

Overcoming Substance Abuse

Here are some helpful things to do if you're worried about misuse of drugs or alcohol.

1 Acknowledge the problem.

For many people struggling with addiction, the hardest step toward recovery is the very first one: recognizing there's a problem and deciding to make a change.

2 Ask for help.

It takes courage to seek help for substance abuse — but remember that treatment works, there are many paths to help, and people recover every day. Good places to start include your doctor, your company's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), an addiction counselor, or a psychologist. You can also call the **National Drug Helpline** at **844-289-0879** for confidential support and guidance to help you or a loved one begin the road to recovery.

3 Explore treatment options.

There are many approaches to overcoming addiction, including medication, detox therapy, behavioral therapy, and 12-step programs. Keep in mind, it can take several attempts at treatment and require trying different types of support before finding the right approach. Some people find abstaining from substances most helpful, while others do best with reducing their use of substances through a [harm reduction model](#). [Find treatment options near you.](#)

4 Be patient.

Like other diseases, substance abuse can be managed successfully. It takes time, motivation, and support, but by making a commitment to change, you can take back control of your life.

5 Find sober friends.

If your previous social life revolved around drugs or alcohol, you might need to make some new connections. Try taking a class, joining a church, volunteering, or attending events in your community.

6 Join a support group.

Spending time with people who know exactly what you're going through can be very healing. You can benefit from hearing the experiences of group members and what they're doing to stay sober or reduce the amount of substances being used. Some groups include [Narcotics Anonymous](#) and [Nar-Anon](#), [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) and [Al-Anon](#), and [Faces and Voices of Recovery](#).

7 Lean on your loved ones.

Encouragement and support from friends and family are crucial to recovery. If you're hesitant to turn to your loved ones because you've disappointed them before, consider relationship counseling or family therapy through your company's EAP.

8 Learn healthy ways to relieve stress.

Negative emotions like stress, loneliness, frustration, anxiety, and hopelessness are a normal part of life, but they can make it tempting to turn to drugs or alcohol to cope. When you're armed with healthy techniques to manage these feelings, facing them isn't as overwhelming. Taking a walk, listening to music, yoga, and meditation are some good ways to relax and find balance. In addition, consider seeking professional help to support your mental health before the risk of drug or alcohol abuse arises.

9 Take care of your health.

Exercise, adequate sleep, and a healthy diet will help keep your energy levels up and your stress levels down. The better you feel, the easier it will be to stay sober or reduce your substance use.