

TRIVIA...

The solution to avoiding the problems associated with abuse and dependence is different for each condition. Since abusers can control their use, their solution is **consistent moderation**. But it may involve more.

For example, if someone is drinking excessively as a way to cope with grief and despair associated with the loss of a loved one, they may need to obtain counseling to learn more appropriate ways to cope with those feelings. Once the feelings are resolved, the "need" to self-medicate with alcohol fades away, and the alcohol abuse ends.

Alcoholics don't have the option of setting limits and sticking to them through will power. They may try many times to control their drinking, and will most likely succeed some of the time, but at least occasionally they will fail. They will drink more than they planned, and they will experience negative consequences associated with drinking.

This is true even if they attend counseling to deal with problems and get help to develop positive self-esteem. Therefore, their only real solution is to abstain from alcohol and drugs and find recovery from dependence.

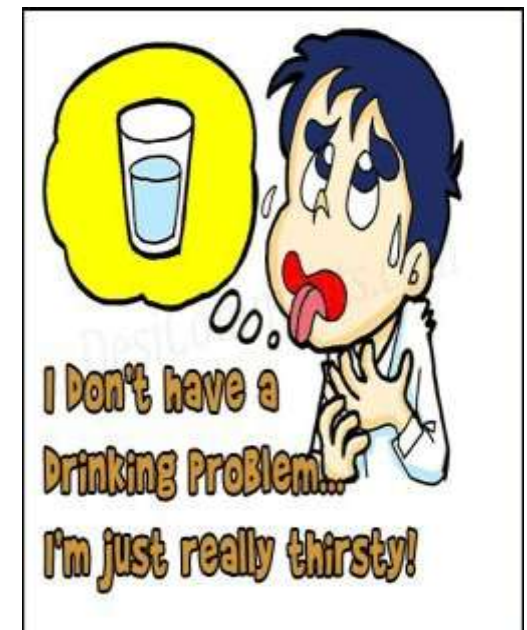
Strategies You Can Use

As an individual, there are many simple strategies that you can put into place to reduce the risk and potential harm associated with drinking. Research shows that the more strategies a person uses, the less likely he/she will experience negative consequences (like hangovers, regret, memory loss, etc.). For example, you can:

- Choose safe and familiar settings in which to drink
- Drink with people you know and trust
- Set a limit and stick to it
- Count your drinks
- Learn how to say, "No thanks" and "No more"
- Avoid all drinking games, always
- Eat something before and while you drink
- Alternate alcoholic with non-alcoholic drinks
- Avoid drinking on top of medications
- Mix your own drinks or know exactly what's in them
- Have a plan to get home safely
- Pace drinks to one per hour



...Problem with Alcohol or Drugs???



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Symptoms of Alcohol & Other Drug Abuse & Dependence

Take a look at the following symptoms and ask yourself honestly, "Do some of these apply to me?" Keep in mind that almost no one has them all.

1. My drinking (drug use) sometimes causes problems.
 2. I sometimes set limits on the amount I will drink (use) and then exceed those limits.
 3. I sometimes make promises to myself or someone else about drinking (using) and then break those promises.
 4. I sometimes lie about or try to hide the frequency and/or amount of my drinking (using).
 5. I sometimes forget or deny things that happen when I was intoxicated (high).
 6. I sometimes behave very differently when intoxicated (high) than when sober (clean), almost as if I'm a different person.
 7. I sometimes tend to avoid social functions at which alcohol (drugs) may not be available.
 8. I've embarrassed, angered, or frightened other people when I was drunk (high).
 9. I have a very high tolerance - that is, I can drink (use) a lot without acting or feeling highly intoxicated.
 10. I sometimes feel guilty, embarrassed, or remorseful about things I said or did while intoxicated (high).
 11. I occasionally drink (use) in the morning or early in the day to treat a hangover or to avoid the shakes (withdrawal symptoms).
- How many "yes" answers do you need to diagnosis a problem? It depends. If you answered "yes" to one or more, then it may be worth taking a closer look.

Alcohol/Drug Abuse vs. Alcohol/Drug Dependence: What's the difference?

Abuse is a harmful pattern of alcohol or drug use leading to impairment or distress over a 12-month period and has experienced one or more of the following criteria:

- Recurrent use leading to failure to fulfill obligations
- Recurrent use that is physically hazardous
- Recurrent alcohol- or drug-related legal problems
- Continued use despite social/interpersonal problems

As such, abuse means *intentional overuse* of alcohol and/or drugs. It is often described as people making bad choices about the use of alcohol or drugs.

People abuse alcohol and/or drugs for many reasons, including peer pressure, immaturity, insecurity, habit, mental illness, life problems, ignorance, and poor coping skills.

Dependence, on the other hand, is a harmful pattern of alcohol or drug use leading to impairment or distress over a 12-month period and have experienced three or more of the following criteria:

- Tolerance to the substance's actions
- Substance is used more than intended
- Withdrawal symptoms or use to avoid withdrawal symptoms
- There is an apparent inability to control use
- Effort is expended to obtain the substance

The essential difference between abuse and dependence lies in **control**. Abusers can control their drinking and drug use whenever they choose.

Dependents can't control theirs on some occasions - perhaps even most - but not all. Their control is unpredictable.

Both also represent different conditions and require separate remedies.

(Source: Diagnostic Statistical Manual IV)

