

Treating Alcohol Abuse and Dependency

It is always better to seek treatment for alcohol abuse or dependency before problems become critical. Alcoholism is progressive. When left untreated it almost always becomes a threat to life, health and happiness.

Each person who abuses or depends on alcohol is different. Individual recovery programs depend on length of abuse or dependency, attitudes of the individual, family and friends, and the person's willingness to do something about it once a program of recovery has been introduced.

The goal of treatment is to learn to live productively and comfortably without drinking.

For more information on developing positive self-esteem, contact your Employee Assistance Program at 701.530.7195 or 800.327.7195

Remember, your Employee Assistance Program is:

- **Confidential:** All information is strictly between you and the counselor.
- **Informal:** A simple phone call starts the process, and there is no red tape.
- **Free:** Your employer has paid the fees. There's no charge for initial counseling services.



Employee Assistance Program

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Employee Assistance Program

Alcohol Abuse and Its Effects





What to Know About Alcohol Abuse

In the United States, approximately 18 million people struggle with alcohol dependence or abuse.

People who are alcoholics often spend a great deal of their time drinking, making sure they can get alcohol and recovering from alcohol's effects, often at the expense of other activities and responsibilities.

Although alcohol abusers are not physically dependent on alcohol, they still have a serious disorder. Alcohol abusers may not fulfill responsibilities at home, work or school because of drinking. They also may put themselves in dangerous situations (like driving under the influence) or have legal or social problems (such as arrests or arguments with family members) due to their drinking.

It is estimated that three out of four alcoholics are men and women living in their communities. Young people may be even more susceptible to alcohol dependency than adults. Studies show the earlier an individual begins to use alcohol, the more likely serious damage will occur, in a shorter period of time.

The Progression of Alcohol Abuse and Dependency

Early Stages - The person drinks to change feelings or to escape from problems, makes promises to quit but breaks them, drinks more to achieve the same effect, has trouble stopping after the first drink.

Middle Stages - The person denies drinking, drinks in secret, hides the alcohol, looks forward to opportunities to drink again, drinks at most social occasions, frequently becomes intoxicated, denies problems related to alcohol even though they are obvious to others.

Later Stages - The person now lives to drink, liquor comes before everything else, ambition and sense of responsibility diminish, absence from work occurs, defensiveness and denial increase as relationships deteriorate and self-respect fades.

Final Stages - The person hits "rock bottom." Drinking continues despite painful and injurious results, such as divorce, alienation from family and friends, job loss, physical disability, social and personal ruin.

Signs and Symptoms of Alcohol Abuse

Any one or more of the following signs may indicate a drinking problem:

- Family or social problems caused by drinking
- Job or financial difficulties related to drinking
- Loss of ability to control drinking
- "Blackout" or the inability to remember what happened while drinking
- Distressing physical and/or psychological reactions when attempting to stop drinking
- A change in the amount of alcohol needed to get the desired effect
- Marked changes in behavior or personality when drinking
- Getting drunk frequently
- Injuring self or someone else while intoxicated
- Breaking the law while intoxicated
- Starting the day with a drink

When Counseling is Needed

Through counseling, individuals and families learn about alcohol abuse and its effect on them and their loved ones. A counselor provides guidance on what can be done and how problems can be resolved.

A counselor also gets people in touch with needed treatment services or with self-help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous/Alanon. Participants of these groups share common problems and meet to give each other help and support.

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