



# SUBSTANCE ABUSE

SETA's Wellness & Safety Awareness  
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## SIGNS OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE

1. Health Issues
2. Disabilities
3. Failure to meet responsibilities
4. Impairment
5. Risky behavior
6. Social issues
7. Withdrawal symptoms when use discontinues
8. Loss of interest in favorite hobbies

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE DEFINED

Substance abuse is defined as overindulgence, reliance, or dependence on a substance, specifically drugs or alcohol. Some substances such as alcohol may be used in moderation and does not constitute abuse. **So, what is considered harmful use?** Substance abuse occurs when the abundance of such use causes harm to the user. Harmful use of controlled substances and alcohol can cause health issues, impairment, engagement in risky behaviors, and other issues.

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***27.1 million Americans are substance abusers; 1 in every 10 people***

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## LEGAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Oftentimes when we think about substance abuse we think of illegal substances or drugs. However, it is possible to abuse legal drugs and substances as well. Nicotine is an example of a legal drug that is often abused. In fact, nicotine is the most abused substance across the world. Despite the decline in cigarette smoking in recent years, substance abusers may still abuse nicotine by way of vaporizers or other smoking apparatuses. In addition to nicotine, marijuana is another legal drug that can be harmful to your body if used in excess. Although a legal drug in some States, the compounds found in marijuana are mind-altering and can affect your brain and your body. Marijuana use affects one's mental state which can leave them feeling panicked, anxious, or afraid. Even short-term use may cause a weakened immune system, distortion of time, breathing problems, and weakened motor skills which may make operating machinery or driving a car dangerous. Recreationally, marijuana is not thought of as an addictive drug, however, studies show otherwise. One in every ten people who use marijuana become addicted to it. The odds of addiction are higher the younger you begin using; one in every six teens who use marijuana will also become addicted.



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***Drug abuse and addiction cost American society more than \$740 billion annually in lost workplace productivity, healthcare expenses, and crime-related costs.***

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## RECOVERY

Typically, there are five primary steps in the recovery process. The first step in the recovery process is **acknowledging** that there is a problem of substance abuse. Once the problem is acknowledged, the recovery process can begin. The acknowledgement of the problem presents a gateway to the road to recovery. Second is the **Consideration** phase; in this phase the abuser learns the effects of their addiction on themselves and others and makes the decision to change. Third, is the **Exploring Recovery** phase. During the third phase of recovery, the substance abuser explores their treatment options. Finding a treatment plan that works for the individual's circumstance is key to success. Everyone who battles with addiction has their own unique experience. Therefore, the treatment plan must be individualized and tailored to each person's individual situation. No matter the circumstance, recovery is not out of reach. The fourth phase in the recovery process is the **Early Recovery** phase. During this phase of the recovery process, the substance abuser is no longer using the substance or drug and learns how to remain drug free. The fifth and final step in recovery is the **Active Recovery** phase; the substance abuser is no longer abusing drugs or substances and learns to maintain sobriety. Substance abusers may find referrals and information by contacting the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**.

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### ***Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)***

SAMHSA's National Help Line (800) 662-HELP (4357)

Free, Confidential, 24/7 Treatment, Referral, and Information Service

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*www.seta.net/staff-resources/wellness-safety-awareness-program*

*Contact us: [wellness@seta.net](mailto:wellness@seta.net)*

#### **REFERENCES:**

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>

<https://www.verywellmind.com/substance-use-4014640>

<https://americanaddictioncenters.org/rehab-guide/addiction-statistics>