

Alcohol and Other Drug Use Self-Assessment

Imagine for a moment how much more enjoyable and productive life might be in the absence of excessive drinking and drug abuse.

Time to take a look at how you're using alcohol and/or drugs in your life?

What we put into our body matters. Substances like drugs and alcohol have a huge impact on our brain and activate its reward system. Often people try to replicate that feeling of being high or intoxicated despite ever-increasing personal loss and suffering.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE INDICATORS

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed.; DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association, 2013)* lists the criteria needed to be diagnosed with a substance use disorder. Some of the hallmarks identified in this list include: craving, drinking or using more than intended, using at great personal cost and experiencing withdrawal.

ASSESSING YOUR USE OF

SUBSTANCES

Clinicians highlight two benchmarks for determining a substance use disorder, tolerance and withdrawal. Your answers to the questions below will provide an indication as to whether or not you might be experiencing a substance use disorder.

Alcohol Use

- Y N On a typical day, do you have 2 or more drinks?
- Y N Is it difficult to stop drinking once you start?
- Y N Do responsibilities at work or home go undone because of drinking?
- Y N Have you forgotten events due to drinking?
- Y N Do you ever need a drink in the morning?
- Y N Has anyone expressed concern about your alcohol consumption?
- Y N Do you wrestle with guilt after you drink?

Drug Use

- Y N Have you ever used drugs for other than medical reasons?
- Y N Do you need drugs to make it through your week?
- Y N Have you ever abused more than one drug at a time?
- Y N Do you struggle with guilt about your drug use?
- Y N Have you neglected family or work

because of drugs?

- Y N Do you feel withdrawal symptoms if you stop using?
- Y N Has anyone expressed concern about your drug usage?

Answering yes to several of these questions may indicate a substance use disorder.

ACTION STEPS

Knowing where to start is often the hardest part in any recovery journey. These suggestions can help you begin the treatment process:

- ✓ Take an honest look at the problems drinking or drug use are causing in your life.
- ✓ Schedule a visit with your primary care provider to explore treatment options.
- ✓ Ask for help from friends, family and community resources.
- ✓ Access peer support resources such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous.

KEEP IN MIND

If you or someone you know struggles with alcohol or drug use, be courageous and seek help. Consider reaching out to your health care provider and engaging other counseling resources for guidance on next steps.

What steps will you take today to be well and live life more fully?