

What is a Substance Use Disorder (SUD)?

Substance use: A substance use disorder is usually identified by the continued use of alcohol and/or drugs despite negative consequences that impact your relationships, school functioning, and job performance. The coexistence of a mental health disorder with a substance use disorder is referred to as co-occurring disorder, which is common in young adults. Read below to see if you might have a problem. If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, you need to be especially careful with using substances as your baby can be born dependent on the drugs you use.

Substance use disorders and symptoms: A substance use problem is when you continue to drink or use drugs despite negative consequences, such as financial, relationships, legal, mental health, medical or other areas of your life. It often involves increased tolerance where you need more of the same substance to get the feeling you want. Continued or excessive use of certain substances can cause cancer, brain damage, respiratory issues, heart damage, stroke, and even result in death.

Withdrawal from drugs, alcohol or tobacco: You may experience serious withdrawal symptoms when you stop using any substance. Withdrawal symptoms can include irritability, abdominal pain, nausea or vomiting, drenching sweats, nervousness, and seizures. For your health and safety, please do not attempt to withdraw from using alcohol or benzodiazepine (benzos) on your own. Serious medical emergencies can result while attempting to detox from alcohol and benzos, and anyone attempting to detox should be under medical supervision.

Types of substances that can be misused:

Alcohol, Cannabis, Tobacco, Opioids, Benzodiazepines, Stimulants and Hallucinogens

Alcohol use disorder: the continued or excessive use of alcohol puts you at risk for developing tolerance to alcohol. Potential consequences include: increased use to get the effects you want, risky behaviors, or serious alcohol withdrawal symptoms which often require medical detoxification.

Tobacco use disorder: persistent smoking, including vaping nicotine (e-cigarettes), can damage nearly every organ in your body. Potential consequences can include lung cancer, respiratory disorders, heart disease, stroke, or other illnesses, and can cause tolerance and withdrawal symptoms.

Opioid use disorder: includes both illegal use of prescribed pain medications or those bought on the street. These drugs include heroin, fentanyl, oxycontin, vicodin, Tylenol with codeine. Continued use/misuse can lead to serious health problems such as severe tolerance and withdrawal symptoms and even death.

Hallucinogen use disorder: use of hallucinogens such as LSD, peyote, and mushrooms can make you feel out of control, experience memory loss, anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts. Withdrawal can include irrational thoughts, behaviors, paranoia and violence.

Stimulant use disorder: the misuse of stimulants like Molly, Ecstasy, cocaine and amphetamines can cause tolerance, long-term brain changes, and sleep or appetite loss. Withdrawal symptoms can include craving, fatigue, hallucinations, depression, violence, and paranoia.

Cannabis (weed) use disorder: weed use can change your mood, cause difficulty with talking and problem-solving, impaired memory, delusions, hallucinations, and psychosis. Withdrawal can include cravings, sleeplessness, irritability, and rage. Use may cause brain damage.

Benzodiazepine (Benzos) use disorder: Benzos include valium, Xanax, Klonopin, Ativan, Halcion, Serax, which can be used to treat conditions like anxiety, panic attacks, seizures, depression, trouble sleeping, and alcohol withdrawal. It is important that discontinuing using benzos is done under a doctor's treatment. Benzos should not be used if you are pregnant. Combining benzos with alcohol and other drugs can lead to overdose, even death. Signs of overdosing include: dizziness, inability to talk or respond, confusion, drowsiness, blurred vision, agitation, difficulty breathing, comas, and hallucinations.



THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW: refer to page 16 for types of SUD services and how to find providers

SAMHSA reports that substance use remains a behavioral health problem among young adults aged 18 to 25. In 2012, there were an estimated 35.6 million young adults aged 18 to 25 in the United States with a problem. Of these, more than one third reported binge alcohol use in the past month; and about one fifth of young adults reported using an illegal drug in the past month.

Where Can I Find Substance Use Treatment?

Types of Substance Use Treatment and Recovery Resources

Some treatment options available to treat substance use disorders:

Detoxification Treatment: Programs provide medically supervised outpatient or residential detox treatment.

Outpatient Treatment: Treatment provided in an outpatient setting: individual and/or group sessions.

Intensive Outpatient and Partial Hospital Treatment Programs: More frequent and intense than outpatient treatment. Treatment includes individual and group sessions.

Residential Treatment Programs: Offer substance use disorder therapies and other services and participants stay overnight.

Medication-assisted Treatment (MAT): Treatment includes therapy and the use of medication like suboxone, naltrexone, or methadone.

Naloxone: Naloxone Kits are available from any pharmacy in RI. They are free if you have Medicaid and there may be a co-pay for other insurances. Naloxone stops the body's overdose response to opioids and may save your life.

Some recovery resources available:

Peer-to-peer support and recovery centers: Places where you can get support from people who are in recovery from a substance use or co-occurring disorder. www.bhddh.ri.gov/substance_use/recovery_community.php

RICARES: A grassroots alliance of people in recovery. <https://www.ricares.org/>

Recovery Housing: Safe, sober and healthy housing available for individuals 18 or older. For more information: <http://www.recoveryhousingri.com/>

Where to Find Treatment and Information

- **Call or go to RI's BH Link Crisis Center:** 401-414-LINK (414-5465) 975 Waterman Avenue, East Providence RIPTA Route 34 (Seekonk). Services available for adults 18 and older: www.bhlink.org
- **Prevent Overdose RI:** dedicated to stopping the Opioid epidemic, resources are available for families, providers, emergency personnel. Call 942-STOP 24/7 or visit <http://preventoverdoseri.org/>
- **BHDDH: Agencies licensed to provide substance use treatment, including detox, in Rhode Island:** Click on "Licensed Treatment Providers": http://www.bhddh.ri.gov/substance_use/
- **The Substance Use and Mental Health Leadership Council of RI (SUMHLC):** Maintains a list of mental health and substance use treatment providers on its website: <https://www.sumhlc.org/treatment-locator/>
- **Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs):** see pages 10-11 for more information.
- **Centers of Excellence for Opioid Use Disorders:** Provides assessments and treatment for opioid dependence, expedited access to care and a resource for community-based providers: http://www.bhddh.ri.gov/substance_use/help.php

Substance Use Resources:

- **RI Regional Prevention Coalitions:** resources including newsletters and tool kits: <https://riprevention.org/>
- **Drug Guide for Parents:** http://riprevention.org/admin/filemanager/userfiles/drug_chart_for_parents.pdf
- What to look for and what to avoid when searching for a drug treatment program: <https://drugfree.org/parent-blog/what-to-look-for-and-what-to-avoid-when-looking-for-an-addiction-treatment-program/>
- What questions to ask when searching for a substance use treatment provider: <https://drugfree.org/download/questions-to-ask-treatment-programs>