Substance Abuse affects an estimated 25 million Americans in a given year.

Addiction is in fact a mental illness

Substance Abuse changes normal desires and priorities. If you experience changes in normal behaviors and your ability to work, go to school, and to have good relationships with friends and family

You may be suffering from Substance Abuse and Addiction
What is Substance Abuse and Addiction?

Addiction is defined as a chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite adverse consequences.

Addiction is a Brain Disorder

Addiction involves functional changes to brain circuits involved in reward, stress, and self-control, and those changes may last a long time after a person has stopped taking drugs.

Addiction is much like any other disease

Like heart disease, both disrupt the normal, healthy functioning of an organ in the body, both have serious harmful effects, and both are, in many cases, preventable and treatable. If left untreated, they can last a lifetime and may lead to death.

What is the difference between regular use and addiction?

While many people want to differentiate between the concepts of use and abuse, the line can become blurred easily.

Regular Use

A "substance" is anything that can alter a person's mood or cognition. Substances can range from caffeine and alcohol to cocaine and heroin. Recreational use, small dosages between long enough periods of time could be considered safe but depends on each individual's health and body.

Misuse and Abuse

Drug misuse refers to the use of a substance for a purpose that is not consistent with legal or medical guidelines, most often with prescription medications. Abuse is recognized as when chronic use begins impairing specific aspects of life.
What are the signs & symptoms of Substance Abuse and Addiction?

### Signs of Addiction
- Continuously using drugs or alcohol even while experiencing negative side effects
- Finding out that you are using more drugs or alcohol to get the same "good feeling"
- Finding that you’re spending more and more time trying to find ways to get drugs or alcohol
- When doing drugs or drinking interferes with work, school, and relationships

### Symptoms of Addiction
- Physically feeling like you need to use drugs or drink to feel normal
- Feeling sick (withdrawal symptoms) when you stop using drugs or drinking
- Trying to stop but finding it very difficult
- Emotionally feeling like you need to use drugs or drink to feel normal

### What are the treatment options for general mood disorder?

#### Medications
Different types of medications may be useful at different stages of treatment to help a patient stop abusing drugs, stay in treatment, and avoid relapse. Medication is used for treatment of alcohol, nicotine and opioid abuse. Unfortunately there is yet no medication for the treatment of stimulant or cannabis abuse.

#### Behavioral Therapy
Behavioral therapies help people in drug addiction treatment modify their attitudes and behaviors related to drug use. As a result, patients are able to handle stressful situations and various triggers that might cause another relapse.

#### Support Groups
This form of therapy, led by a mental health professional, involves groups of four to 12 people with similar issues to talk about. You can share your thoughts to help resolve your feelings, gain confidence in coping with your symptoms and find comfort in knowing you’re not alone.

### How You Can Help Someone Living With An Addiction

1. **Offer Support.** Let them know that you are there for them. And don’t be judgmental.
2. **Encourage the Person to Open Up.** Let them know you are truly interested in their life.
3. **Don’t Lecture, Just Listen.** Listen to everything they say before you ask any questions.
4. **Be Honest and Address the Issue.** Let the person know the signs you noticed and why they worry you.
5. **Speak to the Person with Dignity and Respect.** Don’t treat a person poorly because their struggle.
6. **Remember to Remain Calm.** Staying calm will help you and them, as well as encourage them to speak.
7. **Encourage Professional Help.** Assist in finding help for a person if they ask you to.
8. **Be Persistent, But Don’t Forget to Be Gentle.** Supporting requires empathy.
9. **Seek Support For Yourself.** Care-giving can take a toll, know when you need to reach out.
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This information was provided by the National Institute of Mental Health. For additional information, please visit www.nimh.gov