



UNDERSTANDING Substance Abuse



What is Substance Abuse? No, really?



Substance abuse happens when someone regularly uses drugs or alcohol in a way that harms their health, relationships, school, or personal goals. This can look different for each person. Maybe you notice you're using substances to help deal with stress, sadness, or anxiety. Or maybe a friend has pointed out that they're worried about how much you're drinking or using drugs.

Stress and Life Challenges

Life gets tough sometimes. Family drama, school stress, or big changes—like moving or losing someone—can feel overwhelming. It's easy to want to block out those feelings, and that's when drugs or alcohol might seem like a quick fix. But in the end, they only mask the problem, not solve it.

Mental Health

Dealing with anxiety, depression, or other mental health struggles can feel exhausting. When things get rough, using substances might seem like an easy way to cope. The problem? It's just a temporary escape, and it can make things worse in the long run.

Friends and Social Pressure

Let's be real—friends can have a huge influence. If your crew is into partying or using substances, it might feel like you have to join in to fit. Saying no can be hard, but it's important to remember you always have a choice.



How does substance use affect me?



Using drugs or alcohol doesn't just mess with your body—it can impact nearly every part of your life, often in ways you might not even expect:

Mental Health

1

What might feel like a way to chill out can actually make anxiety or depression worse. It's a quick fix that leads to more stress over time.

School and Goals

2

It's hard to focus or stay motivated when substances get in the way. Things like school, hobbies, or even future plans can start to slip.

Relationships

3

You might notice you're pulling away from friends or family. Substance use can make you feel distant or even cause conflict with people you care about.

Physical Health

4

Over time, drugs and alcohol can hurt your body. Memory issues, getting sick more often, or feeling generally run down can be signs it's taking a toll.

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