

Substance Misuse: Awareness, Support, and Help

Why This Matters

Substance misuse can affect anyone, regardless of role, background, or life stage. Increased stress, life changes, pain, or mental health challenges can raise the risk of developing unhealthy patterns with alcohol, cannabis, prescription medications, or other substances. Early awareness and support make a meaningful difference.

What is Substance Misuse

Substance misuse is characterized when consequences begin to negatively impact areas of life - physical, work, emotions, relationships, legal, financial, or safety.

This may include:

- Using more than intended or more often than planned
- Increased tolerance develops
- Using substances to cope with stress, sleep, mood, or pain
- Difficulty controlling use despite negative consequences
- Preoccupation with substances (time, effort, energy, and focus)

Substance misuse exists on a spectrum—seeking help when you notice any of these behaviors or experiences can help prevent developing a substance use disorder.

Common Substances Involved



Alcohol



Cannabis



Prescription Medications

Such as pain relievers, sleep aids, anti-anxiety medications, or stimulants



Illicit Substances

Such as cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin

Misuse can occur even when medications are legally prescribed.

Signs and Symptoms

Substance misuse does not always look the same. Possible signs may include:

At Work

- Trouble concentrating, focusing, or staying on task
- Increased absenteeism, presenteeism, or tardiness
- Declining performance or missed deadlines
- Workplace conflicts or safety concerns

Physical or Emotional

- Changes in mood, energy, or motivation
- Sleep problems or fatigue
- Increased anxiety, irritability or depression

- Change in physical appearance or hygiene
- Using substances to relax, cope or “get through” the day
- Hangovers, injury, alcohol poisoning or overdose

Social or Personal

- Withdrawing from family, friends, or activities
- Relationship problems
- Feeling guilt, shame, or concern about use
- Hiding level of use or evidence of use

Having one or more of these signs does not mean someone has a substance use disorder—but they may indicate it’s time to check in and seek support.

Why People Hesitate to Seek Help

Many people delay getting support because of concerns about:

- Fear, shame or embarrassment
- Confidentiality
- Job security or career impact
- Stigma or judgment
- Believing there is no problem

These concerns are common and understandable. Confidential support is available without judgement.

If You're Concerned About Yourself

- You don't need to "wait until it's bad enough" to ask for help
- A brief conversation can provide clarity and options
- Seeking support is a sign of self-awareness and strength

Reaching out early often leads to better outcomes.

If You're Concerned About Someone Else

- Focus on observable behaviors, not assumptions
- Encourage them to access available support resources
- Avoid diagnosing or pressuring them
- Respect privacy and follow applicable school, workplace, or organizational guidelines
- Lead with empathy and concern

How AllOne Health Can Help

Your AllOne Health benefits include **confidential support** and resources to help address any substance misuse concerns and challenges.

- No-cost assessment to determine appropriate support plan which could include:
 - » Short-term Counseling
 - » Referrals to treatment or community resources
 - » Support for stress, burnout, anxiety, depression, or life transitions
 - » Guidance for family members concerned about a loved one

Accessing AllOne Health's benefits is confidential, and the program is free to use.

AllOne Health provides fast access to care, real human connection, and whole-person support. Services are free and available to you and your family members. To get started, visit allonehealth.com/member-support.

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