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If Veterans don't help Veterans, who will?

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Does Your Family Member Have a Substance Abuse Problem?

When your family member has been drinking or using drugs does he or she do any of the following (check all that apply):

- Embarrass you?
- Blame you for things?
- Break promises?
- Drive under the influence?
- Make bad decisions?
- Behave badly?

If one or more of these are true for your family member he or she may be abusing drugs or alcohol.

1. Are the men in your family drinking more than 14 drinks a week or four drinks on one occasion?
 Yes No
2. Are the women in your family drinking more than seven drinks a week or three drinks on one occasion?
 Yes No

If one of these is true for your family member, talk to him or her about contacting a health care provider.

Help is available and possible for your loved one!



What Are the Possible Effects of Substance Abuse On My Family?

Substance abuse **causes** stress on the family which can lead to many family problems.

- Health effects: Substance abuse can increase the risk for HIV, fetal alcohol syndrome, premature death, injury and increased risk taking.
- Effects on children: Children whose parents have a substance use disorder have an increased risk of the following problems:
 - Substance use: **They are four times more likely to develop a substance use disorder** than children who aren't in that environment.
 - Conduct problems: They may be more frustrated and have an increased risk of aggressive behavior and crime.
 - Academic problems: They may have learning difficulties, lower concentration and disruptiveness.
 - Emotional problems: They may be angry and develop poor self-esteem, withdrawal and sadness.
- Marital problems: When a family member has a substance use disorder, divorce is seven times more likely than in families who are free from substance abuse.
- Emotional abuse or violence: More than 50 percent of family abuse stems from substance abuse.
- Legal problems: Substance abuse can lead to problems such as unpaid bills, driving under the influence and crime.
- Financial problems: Substance abuse may lead to loss of a job and money because of the expense of a substance. A family member may forget or ignore paying bills because of substance abuse.

Reminders for Families

- Substance use disorder is called a “family disorder” because it affects the entire family and close friends, even if only one person has it.
- **It's not your fault!**
 - **It is a disorder**
 - **You didn't cause it**
 - **You can't make it stop**
 - **You need and deserve help for yourself and your family members**
- People with a history of substance use disorder in their families are more likely to have a substance use disorder when they choose to drink or do drugs. You can't get it if you don't drink or use drugs.
- **You are not alone!**
 - **One in four children under age 18 live in a home where alcohol misuse or alcohol addiction is hurting the family**
 - **Thousands live with parental drug abuse**
 - **A lot of people come from families with a substance use disorder**

Remember The Seven Cs

I didn't	Cause it
I can't	Cure it
I can't	Control it
I can take better by	Care of myself
Making healthy and	Communicating my feelings
	Choices
	Celebrating myself



ACTION STEPS

1. **Ask for help:** If someone close to you abuses alcohol or drugs, the first step is to be open about the problem and ask for help for yourself, your family and your loved one.
 - Children who have alcohol or drug abuse in the family can get help by talking with adults like teachers, doctors or school counselors. Support groups are also helpful.
2. **Get help for your loved one:** Treatment is effective! Getting a loved one into care and finding support services for your family are the next steps toward recovery.
 - Family support and motivation are the most important things in making treatment work.
3. **Find out about treatment options:** There are many treatments that work for addiction. Talk to your health care provider about these treatments. Stopping alcohol or drug abuse is the first step to recovery and most people need to stop.
4. **Talk with children:** It is important to talk with children about what is happening in the family and to help them talk about their fears and feelings. Children need to trust the adults in their lives and to believe that they will support them.