

Disclaimer

The material listed below is for information only and is not advice. Listing of any resource does not imply endorsement and readers need to assess whether any information found is suitable for their own particular circumstances. The information on this web site is not intended to replace professional guidance in dealing with an alcohol problem. Those who think they may have a drinking problem should seek assistance from a qualified physician, health care professional, or licensed alcohol treatment professional. Those in psychological stress should promptly consult a qualified health care professional. Those who seek to abstain entirely from alcohol beverages should consult first with a qualified health care professional. This is because of the risk of serious, even life-threatening, alcohol withdrawal symptoms.

Drug and Alcohol Addiction Terms and Definitions

A

Abstinence

To refrain from the usage of any substance which a person may have become addicted.

Addict

A person who has a craving for an addictive substance, who is physically or emotionally dependent on that substance on a daily basis.

Addiction

The condition of being habitually or compulsively occupied with or or involved in something.

Addictionology

The study of addictions usually focused on drug and alcohol addiction.

Addictionologist

A physician certified in the field of addiction medicine, usually specializing in the areas of drug and alcohol abuse.

Addiction medicine

The evaluation and treatment of people suffering from the disease drug addiction, alcoholism and associated disorders.

Addiction treatment

The attempt by one or more people to cause another person to discontinue their use of drugs, alcohol or harmful behavior. This service is usually provided by a licensed professional or within an addiction treatment program.

Addiction treatment center

A licensed facility that specializes in the evaluation and treatment of drug addiction, alcoholism and associated disorders. This center may provide residential treatment, partial hospitalization treatment or outpatient treatment services.

Addiction treatment facility

A licensed facility that specializes in the evaluation and treatment of drug addiction, alcoholism and associated disorders. This facility may provide residential treatment, partial hospital treatment or outpatient treatment services.

Addiction treatment program

Usually located within an addiction treatment facility or addiction treatment center, the program is comprised of medical services, clinical services, nutritional and education services all focused on the addict or alcoholic achieving and maintaining long term abstinence from drugs, alcohol or other addictive substances.

Addiction treatment unit

Is usually a section (group of beds etc.) of a general or psychiatric hospital specializing in the treatment of addictive diseases; drug addiction, alcoholism.

Alcohol

1. A colorless volatile flammable liquid, C_2H_5OH , synthesized or obtained by fermentation of sugars and starches and widely used, either pure or denatured, as a solvent and in drugs, cleaning solutions, explosives, and intoxicating beverages.
2. A liquid substance capable of altering one's mood and mind. It is addictive. The abuse of this substance leads to alcoholism.

Alcoholic

A person who drinks alcohol habitually, who has a craving for alcohol that once they have one drink they experience an obsession and compulsion for more.

Alcoholics Anonymous

A voluntary and anonymous self-help organization of individuals who share a common problem with alcohol and sometimes, drugs.

Alcohol abuse

The use of alcohol that it interferes substantially in emotional, social or occupational functioning; the pathological use of alcohol

Alcohol dependency

A physical or psychological habituation to a mood or mind altering substance, such as alcohol.

Alcohol poisoning

When a person has consumed so much alcohol these symptoms are present; the individual is unconscious or semi-conscious, their respiration has slowed to eight or less breaths per minute or at least eight seconds between each breath, the skin is cold and clammy and there is a strong odor

of alcohol. Alcohol poisoning can result in death if the individual is not provided with prompt attention.

Alcohol treatment center

A licensed facility that specializes in the evaluation and treatment of alcoholism and associated addictions. Many people use drugs in conjunction with alcohol. The center may provide residential treatment, partial hospital treatment or outpatient treatment services.

Alcohol treatment facility

A licensed facility that specializes in the evaluation and treatment of alcoholism and associated addictions. Many people use drugs in conjunction with alcohol. The facility may provide residential treatment, partial hospital treatment or outpatient services.

Alcohol use

The consumption of alcohol.

Alcoholism

A disorder characterized by the excessive consumption of and dependence on alcoholic beverages, leading to physical and psychological harm and impaired social and vocational functioning. Also called alcohol abuse, alcohol dependence.

Ambien®

A trademark used for the drug zolpidem. See Zolpidem

Amphetamine

A colorless, volatile liquid, C₉H₁₃N, used as a central nervous system stimulant in the treatment of certain conditions, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, depression, and narcolepsy, and abused illegally as a stimulant.

Antagonist

A drug that counteracts the effects of another drug.

Ativan®

Ativan® is the brand name for Lorazepam, an anti-anxiety agent. See Lorazepam

B

Benzodiazepine

Any of a group of chemical compounds with a common molecular structure and similar pharmacological effects, used as anti-anxiety agents, muscle relaxants, sedatives, hypnotics, and sometimes as anticonvulsant's.

Binge drinking

The consumption of five or more alcoholic beverages, in a row, on the same occasion.

Buprenorphine

An opiate antagonist used in the treatment heroin addiction.

C

Chemical abuse

The abuse of a chemical or substance to the extent that it interferes substantially in emotional, social or occupational functioning.

Chemically dependent

When a person has formed a physical or psychological addiction or habituation to mood or mind altering chemicals such as alcohol or drugs.

Chemical dependency

A physical or psychological habituation to a mood or mind altering substance such as alcohol or drugs.

Chemical dependency treatment

An attempt by one or more people to cause another person to discontinue their use of drugs, alcohol or unhealthy behavior. This service is usually provided by a licensed professional or within an addiction treatment program.

Chemical dependency treatment program

Is usually located within an addiction treatment center or addiction treatment facility and is focused on the addict or alcoholic achieving and maintaining long term abstinence. There are various components such as; medical, psychological, clinical, nutritional and educational.

Chronic

A term to describe problems that are permanent and ongoing.

Chronic pain

Is pain that is ongoing and appears to be permanent.

Chronic pain management

Is about suppressing the pain a person is experiencing in a manner that will improve the person's quality of life.

Chronic relapse

A process by which a person continually returns to self-destructive behavior or drug and alcohol use after periods of recovery or sobriety.

Club Drugs

a loosely defined category of recreational drugs which are popular at dance clubs, parties, and rock concerts. In particular, these drugs are associated with techno and punk music and tend to

have stimulating and/or psychedelic properties. Examples of the typical club drugs include Ecstasy and various amphetamines, but less obviously suitable substances like GHB and Ketamine (which do not act as stimulants) are also common. The term “club drug” is used only to describe the context of a drug’s use, and not the chemical properties of the drug in question. Read about club drugs at the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Cocaine

A colorless or white crystalline alkaloid, $C_{17}H_{21}NO_4$, extracted from coca leaves, sometimes used in medicine as a local anesthetic especially for the eyes, nose, or throat and widely used as an illicit drug for its euphoric and stimulating effects.

Codeine

An alkaloid narcotic, $C_{18}H_{21}NO_3$, derived from opium or morphine and used as a cough suppressant, analgesic, and hypnotic.

Codependent

A person who is unfulfilled, constantly in relationships, is indirect, unassertive when they have a need; the person will also exhibit symptoms such as controlling behavior, distrust, perfectionism, avoidance of feelings, intimacy problems and is a caretaker of others.

Codependency

A set of maladaptive compulsive behaviors learned by family members in order to survive in a family which is experiencing great emotional pain and stress.

Compulsion

A term used to describe repetitive behaviors or mental acts preformed over and over in response to an obsessive thought.

Compulsive

A term used to describe thoughts or behaviors that are driven by anxiety.

Compulsive gambling

Is when a person continues to gamble despite negative consequences. The person is usually in denial, experiences changes in moods and the behavior is chronic, escalating and symptoms of withdrawal are present when the behavior is discontinued.

Compulsive sexual behavior

Is when a person continues having sex despite negative consequences. The person will experience changes in mood and denial, the behavior is chronic, escalating and withdrawal symptoms present themselves when the behavior is discontinued.

Crack cocaine

A “rock form” of cocaine which is smoked, is highly addictive and very rarely, if ever, able to be used “socially”.

Craving

A powerful desire or urge for drugs, alcohol or other addictive substances.

Crystal Meth

A form of methamphetamine when it is in its crystalline form. It is also commonly referred to as “ice”. The process of crystallizing puts the methamphetamine into a very pure and potent form that is highly addictive.

D

Darvocet®

Brand Name for a mixture of acetaminophen and propoxyphene. See Opiates

Day treatment program

Is a program where addiction and alcoholism is treated, while the addict or alcoholic lives at home or in another supportive environment. Clinical services are usually available approximately 4 – 5 hours a day, five days a week, which is more comprehensive than an outpatient program and less intensive than an inpatient treatment program.

Delusion

Firm belief in something that is not true despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

Demerol®

A trademark used for a preparation of meperidine. See meperidine.

Denial

The failure to admit or even realize that one is addicted or to realize and accept the harm caused by the addiction.

Depade®

Depade® is the trade name for the opiate antagonist Naltrexone. See Naltrexone.

Dependency

A tendency to rely on others or in this case, drugs or alcohol.

Depressants

Drugs that reduce the activity of the central nervous system. Depressants such as alcohol, benzodiazepines and narcotics such as Demerol, morphine, methadone work by mimicking endorphins.

Depression

A depressive disorder is an illness that involves the body, mood, and thoughts. It affects the way a person eats and sleeps, the way one feels about oneself, and the way one thinks about things. A depressive disorder is not the same as a passing blue mood. It is not a sign of personal weakness

or a condition that can be willed or wished away. People with a depressive illness cannot merely “pull themselves together” and get better. Without treatment, symptoms can last for weeks, months, or years. Appropriate treatment, however, can help most people who suffer from depression.

Detox

A medically supervised process of assisting the body to rid itself of drugs or alcohol while effectively managing the symptoms associated with withdrawal.

Detoxification

A medically supervised process of assisting the body to rid itself of drugs or alcohol while effectively managing the symptoms associated with withdrawal.

Detox program

Can be inpatient or outpatient in nature with medical supervision and is designed to effectively manage the symptoms associated with withdrawal from addictive substances. It has been our experience that addicts and alcoholics are much more comfortable and see much better long term results by utilizing the detox services of an inpatient detox program.

Dexedrine®

A trademark used for the drug dextroamphetamine.

Dextroamphetamine

A white crystalline compound, C₉H₁₃N, that is the dextrorotatory isomer of amphetamine and is used in the form of its phosphate or sulfate salt as a central nervous system stimulant, both medically and illicitly.

Diazepam

Diazepam is mainly used to treat anxiety, insomnia, and symptoms of acute alcohol or opiate withdrawal. The most common brand name of this drug is Valium® which entered the U.S. market in 1963. Valium® became controversial as a widely prescribed tranquilizer and widespread abuse.

Dilaudid®

Brand Name for Hydromorphone. See Hydromorphone.

Dissociation

Is a psychological process on which attention is diverted from a painful, traumatic thought or memory.

Dissociative disorder

Mental disorders characterized by a sudden temporary alteration in consciousness, identity, or motor behavior. They include psychogenic amnesia, psychogenic fugue, multiple personality disorder, and depersonalization disorder.

Domestic violence

Any hurtful or unwanted behavior perpetrated upon an individual by an intimate or prior intimate. Includes; physical, psychological and emotional abuse.

Dopamine

The neurotransmitter in the brain that is responsible for regulating motivation, emotion, movement and feelings of pleasure.

Drug

Another form of medication; any substance that alters mood, perception or consciousness.

Drug abuse

1. The abuse of a substance to the extent that it interferes substantially in emotional, social or occupational functioning; pathological use of prescribed or un-prescribed substances.

2. Habitual use of drugs to alter one's mood, emotion, or state of consciousness.

Drug addict

A person who has become physically or emotionally dependent on addictive substances (drugs, alcohol) which impair them from a physical, emotional, social or even vocational perspective.

Drug addiction

Psychological and physiological substance dependence.

Drug dependency

A physical or psychological habituation to a mood or mind altering substance.

Drug rehabilitation

Drug rehabilitation (often drug rehab or just rehab) is an umbrella term for the processes of medical and/or psychotherapeutic treatment, for dependency on psychoactive substances such as alcohol, prescription drugs, and so-called street drugs such as cocaine, heroin or amphetamines.

Drug use

The consumption of drugs or prescription medication.

Dual diagnosis

Dual Diagnosis refers to an individual who has been diagnosed with substance abuse and a concurrent mental health issue, such as depression, anxiety, bi-polar disorder, or other mental illness.

Dually diagnosed

Refers to the person who suffers from a significant mental illness and an addiction problem.

"The patient has been dually diagnosed with chronic anxiety and alcoholism"

E

Eating disorder

A disorder of the normal eating routine.

Enabling

Allowing irresponsible destructive behavior patterns to continue by taking responsibility for others and not allowing them to face their own consequences.

Euphoria

The exaggerated feeling of well-being or elation.

Ecstasy

Either of two drugs used for their euphoric effects. The original ecstasy, a so-called designer drug, also known as MDMA, is an analog of methamphetamine (see amphetamine). The other drug is a substance also known as ma huang or ephedra; it was marketed as "natural ecstasy" to promote the idea that it is a natural and safe form of ecstasy. The active ingredient of herbal ecstasy is ephedrine.

F

Fetal alcohol syndrome

A set of physical and mental birth defects (including brain damage, facial deformities, and growth deficits) that can result when a woman drinks alcohol during her pregnancy. Other problems that may affect the baby are heart, liver and kidney defects; vision and hearing problems. Children and adults born with FAS have learning, attention, memory, and problem solving difficulties.

G

GHB

Gamma Hydroxybutyrate. A clear liquid taken for its euphoric and relaxing effects. Common at raves and other club parties GHB can be used as a date rape drug and overuse can lead to physical addiction and harm.

H

Habituation

The result of repeated consumption of a drug which produces a psychological, but no physical dependence. The psychological dependence produces a desire (not a compulsion) to continue taking drugs or alcohol for a sense of improved well being.

Heroin

A white, odorless, bitter crystalline compound, $C_{17}H_{17}NO(C_2H_3O_2)_2$, that is derived from morphine and is a highly addictive narcotic. Also called diacetylmorphine

Hydrocodone

Hydrocodone is an effective antitussive (anti-cough) agent, and as an opiate it is also an effective analgesic for mild to moderate pain control

Hydromorphone

a hydrogenated ketone of morphine, is an opioid analgesic.

I

Intervention

Intervention refers to the act of a loved one, doctor, counselor, certified interventionist or other concerned party having a meeting, usually without the drug abusers knowledge, with a drug abuser in an attempt to get the individual into a drug or alcohol treatment program.

“Susie was resistant to the thought or discussion about getting help for her drug addiction so her parents set up an intervention to get her into treatment”

J

K

Ketamine

A general anesthetic given intravenously or intramuscularly and used especially for minor surgical procedures in which muscle relaxation is not required. A common drug of abuse, falls under the category “club drugs”.

L

Lortab®

Trademark used for a preparation of acetaminophen and hydrocodone. See Hydrocodone

Lorazepam

Lorazepam (also known by its brand name **Ativan®** or **Temesta®**) is a benzodiazepine drug with short to medium duration of action.

LSD

A crystalline compound, $C_{20}H_{25}N_3O$, derived from lysergic acid and used as a powerful hallucinogenic drug. Also called acid.

M

Marijuana

Marijuana (marihuana) *Cannabis sativa* L., also known as Indian hemp, is a member of the Cannabaceae or hemp family, thought to have originated in the mountainous districts of India, north of the Himalayan mountains.

Meperidine

A synthetic narcotic compound, $C_{15}H_{21}NO_2$, used in its hydrochloride form as an analgesic and sedative. Sold under the brand name Demerol® this drug can be highly physically addictive

Methadone

A potent synthetic narcotic drug, $C_{21}H_{27}NO$, that is less addictive than morphine or heroin and is used as a substitute for these drugs in addiction treatment programs. It may also be used for chronic pain management.

Methamphetamine

Also known as Meth it is an amine derivative of amphetamine, $C_{10}H_{15}N$, used in the form of its crystalline hydrochloride as a central nervous system stimulant, both medically and illicitly

Morphine

A bitter crystalline alkaloid, $C_{17}H_{19}NO_3 \cdot H_2O$, extracted from opium, the soluble salts of which are used in medicine as an analgesic, a light anesthetic, or a sedative. Also called morphia

N

Narcotics

A class of depressant drugs derived from opium or compounds related to opium.

Narcotics Anonymous

A self-help, anonymous and voluntary organization of individuals who have a problem with drugs and sometimes alcohol. There are no dues or fees to join this Organization.

Naltrexone

Naltrexone is an opioid receptor antagonist used primarily in the management of alcohol dependence and opioid dependence. It is marketed in generic form as its hydrochloride salt, naltrexone hydrochloride, and marketed under the trade names Revia[®] and Depade[®]. In some countries including the United States, an extended-release formulation is marketed under the trade name Vivitrol.

Neurotransmitter

A biochemical substance released from the neuron that is responsible for the inter-neuron signal reduction.

O

Opiates

A medication or illegal drug that is either derived from the opium poppy, or that mimics the effect of an opiate (a synthetic opiate). Opiate drugs are narcotic sedatives that depress activity of the central nervous system, reduce pain, and induce sleep. Side effects may include over sedation, nausea, and constipation. Long term use of opiates can produce addiction, and overuse can cause overdose and potentially death.

Opium

A bitter, yellowish-brown, strongly addictive narcotic drug prepared from the dried juice of unripe pods of the opium poppy and containing alkaloids such as morphine, codeine, and papaverine.

Outpatient treatment program

Is a program where addiction or alcoholism is treated, while the addict or alcoholic resides at home or in another supportive environment. Outpatient treatment can be available several times a week or once a week, with the services lasting approximately three hours per day.

Overdose

Is the use of any drug in such quantities that acute adverse physical or mental effects occur. It can be deliberate or accidental; lethal or non-lethal

Oxycodone

Oxycodone is an opioid analgesic medication synthesized from thebaine. It was developed in 1916 in Germany, as one of several new semi-synthetic opioids with several benefits over the older traditional opiates and opioids; morphine, diacetylmorphine and codeine. It was introduced to the pharmaceutical market as Eukodal or Eucodal and Dinarkon. Its chemical name is derived from codeine – the chemical structures are very similar, differing only in that the hydroxyl group of codeine has been oxidized to a carbonyl group (as in ketones), hence the “-one” suffix, the 7,8-dihydro-feature (codeine has a double-bond between those two carbons), and the hydroxyl group at carbon-14 (codeine has just a hydrogen in its place), hence oxycodone.

Oxycontin[®]

Oxycontin is the brand name of a time-release formula of the analgesic chemical oxycodone. Read about Oxycontin[®] at The National Center for Biotechnology Information.

P

Percocet[®]

Percocet[®] is a brand name for a mix of active ingredients oxycodone, a narcotic (opiate) pain medication (analgesic), and acetaminophen (a non-narcotic pain medication), which relieves pain better than either medication taken alone. Oxycodone (see Oxycodone) acts on the central nervous system and smooth muscle tissue, slowing the central nervous system. It is not clear exactly how acetaminophen works to ease pain.

Percodan[®]

Trade Name for a preparation of aspirin and oxycodone. See Oxycodone.

Physical dependence

When a person cannot function normally without the continued use of a drug and when the drug or alcohol use is discontinued they experience some level of discomfort.

Psychosis

An illness that prevents people from being able to distinguish between the real world and the imaginary world. Symptoms include hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that aren't really there, or delusions), irrational thoughts and fears.

Q

R

Recovery

The process of reducing or eliminating the consumption of destructive substances and behaviors, followed by the creation of a new personal life.

Rehab or rehabilitation

Drug rehabilitation is an umbrella term for a variety of processes by which a person addicted to a drug stops using that drug. These processes can vary from cold turkey to the use of substitute drugs which do not have the same action upon the state of consciousness as the original drug to which the person was addicted.

Relapse

To fall back into a previous state of drinking or drugging after achieving a level of abstinence. The act of “going back” into old behaviors.

Relapse Prevention

Relapse Prevention refers to the method of counseling, services treatment and behavior modification designed to prevent a recovering addict from returning to abusing drugs or alcohol.

Residential treatment center

A licensed addiction and alcohol treatment facility, which specializes in the treatment of addiction and alcoholism. Addicts and alcoholics that attend treatment here generally reside in the facility, although other services are offered.

Residential treatment facility

A licensed addiction and alcoholism treatment center, which specializes in the treatment of drug addiction and alcoholism. Addicts and alcoholics that attend treatment here generally reside in the facility, although other services are offered.

Residential treatment program

Is usually located within a residential treatment facility that specializes in the evaluation and treatment of drug addiction and alcoholism. Its goal is to teach addicts and alcoholics how to achieve and maintain long term abstinence. The components of such a program are generally medical, psychological, clinical, nutritional and educational.

Revia®

Revia® is a trade name for the opiate antagonist Naltrexone. See Naltrexone

S

S.B.I.R.T.

stands for screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment— an evidence-based, effective method to intervene in alcohol and drug misuse, but that is currently underused in the primary care setting in the United States.

Serotonin

A neurotransmitter that has an effect on perception and movement and emotions by managing the actions of other neurotransmitters in the brain.

Sex addiction

Sex addiction, as with other addictions, occurs when a person cannot stop having sex despite negative consequences. They experience changes in moods, denial and the behavior is escalating, chronic and symptoms of withdrawal appear when the behavior is abruptly discontinued.

Stimulants

These drugs cause alertness and create energy. Amphetamines, for example, increase the dopamine signaling, stimulating its release or blocking its typical absorption.

Substance abuse

Excessive use of a drug.

Substance abuse facility

Is a licensed center which specializes in the evaluation and treatment of drug addiction and alcoholism. The services available here can be residential treatment, partial hospital treatment or outpatient treatment.

Substance abuse treatment

An attempt by one of more people to cause the substance abuser to discontinue abusing drugs, alcohol or unhealthy behavior. This service is usually available by a licensed professional or in a residential addiction treatment program.

Substance dependence

Pattern of behavior which results in increased tolerance for the substance physiological, psychological dependence and withdrawal symptoms.

T

Tolerance

A situation where higher doses of a drug or alcohol are needed to achieve the same effect as initially experienced.

Toxic

Drug or alcohol effects which are detrimental to the functioning of an organ or organs.

Treatment center

In this case, a treatment center would refer to a licensed addiction treatment facility, which specializes in the treatment of drug addiction, alcoholism and associated disorders. The services could include residential treatment, partial hospital treatment or outpatient treatment services.

Treatment plan

Is a medical and clinical plan, designed by the physicians and clinicians of addiction and alcohol treatment programs, complete with goals and objectives focused on the addict or alcoholic achieving and maintaining long term abstinence.

U

V

Valium®

Valium® is a common brand name for Diazepam. See Diazepam

Vivitrol®

Vivitrol® is a trade name for the opiate antagonist Naltrexone. See Naltrexone

W

Withdrawal

What someone who is addicted drugs or alcohol experiences when they abruptly discontinue the use of drugs or alcohol.

Withdrawal symptoms

The actual effects an addict or alcoholic experiences when they discontinue the use of drugs or alcohol. Examples would be; sweats, tremors, nausea, pain in the joints or bone, confusion, loss of concentration, diarrhea or loss of appetite.

X

Xanax[®]

Xanax[®] is a brand name for Alprazolam, a short acting Benzodiazepine. See Benzodiazepine

Y

Z

Zolpidem

Zolpidem is a medicine that helps a person get to sleep and stay asleep. The brand name of zolpidem in the U.S. is Ambien[®].