

How Drugs and Alcohol can affect Mental Health



Substance abuse is often linked to the development or exacerbation of mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. Substance use can disrupt brain chemistry and impair normal cognitive functioning, leading to the onset of these conditions.

Drugs and alcohol can intensify the symptoms of existing mental health disorders. For instance, alcohol can exacerbate depression and anxiety, while stimulants like cocaine or amphetamines may trigger psychosis or paranoia in susceptible individuals.

Substance use impairs judgment and decision-making abilities. This can lead to engaging in risky behaviors, making poor choices, and neglecting one's overall well-being. Substance-induced impairments may further worsen mental health symptoms and increase the likelihood of accidents or dangerous situations.

Substance abuse can lead to dependency and addiction, wherein individuals become physically and psychologically reliant on drugs or alcohol. The process of addiction often deteriorates mental health, as individuals may experience cravings, withdrawal symptoms, and engage in self-destructive behaviors to obtain substances.

Substance use can interfere with the effectiveness of mental health treatments. Drugs and alcohol can interact negatively with prescribed medications, reduce the efficacy of therapy, and hinder progress in managing mental health conditions.



Substance abuse and mental health disorders often co-occur.

This phenomenon is known as *dual diagnosis* or *co-occurring disorders*. The presence of both substance use disorders and mental health disorders requires specialized treatment approaches that address both conditions simultaneously.

Substance abuse is a risk factor for suicidal ideation and completed suicides. The psychological distress and impaired judgment associated with substance use can contribute to feelings of hopelessness, impulsivity and a higher risk of self-harm.



There are a wide range of support and resource options available at the ELPIS Foundation of Australia for those who are or may know someone affected by drug or alcohol addiction.

Reach out to ELPIS today.

Tel: (02) 9816 1859

E: info@elpisfoundation.org.au



[Emergency Support Information](#)

The ELPIS Foundation of Australia is not a crisis centre and cannot provide crisis support.

If you or someone you know needs immediate help, please call:

Emergency | 000

Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)

02 9361 8000 or free call 1800 422 599 (NSW regional and rural callers).

Lifeline Australia – 13 11 14

<https://www.lifeline.org.au>

1800 RESPECT

<https://www.1800respect.org.au>

Alcoholics Anonymous

<https://aa.org.au>

Narcotics Anonymous

<https://www.na.org.au>