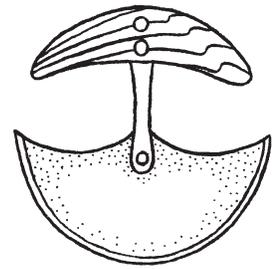


Information for Inuit Community Members

Fact Sheet Substance Use



Substance Abuse

What is Substance Abuse?

When a person repeatedly uses street drugs, alcohol and/or solvents to produce pleasure and/or to medicate one's pain and/or to relieve stress, this is called substance abuse. People use street drugs to escape realities of everyday life or to cope with suffering or trauma from abuse of any form. People's past and present experiences contribute to a person becoming addicted to drugs.

Alcohol Addiction

An individual may become an alcoholic when the use of alcohol becomes a way of coping or dealing with everyday stresses or if he or she continues to drink even after repeated attempts to quit on their own. Alcoholic drinking interferes with a person's everyday life including their job, family life, school and regular routine activity.

Alcoholism is often a family issue affecting many members of one family from one generation to the next. Without proper help, support and counseling, the family may have a difficult time breaking this cycle of addiction.

Drug Addiction

A person is considered addicted to drugs when the use of drugs gets out of control and he or she no longer takes care of themselves and their daily activities. It is possible to hide a drug addiction for a while but eventually, the addiction reaches a point when a person can no longer maintain their secret lifestyle. Drug addiction leads many people to resort to illegal activity (e.g. theft) in order to obtain drugs. There are some addicts who will compromise their health by resorting to sexual activities without proper protection (use of condoms) in exchange for drugs.

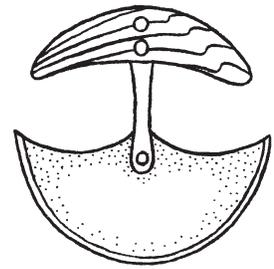
Solvent Abuse

Solvent abuse is the sniffing or inhaling of solvents that contain butane and propane. These solvents are found in aerosol containers as well as items including lighters, paint thinners, glue, and liquid paper.



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What should you do if you think you or someone you know has a problem with substance use?

Addiction is a very sensitive issue to deal with as it is usually the consequence of many underlying and unresolved issues. When we feel that we can no longer drink moderately or we find that we are using drugs to medicate ourselves, this is a sign that our substance use must be looked at very seriously.

Most people who have a strong network of family and community support will often have better success in finding the help that they need to deal with their substance abuse problem. There are also treatment centres that help people with addictions and trauma. Due to the limited accessibility of these services in the North, many people will have to leave their home communities for a period of time in order to seek treatment. Contacting the health centre and social services is a good way to start as they have the information about what services might be available in your community or region.

