



AFFECT OF DRUG USE ON MENTAL HEALTH

What are the differences between casual and frequent drug users?

Recognizing the differences between frequent and casual drug use is essential in understanding the development of severe mental health issues. Typically, casual drug users prefer to use drugs for periodic relief and enjoyment. On the other hand, frequent users may take drugs to escape from their emotions or stressful situations, however, this may build reliance on such drugs. Furthermore, casual drug users are not consistent with usage and may only use drugs at social gatherings. In comparison, those taking drugs more frequently may do so on a consistent or daily basis. Other differences include frequent users developing a mental dependency on drugs, making it harder for them to quit its consumption.

Are there long-term mental health effects from drug abuse?

Long-term mental health effects can be seen if drugs are abused. Such long-term impacts include cognitive issues such as issues with learning or retaining information, decreased attention span, and memory loss. Psychiatric disorders such as bipolar disorder and anxiety disorders are also at risk of developing when consistently abusing drugs. The risk of suicide is another issue elevated by drug abuse. This can be seen due to the increased feelings of despair, loneliness, or hopelessness which with the addition of impulsive behaviors may ultimately lead to you contemplating self-harm or suicide.



What are the warning signs for negative mental health from drug use?

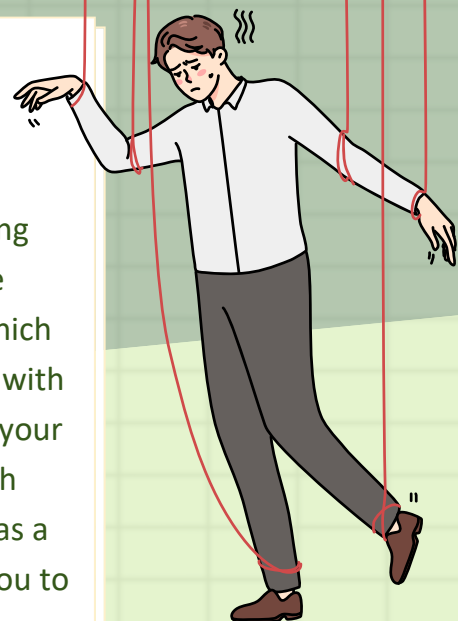
Some signs that your mental health may be negatively affected by drug use include

- Change in sleep patterns, difficulty sleeping
- Mood swings as well as increased irritability or sadness
- Change in eating habits, decrease or increase in appetite
- Excluding yourself from social gatherings and activities
- Ignoring personal care such as not showering or brushing your teeth
- Increase in nervousness or paranoia
- Ignoring commitments such as school, work, or plans with others



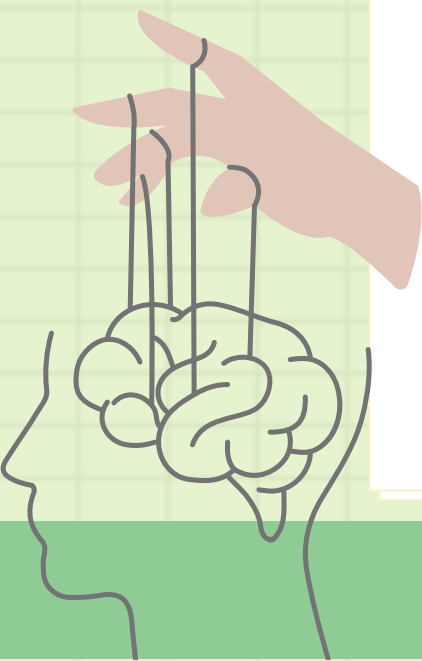
How do already existing mental health disorders and drug use influence each other?

If you struggle with preexisting mental disorders, you may be at risk of being drawn to dangerous methods of relief such as drug use. Drug use may be motivated as a means of coping with issues such as anxiety or depression which typically manifest when you are dealing with low mental health or struggling with more severe mental health disorders. However, drug use can further impact your mental health by worsening the symptoms of your disorder. Mental health conditions and drug use can create an unhealthy cycle of drug dependency as a means of escape. This feeling of relief can become tempting and could lead you to be addicted to the drugs you take.



Can drugs such as weed, tobacco or alcohol worsen my mental health?

Drugs such as weed, tobacco and alcohol frequently have a hand at depleting mental health. Prolonged and excessive use of weed may lead to paranoia as well as depression that has the possibility to worsen. Additionally, over-relying on weed can develop mental health issues and disorders such as psychosis or schizophrenia that can impair your overall being. Alcohol can also lead to depression due to its drastic impacts on mood which, if prolonged, can lead to feelings of hopelessness and sadness. Furthermore, alcohol can impair or cloud judgment which can lead to dangerous decision-making resulting in consequences in your life. Tobacco is another substance that can damage mental health due to its addictive nature. Upon frequent consumption, users can be involved in a negative coping strategy for stress and anxiety, as tobacco use hastens issues with depression and anxiety further. Already existing mental health conditions can also worsen because of additional drug use. One such example is that medications for mental health conditions and the drugs consumed can interact negatively with your body. This could decrease the effectiveness of medications as well as put you at risk for severe health issues such as shortness of breath and the risk of overdose.





What resources can I use to help fight off addiction?

Aside from your family and friends, medical professionals such as counselors and therapists are great resources to help address heavy drug use. Rehabilitation programs and treatment centers can additionally help alleviate drug addiction. Mental health helplines are a great source of confidential support that is always available. Furthermore, Let's Talk is a great resource for online support and provides services for youth counseling as well as anxiety and stress management.

Appointments can be scheduled at
<https://letstalk.pairacademy.org/register.php>

