

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

NATIONAL DRUG AND ALCOHOL FACTS WEEK

Substance use and mental health disorders affect millions of Americans from all walks of life without regard for gender, age, race, income level, or social standing. Yet myths and misunderstandings about drug and alcohol addiction are common and can discourage people from getting the help they need.

Here are three common myths and facts about addiction and recovery:

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, character flaw, or matter of willpower. 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 medication, therapy, and lifestyle changes.

Myth #2: Treatment doesn't work.

Fact: There are very effective, evidence-based treatment methodologies available, including medication-assisted treatment. However, like other chronic diseases, addiction can involve cycles of relapse and remission. Relapsing is not a sign of failure but may indicate the need for another treatment approach.

Myth #3: 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.

People can and do recover from substance use disorders to lead full and rewarding lives.

