

Substance Abuse

Substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs¹. When someone loses control of their drug or alcohol use, medical problems, relationship issues or problems at work may occur².

The reasons behind substance abuse are complex but may include psychological problems such as depression or anxiety, addiction or as a coping strategy.

Signs someone may be abusing substances²

- Failing to meet deadlines/responsibilities
- Struggling at work
- Prioritising substance use over leisure, work or social activities
- Changes in personality
- Tolerance (the need to use more of the substance for the same effect)
- Withdrawal symptoms (physical symptoms relieved by use of the substance)

More information

- Your General Practitioner (GP) or healthcare practitioner
- Healthdirect website: <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/substance-abuse>
- Department of Health Website on Alcohol use: <https://beta.health.gov.au/health-topics/alcohol>

Seeking help

- Your GP
- Lifeline 13 11 14
- Counsellor/Psychologist
- Employee Assistance Program

We're here to help. For a confidential discussion or more information contact Drake WorkWise on 1300 135 600 (AU) 0800 452 521 (NZ).

Note: This material is designed as general information only and may not be applicable to your personal situation. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your doctor.

References

1. World Health Organisation, Substance abuse, 2019. https://www.who.int/topics/substance_abuse/en/
2. Healthdirect, Substance abuse, 5-minute read, November 2018. <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/substance-abuse>