



solutions



Define and Decide

Check in to see if you may need help with substance abuse

Grandmothers, college professors, doctors, and business executives—anyone from any walk of life can overuse a substance such as alcohol or other drugs. Others may have problems with overuse of certain experiences like shopping, gaming, gambling, eating, or sex. Both groups can struggle with the detrimental effects of their choices.

Many times, abuse of a substance can cause changes in the body and brain that lead to overuse, cravings, and—possibly—addiction. The overuse and craving for an experience is often called a “process” or “behavioral” addiction. Reaching out for support early can help one prevent this potentially destructive cycle. An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) counselor can help you work through your concerns related to substance use or addiction.

The difficulty with substance use is that we often do not notice the point where we have gone too far—where occasional use has developed into risky overuse or addiction. The following definitions give a broad impression of the differences.

OCCASIONAL USE

Use of a substance is not necessarily abuse. You may occasionally have a drink with friends, but this does not mean you have a drinking problem. As long as you are able to limit your use and not take risks with yourself or others—driving while impaired for example—you are probably doing fine.

OVERUSE/ABUSE

Overuse or abuse occurs when you risk those things that are most important to you—relationships, health, or finances—because your overuse of a substance has eclipsed what you care about most. Overuse can also be a sign that you are building a tolerance to the substance, and it takes more of it to experience the desired effect. If you feel this relates to you or someone you love, contact your EAP today.



The quickest and best way to contact the EAP is by calling **1-800-222-0364**



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DEPENDENCE/ADDICTION

Dependence occurs when you have trouble controlling your use of a substance; you crave it; or you feel you need it to function normally. If you have reached this point, you may need more extensive support. Your EAP can help you get the help you need starting today.

Check in with yourself – or someone you trust

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), a federal agency that is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, estimates that of the people with substance use problems, almost 95 percent are unaware of how serious their problem has become. This is why it is so important to do a self-check of your current substance use.

Sometimes checking in with yourself and asking a few questions can help you see if you may need support.

Has the use of a substance:

1. Kept you from doing things that used to be important to you?
2. Made it difficult for you to accomplish regular daily tasks?
3. Contributed to problems in your relationships?
4. Affected your health?
5. Caused legal or financial problems?
6. Caused you to spend less time with friends and family?
7. Contributed to being habitually late for work, school, or meetings?
8. Caused you to be late completing assignments or projects at work or school?

Two other important questions to ask are:

1. When you have been successful at cutting back on substance use, have you experienced withdrawal symptoms?
2. Have you tried to stop or cut back, but couldn't?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you may want to reach out to an EAP counselor. Your EAP can help you work through your experience to find strategies for getting a handle on substance use.

Have a plan

Check in with yourself to see if you are ready to let go of your habit of using. If you are, you can use the following worksheet to chart a course to your new goal.

Change Plan Worksheet

The changes I want to make are:

The most important reasons I want to make these changes are:

I plan to do the following to reach my goal:

The first steps I plan to take are:

Some things that could interfere with my plan are:

Some other people who could help me in changing are:

I hope my plan will have these positive results:

I will know that my plan is working if:

A counselor or professional I can call if I think I have a problem is:

(The worksheet above is from *Faces of Change: Do I Have a Problem With Alcohol or Drugs?*, a SAMHSA publication.)

Remember your EAP is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to give you and your family the support needed to deal with issues related to substance use and addiction.

Employee Assistance Program

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HOURS A DAY

1-800-222-0364

TTY: 1-888-262-7848

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