

SUBSTANCE  
ABUSE



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# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## 1 WHAT IS SUBSTANCE ABUSE?

Substance abuse involves the regular and continued use of substances such as alcohol, drugs, and other chemicals that lead to pathological behavioural changes.

## 2 WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE?

- Sudden personality changes.
- Fatigue.
- Secretive behaviour.
- Deterioration in quality and output of work.
- Borrowing money.
- Withdrawal from responsibility.
- Withdrawal or avoidance from family.
- Unusual flare-ups or outbursts of anger.
- Loss of interest in what were once favourite activities and pursuits.
- Difficulty in concentration.
- Sudden jitteriness, nervousness, or aggression.
- Deterioration of physical health and appearance.

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## WHAT MAY LEADS TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE?

- **Group psychology:** Social pressure often leads people to experiment with drugs to gain acceptance and recognition. Through the processes of 'de-individualisation' and 'groupthink', individual identity is lost and the identity of the group takes over.
- **Media:** Watching role models engage in substance use results in the disinhibition and desensitization to substance use, a distortion in reality perception and learning through imitation.
- **Misinformation:** People harbour misconstrued notions that certain substances are beneficial in small quantities, or help de-stress.

## 4 WHAT ARE THE HEALTH RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE?

- Heart disease
- Respiratory failure
- Cancer
- Liver and kidney diseases
- Depression and anxiety
- Delusions, hallucinations and disorientation
- HIV and hepatitis
- Coma and death

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## ARE MEDICATIONS REQUIRED?

The most effective intervention for substance use disorders is preventing the initial development or pathological patterns of use. These interventions include educational approaches, family-based interventions, and community-based projects.

Recovering patients require both detoxification and rehabilitation. The most effective treatment strategy involves the use of medications and psychotherapy, under the guidance of a team of psychiatrists and clinical psychologists.