

Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Some people can drink alcohol, use legal drugs, or take prescriptions as recommended without negative consequences. Others may, over time, fall into patterns of abuse. The following behaviors may indicate that a person is struggling with alcohol or drugs:

- ▶ Trying and failing to quit using alcohol or drugs or being unable to limit use
- ▶ Experiencing blackouts or lapses in memory
- ▶ Using while alone or hiding evidence of use
- ▶ Using to forget about problems
- ▶ Doing things while under the influence that cause regret later
- ▶ Neglecting responsibilities in order to use
- ▶ Friends or loved ones expressing concern about a user's behavior
- ▶ Being willing to do almost anything to acquire drugs or alcohol
- ▶ Financial or legal problems related to using alcohol or drugs

Over time, a person who abuses alcohol or drugs may develop a dependency that results in withdrawal symptoms when the substance is not in his or her system. Some people may also develop an addiction to alcohol or drugs, which means they lose control of their behavior related to the substance. Addiction, which sometimes has a genetic component, is a physical and psychological illness that in many instances requires professional assistance.



Recognizing a problem with substance abuse is the first step toward recovery. These steps are also helpful:

- ▶ Acknowledge the problem.
- ▶ Limit the time you spend with people who encourage drug use or drinking.
- ▶ Seek assistance. LifeMatters offers 24/7/365 assistance with alcohol or drug-related concerns.
- ▶ Seek support from a twelve-step program such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous.

A user's friends, family, and co-workers are also affected by substance abuse. Strained relationships, financial or legal issues, or the user's health concerns may put enormous stress on his or her loved ones. Friends and family may find it helpful to speak with a counselor or join a support group to cope with their feelings about the user's behavior and the impact it is having on their own lives.

Whether you have an issue with alcohol or drugs or are affected by someone else's substance abuse issues, LifeMatters can help. Call 24/7/365.

Call **LifeMatters®** by Empathia toll-free anytime. **1-800-367-7474**

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Call collect to **262-574-2509** if outside of North America

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