

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

RECOVERY AND SUBSTANCE USE AWARENESS

Myths and misunderstandings about addiction can discourage people from getting the help they need.

Substance use disorders affect millions of Americans without regard for gender, age, race, income level or social standing. Yet stigma, myths, and misunderstandings about addiction and recovery still abound and can discourage people from getting the help they need.

Here are some common fallacies:

Myth #1: Addiction is a moral failing and the result of bad choices.

Fact: Addiction is a medical condition and a public health issue, not a moral weakness or character flaw. The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) defines addiction as a primary and chronic brain disease, meaning it must be treated and managed over a person's lifetime. It may require ongoing medication, therapy, and lifestyle changes.

Myth #2: People with an addiction have to hit rock-bottom before getting help.

Fact: People don't have to wait until they lose everything before seeking treatment and making positive changes in their lives.

Myth #3: Treatment doesn't work.

Fact: There are very effective treatment methodologies available and evidence-based programs and treatments show positive outcomes. But like other chronic diseases, addiction can involve cycles of relapse and remission.

Medication-assisted treatment (known as MAT) refers to certain prescription drugs used to manage substance dependence. For example, MAT for opioid addiction uses medications such as buprenorphine to block the euphoric effects of opioids, relieve cravings, and stabilize brain chemistry. Research shows that MAT is effective in decreasing opiate cravings and preventing relapse among people addicted to opiates.

There are several resources for addiction recovery. Detoxification, inpatient, outpatient, intensive outpatient, and residential treatment services are available to help people recover from substance use disorders. Contact EAP for guidance and referral.

