



ON THE EDGE

How can I support my friends/family through substance abuse?

Substance abuse is a disease that affects a person's brain and behavior and leads to an inability to control the use of a legal or illegal drug. Alcohol, marijuana and nicotine are considered drugs. People who suffer from substance abuse may continue using the drug despite the negative effects it causes and can leave loved ones feeling like they are living "on the edge".

What Are the Costs of Substance Abuse?

\$740,000,000,000

Alcohol, nicotine and illicit drugs cost the United States more than \$740 billion a year

related to healthcare, crime and lost productivity. In addition, each year:

- Drug overdoses kill over 63,000 people
- Alcohol is responsible for 88,000 deaths
- Tobacco is linked to an estimated 480,000 lost lives

How to Recognize Unhealthy Substance Abuse in Loved Ones

- Lack of interest in appearance and grooming
- Frequently missing school or work
- Drop in grades or work performance
- Loss of interest in activities
- Lack of energy
- Weight changes
- Red eyes
- Diminished relationships with loved ones
- Secretive behavior
- Requests for money or discovery that money or items from your home have been stolen

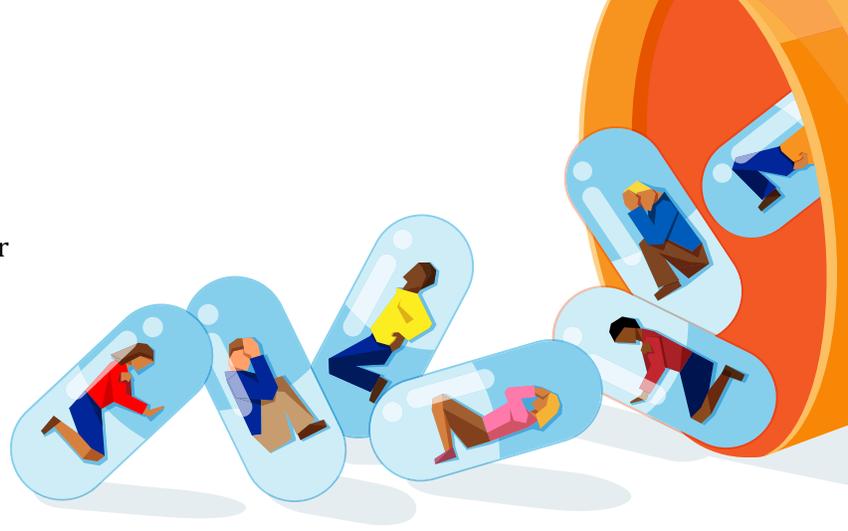
Is Addiction Treatable?

Fortunately, addiction is treatable. Research shows that the best way to ensure success is to combine behavioral therapy with medications, known as medication-assisted treatment. Each patient's treatment must be tailored to their individual drug use patterns and psychiatric, social and environmental problems.

HOW TO SUPPORT A LOVED ONE WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE

If a friend or family member is showing signs of addiction, you can offer support by:

- Expressing that you care and want to help
- Reminding them that addiction can be treated
- Treating them with respect, compassion, and empathy
- Connecting them to treatment options



Getting Help

One of the most important ways you can help a loved one who is suffering from substance abuse, is to connect them to professionals that can help them begin the process of treatment and recovery.

- Talk to your healthcare provider to learn what resources are available to get your loved one treatment.
- Call 911 if you believe your loved one's life is in immediate danger.
- Contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (1-800-662-HELP), a free referral service that can help you find the resources you need for recovery.



ACTION ITEMS

Need a doctor? Let our Physician Referral Service help you find a primary care physician or specialist in our network of care. Visit doctors.stlukes-stl.com or call **314-205-6060**.



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