



Addressing addiction

5 steps to take if you suspect a substance use problem

Alcohol or drug addiction, also known as substance use disorder (SUD), typically starts slowly and progresses gradually. If you suspect you have a problem with substance use, it can be difficult to know what to do. Try the following.

- 1. Acknowledge the problem:** Reflect on the past year or so. While being honest with yourself takes courage, it's the foundation of positive change.
- 2. Seek professional help:** Start by talking with your primary care provider. Next, consider therapy. Whether it's individual or group sessions, therapy (counseling) is a cornerstone of SUD treatment, helping to address underlying causes of addiction.
- 3. Consider joining a support group,** such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Narcotics Anonymous (NA). These groups are free, widely available, and effective resources for peer support.
- 4. Avoid high-risk situations:** Identifying and avoiding triggers is a key strategy in relapse prevention, as suggested by cognitive-behavioral therapy and other therapeutic approaches. For example, you may need to skip certain events for a while, limiting social time to alcohol/drug-free settings.
- 5. Practice self-care:** The role of self-care in recovery is widely recognized by health professionals and organizations like the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Your body, mind, and spirit likely need some TLC from the effects of substance use. In addition, learning new behaviors requires energy and stamina. Examples of self-care include eating healthy meals, getting enough sleep, and practicing mindfulness to reduce stress.

If you are suicidal or in crisis, call or text 988.

This is a free lifeline available 24/7.



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