

Momentum

Substance misuse awareness



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Opioid use and suicide

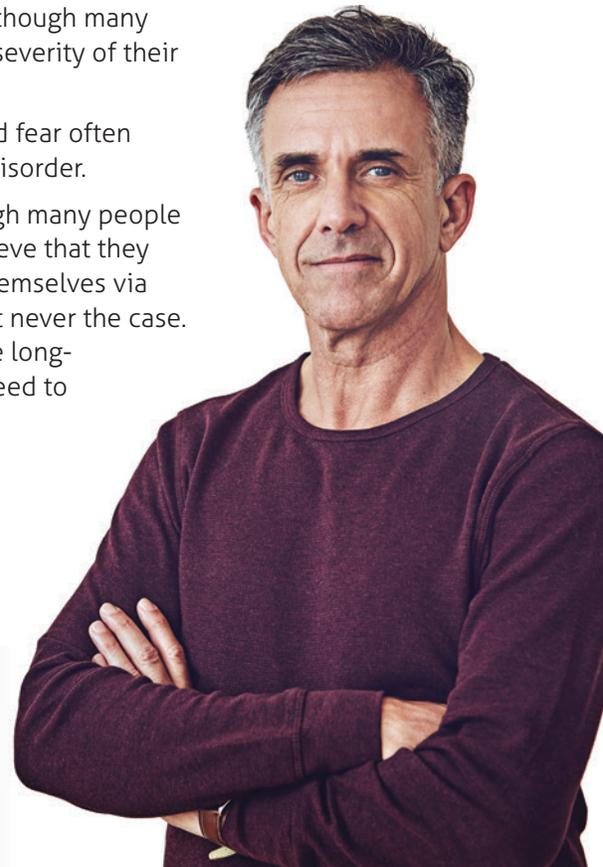
- ✓ Overdoses of opioids—prescription painkillers like hydrocodone, illicit drugs such as heroin, and more powerful synthetic opioids like fentanyl—result in 40,000+ U.S. deaths each year.
- ✓ Researchers have found many of the deaths aren't accidental—they are in fact suicides. Opioid misuse is associated with a 40 to 60 percent increased risk for suicidal thoughts.
- ✓ If an individual ends up in the emergency room with an overdose, they require a full evaluation including screening for suicide risk.

Substance misuse: pushing back

Uncontrollable use of drugs or alcohol can damage every aspect of your family and work life. When you or a loved one recognize that substance misuse is having an impact, it's important to make a commitment to change.

One of the first warning signs of risky substance use is when you stop taking care of responsibilities, such as missing work, not paying bills, not taking adequate care of yourself, your house or your children, relationship problems, etc. Substances change your brain chemistry making it difficult to recognize how use is negatively impacting your life.

- Recognizing the problem and reaching out for help is a key first step—although many people struggle to admit the severity of their symptoms.
- Denial, depression, shame and fear often accompany a substance use disorder.
- Treatment truly helps. Although many people with substance disorders believe that they can overcome the problem themselves via sheer willpower, this is almost never the case. Professional care provides the long-lasting coping skills people need to recover.
- Your program offers easily accessible information and recovery resources that can help you or a household member.



Confronting substance misuse can be difficult and at the beginning frustration and despair are common reactions. It helps to get educated on the issue and to view recovery as a long-term process rather than a one-time event.

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Signs and symptoms

The following are common indicators of drug or alcohol misuse.

- Tolerance—The substance user needs more of the drugs or alcohol to get the desired high.
- Cravings—The individual has an uncontrollable need to use drugs or alcohol.
- Loss of control—The individual uses more substances than planned. He/she typically wants to cut back on use but is unable.
- Neglected responsibilities—Substance use has taken priority over home, work or school obligations. The substance user stops engaging in previously valued activities in favor of drug/alcohol use.
- Opioid misuse—The individual takes pain medication for reasons other than pain relief, e.g., for recreational use or when depressed, or takes pain medication that was prescribed for another person.
- Physical withdrawal—The user suffers with nausea, sweating, shakiness and extreme anxiety if he/she stops using a drug.
- Changes in appearance—There is a lack of grooming and personal hygiene.
- Risk escalation—The substance use continues despite dangerous circumstances and increasing physical and/or psychological problems.

Treatment works!



Evaluation, treatment planning

When you agree to begin treatment, the first step is to complete an evaluation to help determine what type of treatment will work best for you. Once a counselor gathers the information needed in the evaluation, with the counselor will work with you to develop your own personal treatment plan including treatment goals and steps.

Treatment options

Settings for treatment can include medically monitored substance rehab in a physician office setting, hospital unit or addiction treatment facility; residential or day treatment; and/or outpatient or intensive outpatient care. Treatment may include withdrawal management (detoxification) and medication-assisted therapy to reduce cravings for a substance. Cognitive behavioral therapy is an important part of addiction care.

The recovery process

During the early part of recovery, the individual learns about addiction disorders, gains new skills for living life without substance use, and receives relapse training. The next recovery maintenance phase is open-ended. Participating in ongoing relapse support groups helps people stay on track in recovery.

Additional sources: National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), DrugAbuse.com, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), AlcoholRehab.com.



Webinar—Join us Wednesday, Sept. 12 for Substance Misuse: the Facts, the Myths, and the Solutions, a wide-ranging educational webinar. Register [here](#).