



RECOVERING FROM ALCOHOL AND DRUG ADDICTIONS

*Provided through the Marketing and Development Committee
of the Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas*

WHAT IS ALCOHOL ADDICTION

Alcohol addiction is another term for dependence on alcohol and stems from the body's gradually inability to tolerate alcohol, whereby the human body loses its ability to deal with a minimum amount of alcohol. It becomes an addiction when a person feels they need to drink alcohol on a regular basis and usually gets drunk. The definition of addiction is the craving or burning desire for the substance or chemical in question. Someone is addicted to alcohol when they make heavy alcohol consumption a regular part of their life and it is having a negative effect on one or more areas and quality of their lifestyles.

Alcohol addiction is a pattern of drinking that result in harm to one's health, interpersonal relationships or ability to work. Manifestations of alcohol abuse include:

- Failure to fulfill major responsibilities at work, school or home.
- Drinking in dangerous situations, such as drinking and driving.
- Legal problems related to alcohol, such as being arrested.
- Continued drinking despite ongoing relationship problems caused by drinking.
- Long-term alcohol abuse can turn into alcohol dependence.



WHAT IS DRUG ADDICTION

Drug addiction is a chronic disease that causes compulsive drug seeking and use despite harmful consequences to the individual who is addicted and to those around them.

Most people do not understand why individuals become addicted to drugs or how drugs change the brain to foster compulsive drug abuse. They

mistakenly view drug abuse and addiction as strictly a social problem and may characterize those who take drugs as morally weak. One very common belief is that drug abusers should be able to just stop taking drugs if they are only willing to change their behavior. What people often underestimate is the complexity of drug addiction. It is a disease that impacts the brain and because of that, stopping drug abuse is not always a matter of willpower.

Drug addiction is a brain disease because the abuse of drugs leads to changes in the structure and function of the brain. Although it is true that for most people the initial decision to take drugs is voluntary, over time the changes in the brain caused by repeated drug abuse can affect a person's self-control and ability to make sound decisions, and at the same time send intense impulses to continue to use and take drugs.

It is because of these changes in the brain that it is so challenging for a person who is addicted to stop abusing drugs. Fortunately, there are treatments that help people to counteract addiction's powerful disruptive effects and regain control.

RECOVERING FROM ALCOHOL AND DRUG ADDICTIONS

WHO IS AT RISK FOR ADDICTION

No one knows exactly why some people become an addict or alcoholic and others do not. There are many theories and ideas on the subject. The strongest idea is that of "Biogenetic Predisposition". This means that the tendencies towards becoming chemically dependent are inherited. Statistics show that the child of an alcoholic or addict has four times greater chance of becoming chemically dependent than a child who has no history of addiction in their ancestry. Alcoholism and drug addiction are not signs of weakness or indicative of a person with low moral character and qualities. They have a disease that is treatable but as yet, has no cure.

RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE

Help is available, and like many other disorders, alcohol and drug addictions can be treated effectively. People in recovery can and do rejoin their families, their jobs, and their lives in their communities.

Recovery means readjusting. There are no instant results, in fact, it is a life long process. Patience and understanding are important for everyone involved in recovery.

To enable more people living with these disorders to get help, there is a need to raise awareness about the stigma and discrimination have on people in recovery and their family members. Stigma and discrimination are often barriers to getting treatment needed for recovery.

Learning about the treatment of alcohol and drug addictions can help family members understand how they can support a relative who is receiving treatment.

When people with alcohol and drug addictions enter treatment, the healing can be significant. One year after treatment, people report a significant reduction in their alcohol and drug use, increases in employment and income, improvements in mental and physical health, decreases in homelessness, and decreases in risky behavior that puts them at risk for HIV/AIDS infections.



Recovery means readjusting.
People in recovery can and do rejoin their families,
their jobs, and their lives in their communities."

MORE INFORMATION



Mental Health Matters

Toll Free 866-973-2241

www.sekmhc.org

Chanute, 402 S. Kansas, 620-431-7890

Fort Scott, 212 State, 620-223-5030

Garnett, 519 S. Elm, 785-448-6806

Humboldt, 1106 S. 9th, 620-473-2241

Iola, 304 N. Jefferson, 620-365-5717

Pleasanton 505 W. 15th, 913-352-8214

Yates Center 204 S. Main, 620-625-2746

Serving Allen, Anderson, Bourbon, Linn, Neosho and Woodson Counties