International Overdose Awareness Day: Do I Have a Substance Abuse Problem?

A substance use disorder (SUD) can be [defined](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/substance-use-and-mental-health) as a mental health condition impacting the functioning of a person’s brain and their behavior. The mental health disorder is a condition in which a person feels unable to control their substance use. These substances typically include legal or illegal drugs or medications and alcohol and the symptoms of the disorder can range from mild to severe.

There are many reasons a person may turn to addictive substances. They may feel pressured by the company they keep, may be attempting to numb difficult emotions, or may be experiencing other mental health conditions that leave them vulnerable to addiction.

SUD can look different in everybody. However, there are a few different signs and symptoms one can look for if they believe themselves to be struggling with a substance abuse problem. These signs and symptoms include:

# Feeling the Need to Use the Substance Regularly

Whether you are experiencing an alcohol or drug addiction, you will likely find yourself craving and using the substance multiple times a day, every single day. Excessive use of these substances are one of the most obvious signs that one is experiencing a substance abuse problem.

If you are experiencing a substance use problem, you may have found yourself attempting to cut back on your substance use with no success. Every effort to cut the substance out, whether you attempt to go cold turkey, create a strict schedule, or join a support group, may still result in failure until you can find the professional help you need.

# Obsessing Over the Substance

Substance abuse problems can begin to take over a person’s life. One of the biggest telltale signs of a substance use disorder is an obsession with obtaining and using the substance, no matter the consequences it may bring. Because of this, many people experiencing addiction and substance use problems find that their careers, relationships, health, safety, finances, and overall quality of life are suffering due to their addiction.

# You Need More of the Substance Than You Needed Before

Substances like alcohol, drugs, and certain medications can trigger the dopamine levels within your brain. Because of this, your brain begins to crave more and more of the euphoria and “high” associated with the drug. However, your brain also becomes desensitized to the dopamine brought on by the substance. As your brain becomes desensitized to your original dosage of the substance, it will require larger amounts in order for the euphoric high to be triggered.

# We Are Here to Help

Substance abuse can begin to take its toll on a person’s health, wellness, and overall quality of life. If you believe that you or a loved one may be experiencing a substance abuse disorder, our caring and knowledgeable substance abuse counselors are here to help. Through our substance abuse counseling, you will work with a therapist to attempt to find your best route to healing. [Contact](https://michiganpsychologicalcare.com/contact.php) us today.

**References**

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/substance-use-and-mental-health>

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