



## **WARNING SIGNS OF PROBLEMATIC ALCOHOL AND/OR OTHER DRUG USE**

According to the National Institute of Health, alcohol is the third-leading preventable cause of death in the United States, and the abuse of alcohol and other substances can lead to a range of problems. If you think someone you know might need help, reach out. Be supportive and non-judgmental. Encourage talking to family, friends, health care professionals. Remember – a substance abuse disorder is a medical condition, not a moral failing.

How do you know if substance abuse has become a problem? The simplest question to ask is **“Are alcohol and/or other drugs having a noticeable negative impact on your life?”**

### **Have you:**

- Had times when you ended up using more, or longer than you intended?
- More than once wanted to cut down or stop but couldn't?
- Spent a lot of time using, being sick, or getting over the aftereffects?
- Experienced cravings?
- Found that using interfered with taking care of your home or family? Or caused job troubles? Or school problems?
- Continued to use even though it was causing problems?
- Given up or cut back on activities that were important or interesting to you, or gave you pleasure, in order to use?
  - More than once gotten into situations while or after using that increased your chances of getting hurt?
  - Continued to use even though it was making you feel depressed or anxious or adding to another health problem?
- Had to use much more than you once did to get the effect you want?
- Found that when the effects of alcohol or other drugs were wearing off, you had withdrawal symptoms?

### **If so, what should you do?**

- Get assessed by an appropriate professional (see resources below)
- Address mental health issues with your PCP or clinician
- Work with an addiction counselor on cognitive behavioral change and mindfulness
- Attend self-help groups: Alcoholics Anonymous, SMART Recovery, and Recovery Dharma
- Attend an Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) that meets a few times a week.
- Practice Self-Care
- If you experience withdrawal, you may need a detox program

## **RESOURCES**

- **Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline** - <https://helpline.ma.org/> 800-327-5050 - The Helpline is the only statewide, public resource for finding substance use treatment, recovery, and problem gambling services. Helpline services are free and confidential.
- **Shatterproof Treatment Atlas** - <https://www.treatmentatlas.org/> - Confidential assessment for appropriate level of care. Find and compare treatment facilities using trustworthy information on treatment quality.
- **Self Help Groups** - Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Marijuana Anonymous, Recovery Dharma, Refuge Recovery, SMART Recovery
- **Allies in Recovery** - <https://alliesinrecovery.net/> Free and paid services for families who have a loved one with a substance use disorder. Membership is free for families and individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic

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