

RECOGNIZING SUBSTANCE ABUSE ... AND GETTING HELP

Substance abuse can seem like an overwhelming and frightening problem, which is why some problem drinkers and drug users - and the people around them - find it easier to deny the problem than face it head on.

Contrary to what most people think, substance abuse doesn't just involve illegal "street drugs" such as cocaine or marijuana. People may abuse alcohol, prescription drugs like sedatives or painkillers, or even over-the-counter medications.

This quiz will help you to identify whether you, or someone you know, might have a substance abuse problem.

- ◆ Do you miss work because of your alcohol or drug use, especially on Mondays, Fridays, around holidays and paydays?
- ◆ Has your alcohol or drug use led to financial problems for you or your family?
- ◆ Have you borrowed or stolen money to pay for alcohol or drugs?
- ◆ Have you been making errors on the job because of your alcohol or drug use?
- ◆ Have you taken unnecessary risks or shortcuts in your work that may have endangered your safety or that of others?
- ◆ Have you argued with your supervisor or co-workers about your poor performance or inability to work with others?
- ◆ Do you use alcohol or drugs during work hours?
- ◆ Do you turn to alcohol or drugs for relaxation or to manage stress and tension?
- ◆ Do you need more and more of a substance to get the same feeling?
- ◆ Are you uncomfortable when you stop using alcohol or drugs?
- ◆ Once you're sober or straight, do you feel guilty or embarrassed about your behavior while you were drunk or high?
- ◆ Do you prefer to associate with users rather than non-users?
- ◆ Have you been violent or abusive towards family members?
- ◆ Do you think you need help for your alcohol or drug problem?

If you answered **YES** to more than one of these questions, you may have a substance abuse problem. People who have successfully overcome an alcohol or drug problem will often say that the first step - admitting there's a problem and getting help - is the hardest one. But they'll also say that it's the most important step they've ever taken.

Alcoholism or drug dependency is a disease, just like diabetes or high blood pressure. It can cause people to do things that they may later regret or lead to embarrassment. But having the disease is not a cause for shame. The "typical" substance abuser can be anyone - teenager or elderly adult, man or woman, rich or poor, educated or not ... it doesn't matter. If you know someone who may be struggling with alcohol, the following resources are available to help:

MERCER COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM & DRUG ADDICTION
(609) 396-5874 ◆ www.mercercouncil.org

ADDICTIONS HOTLINE
(800) 238-2333 ◆ www.njdrughotline.org

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS (support group for alcoholics)
(609) 298-7795 ◆ www.centraljerseyintergroup.org

AL-ANON (support group for family and friends of alcoholics)
(973) 744-8686 ◆ www.nj-al-anon.org

HIGHTSTOWN HEALTH DEPARTMENT