



Drug and Alcohol Awareness
University of Adelaide

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Course Overview

- Recognise the warning signs of substance abuse
- Physical and psychological impact of substance abuse and the associated risks
- Understanding Mental Health First Aid for Substance abuse
- Providing assistance and gaining support



Before we get started:

Today's discussions may raise sensitive issues.

- Please be respectful and supportive to others
- Feel free to take a break / take time out of the room: just let the person next to you know if you are OK.



Mental Health Awareness - Workplace

- With over 11.5 million Australians in employment, workplaces can play a significant role in supporting mental health.
- At any given time, one in five employees is likely to be experiencing a mental health condition.



Mental Health Awareness

- Mental health conditions tend to affect people during their prime working years (16 to 64 years). In addition to the personal cost to the individual, untreated mental health conditions can have a direct impact on workplaces.
- The Heads Up initiative was recently launched in partnership with the Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance (MHWA) to encourage business leaders to take action on mental health in the workplace and give it the same priority as physical health and safety.



Mental Health Awareness

Creating a mentally healthy work place starts with individual commitment of each staff member.

Each person needs to:

- consider their own mental health and how they manage day to day stressors
- identify and assist other staff who may require assistance.



Mental Health Awareness – Colleagues

- We know our colleagues well and can often identify when their behaviour changes
- We are therefore uniquely positioned to observe and approach them to discuss our observations and their impact



Responses to Stress

Destructive

- Impulsive behaviours / aggression
- Relationship issues
- Stop feeling / or over sensitive
- Poor Work Attitude / performance
- Excessive Use of Substances such as Alcohol and Drugs



Responses

- Chronic stress can lead to mental health issues.
- People can experience either acute or chronic symptoms.
- Do they have access to treatment or not yet be aware of services available to them to assist.
- What methods do they use to cope?



What is a Mental Disorder?

A mental disorder is a diagnosable illness which causes major changes in a person's thinking, emotional state and behaviour, and disrupts the person's ability to work and carry on their usual personal relationships.



Substance Abuse Disorder

- Not just alcohol or other drugs
- Occurs when the substance abuse causes adverse affects on a person's life
- Represents approximately 5.1% of the population aged over 16 in any one year.
- The median age of onset is 18 years of age
- Often occurs with mood, anxiety, depression and even psychotic disorders.



Percentage of Australians aged 16 - 85 with a Common Mental Illness in One Year

	% MALE	% FEMALE	% TOTAL
Any Anxiety Disorder	10.8	17.9	14.4
Any Mood Disorder (including depression)	5.3	7.1	6.2
Any Substance Use Disorder	7.0	3.3	5.1
Any Common Mental Disorder	17.6	22.3	20.0

Another 0.5% people have a **psychotic disorder** in any one year.

Source: 2007 National Survey of Mental Health & Wellbeing



Professional Help Seeking

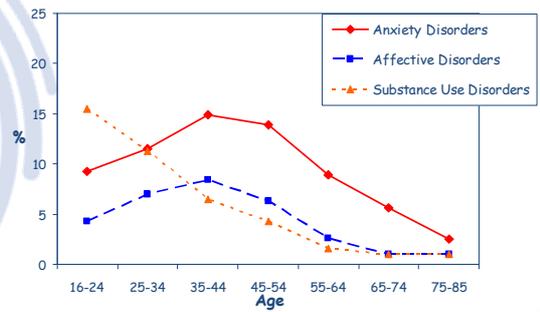
- Many people with common mental illnesses do not seek any professional help
- Only **35%** of people with a common mental illness receive professional help:

- 59%** People with depressive disorders
- 38%** People with anxiety disorders
- 24%** People with substance use disorders

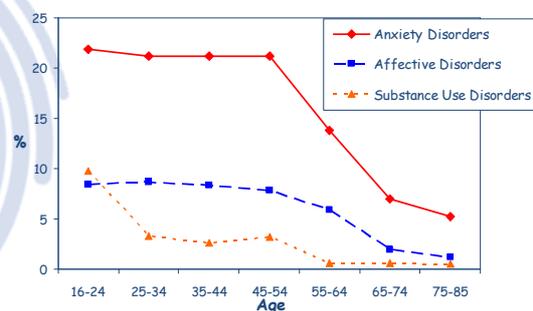
Source: 2007 National Survey of Mental Health & Wellbeing
MHFA



PREVALENCE OF MENTAL DISORDERS IN LAST 12 MONTHS: MALES



PREVALENCE OF MENTAL DISORDERS IN LAST 12 MONTHS: FEMALES



Substance Use Disorders

- Using alcohol or drugs does not mean a person has a substance use disorder.
- Substance use disorders include dependence, &/or use that leads to problems at work or home &/or causes damage to health.
- Alcohol use disorders are 3 times as common as drug use disorders.



Substance Use Disorders

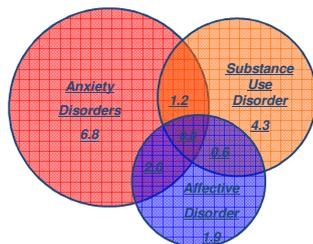
Why do some people using substances become addicted, while others don't?

As with many other conditions and diseases, vulnerability to addiction differs from person to person. Your genes, mental health, family and social environment all play a role in addiction. Risk factors that increase your vulnerability include:

- Family history of addiction
- Abuse, neglect, or other traumatic experiences in childhood
- Mental disorders such as depression and anxiety
- Early use of drugs
- Method of administration—smoking or injecting a drug may increase its addictive potential



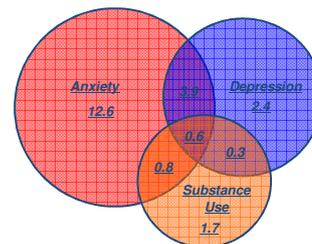
- **Substance misuse** also frequently occurs with depression and anxiety disorders. People may be trying to self medicate with alcohol to "drown their sorrows" or to "chill out" (relax). However, it is also now believed that ongoing **alcohol misuse** can cause **depressive** or **anxiety** symptoms.



Australian Men

37% (over 1 in 3) males with a substance use disorder have an underlying depression &/or anxiety which is often undetected & untreated.

Source: National Survey Mental Health Wellbeing (NSMHWB), 2007



Australian Women

50% (1 in 2) females with a substance use disorder have an underlying depression &/or anxiety which is often undetected & untreated.

Source: National Survey Mental Health Wellbeing (NSMHWB), 2007

Short Term Risks of Alcohol Consumption

- Accidents
- Injury
- Embarrassment
- Impaired decision making
- Suicide



Alcohol and the Body- Long Term

Damaged heart muscle, Hallucinations, Fits, Heart damage, High blood pressure, Stroke, Liver damage, Cancers of digestive system, Sexual impotence and reduced fertility, Increased breast cancer risk, Brain damage, Concentration and memory problems, Confusion, Blackouts, Stroke, Muscle weakness, Loss of muscle tissue, Hepatitis, cirrhosis, liver cancer, Lung infections, Flushed and bruised skin, Nerve damage, Inflamed pancreas, Intestinal and stomach bleeding and ulcers, Impaired coordination and balance.



Source, 1997 National Survey Mental Health Wellbeing (NSMHWB)

Type of disorder	Males	Females	Persons
Alcohol	9.4%	3.7%	6.5%
Cannabis	2.7%	.8%	1.7%
Stimulants	.3%	.1%	.3%
Sedatives	.4%	.4%	.4%
Opioids	.2%	.2%	.2%
Any Substance use disorder	11.1%	4.5%	7.7%



Warning Signs of Commonly Abused Drugs

- **Marijuana:** Glassy, red eyes; loud talking, inappropriate laughter followed by sleepiness; loss of interest, motivation; weight gain or loss.
- **Depressants (including Xanax, Valium, GHB):** Contracted pupils; drunk-like; difficulty concentrating; clumsiness; poor judgment; slurred speech; sleepiness.
- **Stimulants (including amphetamines, cocaine, crystal meth):** Dilated pupils; hyperactivity; euphoria; irritability; anxiety; excessive talking followed by depression or excessive sleeping at odd times; may go long periods of time without eating or sleeping; weight loss; dry mouth and nose.
- **Inhalants (glues, aerosols, vapours):** Watery eyes; impaired vision, memory and thought; secretions from the nose or rashes around the nose and mouth; headaches and nausea; appearance of intoxication; drowsiness; poor muscle control; changes in appetite; anxiety; irritability; lots of cans/aerosols in the trash.
- **Hallucinogens (LSD, PCP):** Dilated pupils; bizarre and irrational behaviour including paranoia, aggression, hallucinations; mood swings; detachment from people; absorption with self or other objects, slurred speech; confusion.
- **Heroin:** Contracted pupils; no response of pupils to light; needle marks; sleeping at unusual times; sweating; vomiting; coughing, sniffing; twitching; loss of appetite.



Cannabis (marijuana)

- Only about 2% of the population have a cannabis problem of abuse and dependence
- More than twice as likely to suffer from an anxiety disorder or depression
- More than three times the risk of suffering from psychotic symptoms
- Adolescents using cannabis are more likely to suffer from depression, conduct problems, drinking & other drugs
- There is an association between cannabis use and schizophrenia.
- The more frequent the use of cannabis, the greater the risk of diagnosis of schizophrenia over the next 15 years



Amphetamines

- Amphetamines belong to the category of stimulant drugs and have the temporary effect of increasing energy and apparent mental alertness.
- A particular mental health risk is amphetamine psychosis or "speed psychosis" which involves symptoms similar to schizophrenia. The person will recover as the drug wears off but are vulnerable to further episodes of psychosis if the drug is used again.



Ecstasy

- Ecstasy is a stimulant drug which also has hallucinogenic properties
- Risk of adverse reaction in hot crowded conditions where some extreme cases can result in death
- When coming off ecstasy, users often experience depressed mood
- Considerable evidence has shown that the long term effect of ecstasy use can cause damage to the nerve cells in the brain that use a chemical messenger called serotonin



Heroin

- Heroin is a type of opioid. Opioid drugs also include morphine, opium and codeine
- Heroin produces short-term feelings of euphoria and wellbeing but has a high risk of creating dependence
- Most people who are dependent on heroin have associated problems such as depression, alcohol dependence and criminal behaviour
- Heroin users are also at high risk for suicide



Common Signs and Symptoms of Drug Abuse

- **Physical warning signs of drug abuse**
- Bloodshot eyes, pupils larger or smaller than usual
- Changes in appetite or sleep patterns. Sudden weight loss or weight gain
- Deterioration of physical appearance, personal grooming habits
- Unusual smells on breath, body, or clothing
- Tremors, slurred speech, or impaired coordination



Common Signs and Symptoms of Drug Abuse

- **Behavioural signs of drug abuse**
- Drop in attendance and performance at work or school
- Unexplained need for money or financial problems. May borrow or steal to get it.
- Engaging in secretive or suspicious behaviours
- Sudden change in friends, favorite hangouts, and hobbies
- Frequently getting into trouble (fights, accidents, illegal activities)



Common Signs and Symptoms of Drug Abuse

- **Psychological warning signs of drug abuse**
- Unexplained change in personality or attitude
- Sudden mood swings, irritability, or angry outbursts
- Periods of unusual hyperactivity, agitation, or giddiness
- Lack of motivation; appears lethargic or "spaced out"
- Appears fearful, anxious, or paranoid, with no reason



When You Suspect Someone Has a Drug Problem

If you suspect that a friend or family member has a drug problem, here are a few things you can do:

- **Speak up.** Talk to the person about your concerns, and offer your help and support, without being judgmental. The earlier addiction is treated, the better. Don't wait for your loved one to hit bottom! Be prepared for excuses and denial by listing specific examples of your loved one's behaviour that has you worried.
- **Take care of yourself.** Don't get so caught up in someone else's drug problem that you neglect your own needs. Make sure you have people you can talk to and lean on for support. And stay safe. Don't put yourself in dangerous situations.
- **Avoid self-blame.** You can support a person with a substance abuse problem and encourage treatment, but you can't force an addict to change. You can't control your loved one's decisions. Let the person accept responsibility for his or her actions, an essential step along the way to recovery for drug addiction.



When You Suspect Someone Has a Drug Problem

Don't:

- Attempt to punish, threaten, bribe, or preach.
- Try to be a martyr. Avoid emotional appeals that may only increase feelings of guilt and the compulsion to use drugs.
- Cover up or make excuses for the drug abuser, or shield them from the negative consequences of their behaviour.
- Take over their responsibilities, leaving them with no sense of importance or dignity.
- Hide or throw out drugs.
- Argue with the person when they are high.
- Take drugs with the drug abuser.
- Feel guilty or responsible for another's behaviour



5 Myths About Addiction

MYTH 1:

Overcoming addiction is a simply a matter of willpower. You can stop using drugs if you really want to.

Prolonged exposure to substances alters the brain in ways that result in powerful cravings and a compulsion to use. These brain changes make it extremely difficult to quit by sheer force of will.



5 Myths About Addiction

MYTH 2:

Addiction is a disease; there's nothing you can do about it.

Most experts agree that addiction is a brain disease, but that doesn't mean addicts are helpless victim. The brain changes associated with addiction can be treated and reversed through therapy, medication, exercise, and other treatments.



5 Myths About Addiction

MYTH 3:

Addicts have to hit rock bottom before they can get better.

Recovery can begin at any point in the addiction process—and the earlier, the better. The longer substance abuse continues, the stronger the addiction becomes and the harder it is to treat. Don't wait to intervene until the addict has lost it all.



5 Myths About Addiction

MYTH 4:

You can't force someone into treatment; they have to want help.

Treatment doesn't have to be voluntary to be successful. People who are pressured into treatment by their family, employer, or the legal system are just as likely to benefit as those who choose to enter treatment on their own. As they sober up and their thinking clears, many formerly resistant addicts decide they want to change.



5 Myths About Addiction

MYTH 5:

Treatment didn't work before, so there's no point trying again.

Recovery from addiction is a long process that often involves setbacks. Relapse doesn't mean that treatment has failed or that you're a lost cause. Rather, it's a signal to get back on track, either by going back to treatment or adjusting the treatment approach.



Active Listening

- Really trying to understand
- Being able to look from another's point of view
- Allow the person to make their own decision and manage the problem in their own way
- Make no moral judgement
- Pay attention
- Allow long pauses so someone can speak – don't be afraid of silence.



Professionals Who Can Help

- General Practitioners
- Psychologists
- Psychiatrists
- Allied health professionals
- Counsellors
- Mental health nurses
- Case managers



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Consider the Barriers to Help-Seeking



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Recovery

Recovery can be quicker for people who feel supported

- Support from friends and family
- Support from community
- Support from others who have experienced mental illness or addiction
- Self-help strategies

Remember: first aiders also need to take care of themselves



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Mental Health First Aid

How do we consider approaching an individual who may be in crisis and is demonstrating some or any of these symptoms?



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

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MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID ACTION PLAN



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

- Action 1:** **A**pproach the person, assess and assist with any crisis
- Action 2:** **L**isten non-judgmentally
- Action 3:** **G**ive support and information
- Action 4:** **E**ncourage appropriate professional help
- Action 5:** **E**ncourage other supports

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Action 1: A pproach the person, assess and assist with any crisis

- Approach the person about your concerns, look out for any crises and assist the person to deal with them
- If the person is in crisis, this is your first priority
- It may be immediately apparent, or may emerge during your conversation with the person
- Review how to assist in that crisis situation

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Action 2: L isten non-judgmentally

- Listen non-judgmentally at all times when providing MHFA
- Engage the person in discussing how they are feeling
- Ask how long they have been feeling this way
- Set aside any judgments about the person or their situation
- Most people want to be listened to empathetically before being offered help
- Use appropriate verbal and non-verbal listening skills



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Action 3: G ive support and information

Once a person has been listened to, it may be easier to then offer support and information.

Support can include:

- Emotional support
- Hope for recovery
- Practical help

Information can include:

- Mental illnesses are real medical conditions.
- There is effective help available
- Getting help early means mental illness will pass more quickly and is less likely to reoccur later

MHFA



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Action 4: E ncourage appropriate professional help

- Offer options of help available from mental health professionals
- Many people do not know about the various professional options available, such as:
 - medication
 - counselling or psychological therapy
 - help with vocational and educational goals
 - help with finances problems



What if the person doesn't want help?

- Try to find out if there are some specific reasons why, eg concern about cost, not liking the doctor, being sent to hospital
- Offer reliable information (pamphlets, books, websites) which may help them to see that seeking help is a good idea
- Continue to encourage them to seek or accept professional help
- However, do not threaten, lecture, nag or use guilt to change their mind; this may damage your relationship with them and make it hard for them to approach you again in the future
- *Let the person know you are prepared to talk when they are ready*
- If their symptoms become severe, you may need to seek assistance for them against their wishes



ALGEE

Action 5: Encourage other supports

Recovery can be quicker for people who feel supported

- Support from friends and family
- Support from community
- Support from others who have experienced mental illness
- Self-help strategies
- Any management strategies they can access other than the use of alcohol and other drugs.

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Helpful Contacts



- **APS Psychologist Referral Service: 1800 333 497** or see **APS Psychologist Referral Service**
- **Kids Help Line: 1800 551 800** or visit **www.kidshelpline.com.au**
- **Lifeline: 13 11 14** or visit **www.lifeline.org.au**
- Emergency **000**
- ACIS **13 14 65**
- CARL **13 14 78**



Key Points



- Understand **risk factors** and **warning signs** for Substance abuse
- Develop strategies for **approach about your concerns**
- Know the steps you can take **ALGEE**



Questions

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