

SUBSTANCE ABUSE



Commonly abused substances:

| Alcohol | Cannabinoids: marijuana, hashish | Depressants: prescription drugs used to treat anxiety (benzodiazepines), insomnia, seizures | Stimulants: cocaine, amphetamine, prescription drugs for ADD/ADHD | Opiates: heroin, opium, prescription opioid pain relievers | Hallucinogens: mescaline, psilocybin |
|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| Signs of use | | | | | |
| Euphoria, relaxation, lowered inhibitions, drowsiness, slurred speech | Euphoria, increased appetite, dry mouth, impaired judgment, slowed reactions | Slurred speech, mood swings, lack of coordination, dizziness | Dilated pupils, irritability, increased energy, decreased appetite, insomnia | Sedation, slurred speech, constricted pupils, confusion, drowsiness | Euphoria, hallucinations, bizarre behavior, tremors, altered perception |

Symptoms vary by type of substance used, dose, and tolerance

| Substance use occurs on a continuum: | Use | Abuse | Dependence |
|--|---|--|------------|
| Use: occasional, use in social settings, does not appear to affect activities of daily living | Abuse: recurrent use, related legal problems, failure to fulfill role obligations (school, work, family) | Dependence: tolerance, withdrawal, large amounts, persistent desire | |

Risk factors for substance abuse disorder:

No single factor can predict whether a person will develop substance abuse disorder. A combination of genetic, environmental, and developmental factors influences risk for addiction.

- Family history of substance use
- Mental health disorder
- Peer pressure
- Use at an early age
- Using highly addictive drugs
- History of trauma
- Genetic predisposition

Client education:

- Substance abuse disorder is a chronic, but treatable, medical condition.
- Educate clients on available treatment methods.
- Connect clients to community resources and treatment providers.
- Use non-stigmatizing, person-first language when educating clients. **For example:** “a person with a substance use disorder” rather than “addict” or “alcoholic.”



NOTES

