential to staying sober and coping with addiction. These groups offer support for those coming out of formal treatment, or for those who do not require a more formalized treatment program for recovery.

Built around the highly regarded twelve-step framework, NA emphasizes abstinence and acceptance of the addict's powerlessness over their chosen drug. The program is self-supporting and therefore requires no attendance fees, simply a willingness to stay clean and sober.

Other self-help groups offer alternatives to the twelve-step approach. Information about these support groups can often be obtained by contacting your local government's Department of Health.

Support and Understanding for Friends and Family

You cannot make someone stop using drugs. But you can take care of yourself. You have a right to personal safety and with proper support you can *make positive choices for yourself.*

For those affected by others' drug abuse and addiction there is help. Based on the same twelve steps as NA, groups such as Nar-Anon offer advice and support.

You Can Do It

Chemical dependency is not easy to overcome, but **you can do it.** Through Inpatient, outpatient and self-help programs and the support of friends and family, *the battle against drug abuse and addiction can be won.*