

Signs of Self-Medicating

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Mental health issues can lead to depression, anxiety, anger problems, and other disorders that make life much more challenging to manage. People in this situation often begin self-medicating with alcohol or drugs to cope. Substance abuse initially seems to help by numbing their feelings of frustration and fear and providing short-term comfort. But, naturally, dependence on addictive drugs or liquor alters brain chemistry, which compounds the original mental health issues. Here's some information on the signs and dangers of self-medication and how you can help.

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Mental Health Disorders and Substance Addiction

People struggling with physical health problems or mental health challenges from grief, trauma, depression, bipolar disorder, or other issues often turn to substance abuse to cope. That's why co-occurring mental health disorders and substance abuse disorders are not uncommon.

Self-medicating to alleviate the symptoms of mental health disorders can result in addiction. In turn, addiction can become a *cause* of mental health issues or worsen them. Substance abuse can lead to depression, anxiety, delusions, and other severe symptoms. In some cases, the symptoms persist even after the high effects of the drug are gone.

Further, people with substance abuse disorder are more likely to experience job loss, financial difficulties, legal problems, and separation from family and social groups. Though substance addicted people with mental health disorders often become highly

motivated to quit using, attempting to stop consuming the substance can cause very severe withdrawal symptoms in many cases.

Is someone close to you showing symptoms of depression, anxiety, or other mental struggles? Have you also discovered apparent signs of substance abuse in that person? If so, one of the following common scenarios may explain some reasons for self-medication with alcohol or drugs by people who are coping with mental disorders:

- People seeking treatment for an anxiety disorder often use opioids to numb their sense of mental pain.
- Someone with PTSD may consume various drugs and/or alcohol to relax and forget.
- Research has shown a 58% alcohol abuse rate among people with bipolar disorder. They may consume it to feel happier during their low periods.
- A person with depression may smoke marijuana to feel happier.

Combined Treatment for Co-Occurring Disorders

Treatment for a co-occurring mental health disorder and substance abuse disorder requires therapeutic specialists to treat both conditions. Without such comprehensive treatment, a person suffering from dual disorders can be stuck in a vicious circle of continuous relapsing. Even for someone committed to overcoming their addiction, that can mean continuously repeating the withdrawal and rehab process without ever achieving lasting results.

Pathways' dual-diagnosis and treatment program provide solutions for both mental and substance abuse disorders to help people achieve a full recovery:

- Mental health treatment
- RTC Residential treatment program
- Intensive outpatient treatment (IOP).
- PHP Day Treatment program
- General Outpatient treatment (GOP).
- Relapse prevention support

Pathways provide a complete life-long resource for our clients in addiction recovery, from medically assisted detox to support for long-term relapse prevention.

Our mental health and addiction specialists work with each client to develop a customized treatment plan that focuses on each individual's unique needs. That may mean more focus on mental health treatment for some and a stronger emphasis on addiction treatment for others.

Mental Health and Addiction Treatment in Utah

Pathways Real Life Recovery is a mental health and addiction treatment center with a team of top professionals who have helped many people develop mental wellness and a sober lifestyle.

Contact Pathways Real Life Recovery at (801) 895-3006 or online to schedule a free consultation and start on your path to a much happier and more meaningful life.
