



Substance Abuse and Mental Health Issues

Dealing with dual diagnosis? Learn how to tackle addiction when you're also dealing with depression, anxiety, or another mental health problem.

Understanding the link between substance abuse and mental health

When you have both a substance abuse problem and a mental health issue such as depression, bipolar disorder, or anxiety, it is called a co-occurring disorder or dual diagnosis. Dealing with substance abuse, alcoholism, or drug addiction is never easy, and it's even more difficult when you're also struggling with mental health problems.

In co-occurring disorders, both the mental health issue and the drug or alcohol addiction have their own unique symptoms that may get in the way of your ability to function at work or school, maintain a stable home life, handle life's difficulties, and relate to others. To make the situation more complicated, the co-occurring disorders also affect each other. When a mental health problem goes untreated, the substance abuse problem usually gets worse. And when alcohol or drug abuse increases, mental health problems usually increase too. But you're not alone. Co-occurring substance abuse problems and mental health issues are more common than many people realize.

According to reports published in the Journal of the American Medical Association:

- Roughly 50 percent of individuals with severe mental disorders are affected by substance abuse.
- 37 percent of alcohol abusers and 53 percent of drug abusers also have at least one serious mental illness.
- Of all people diagnosed as mentally ill, 29 percent abuse either alcohol or drugs.

While substance abuse problems and mental health issues don't get better when they're ignored—in fact, they are likely to get much worse—it's important to know that you don't have to feel this way. There are things you can do to conquer your demons, repair your relationships, and get on the road to recovery. With the right support, self-help, and treatment, you can overcome a co-occurring disorder, reclaim your sense of self, and get your life back on track.

Click [HERE](#) for more: What comes first: Substance abuse or the mental health problem?

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