



### Substance Abuse in Families

Too many Americans are addicted to drugs or alcohol, and the majority of them have families that suffer from their loved ones' substance abuse. Children in these families need special care and attention.

Children of substance abusers need reliable, dependable adults in their lives who can provide them with the nurturing protection they deserve.

There are often unusually high levels of stress, anger, and confusion in families struggling with drug and alcohol problems—which creates a risk factor for mental health issues and substance abuse. Children subjected to drug and alcohol abuse in the home must be allowed to express their fears and concerns. They must have adults they can turn to for help and support.

Programs are available through some schools that provide educational support groups for kids living with drug abusing or alcoholic parents. For children 11 and older, programs like Alateen can provide connections with others—in a group setting—who are dealing with the same kinds of issues.

Many churches and faith-based organizations offer activities that help kids cope with drug addiction in the family. Help is also available from most county health departments through referrals to licensed treatment facilities and self-help groups.

The following is a list of resources for those dealing with an addicted family member.

#### To Find Local Self-Help Groups

- Al-Anon Family Groups: [www.al-anon.org](http://www.al-anon.org)
- Alateen: <https://al-anon.org/newcomers/teen-corner-alateen/>
- Alcoholics Anonymous: [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

- Adult Children of Alcoholics: [www.adultchildren.org](http://www.adultchildren.org)
- For a pastoral counseling center in your community, visit: [www.aapc.org](http://www.aapc.org)

#### For Treatment Information

- National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP; [www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov)
- National Association for Children of Alcoholics: [www.nacoa.org](http://www.nacoa.org)
- National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence: [www.ncadd.org](http://www.ncadd.org)

#### Family Member Substance Abuse and the Workplace

Seventy percent of substance abusers are employed. This means that the majority of people who abuse drugs or alcohol have jobs and are (at least temporarily) productive members of society—which creates a false hope in the family that “it can’t be that bad.” But because addiction is a chronic, progressive disease of the brain that worsens over time, it can become especially damaging to both the family and the workplace.

Drug addicts and alcoholics cost U.S. companies an average of more than \$80 billion annually. This loss of revenue hurts employers, families, and the economy.

Substance abusers cost companies money through increased healthcare costs, more workers compensation claims, greater legal liability, and increased theft in the workplace.

The psychological and stress-related effects of drug use or alcohol abuse by a family member can adversely impact a worker’s job performance through decreases in productivity and excessive absenteeism and tardiness (from dealing with the substance abuser’s problems).

Family members of addicts often suffer from emotional and mental health problems,

marital problems, dependent care concerns, and other personal problems that affect the employee's work.

Caring, concerned business owners implement drug free workplace programs designed to identify employees who are struggling with substance abuse problems and get them the help they need.

Drug free workplace programs help companies save money while providing much needed help for families and children.

### **Drug Free Workplace Program Help**

Drug addicts and alcoholics typically believe that they drink normally, and that drug use is something that "everyone does." This false belief is a result of denial, which is a part of the disease of addiction. Addiction tells the addict/alcoholic: "You don't have a problem; it's society that has the problem for judging you."

Drug free workplace programs that include drug testing help identify employees with substance abuse problems and "break through the denial."

Drug addiction and alcoholism are medical conditions that can be effectively treated. Thanks to successful drug free workplace programs in companies all over the U.S., millions of employees and their families are in healthy recovery from the disease.

*The following information is provided by the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities.*

### **Suicide Prevention Is Hard Work**

Suicide in Georgia has been the second leading cause of death for youth aged 10-14 and adults aged 25-34. It's been the third leading cause of death for youth aged 15-24, according to CDC data (CDC WISQARS 2016).

Georgia's Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities/Office of Behavioral

Health Prevention's (DBHDD/OBHP) Suicide Prevention program is committed to preventing deaths by suicide.

OBHP uses a multi-level approach of evidence-based prevention trainings, evidence-based activities, and postvention strategies. We provide training and technical assistance to many different types of community agencies and organizations to reduce suicide attempts and suicide deaths.

### **OBHP Prevention Activities Include:**

- Suicide Prevention and Postvention Technical Assistance
- Suicide Prevention Training
- Implementation of Workplace Suicide Crisis Protocols
- Suicide Prevention Policy Guidance and Adherence
- Postvention Training and Technical Assistance Support
- Promotion of Zero Suicide in Behavioral Health Care

If you see friends or coworkers who seem sad or depressed, ask if they are okay. Don't be afraid to ask if they are thinking about hurting themselves. You don't have to have the answers to their problems. If you just ask, listen, and then refer them to a professional, you could save their life.

To learn more about suicide prevention, visit the DBHDD website at: <https://dbhdd.georgia.gov/suicide-prevention>, or contact Suicide Prevention Director, Walker Tisdale, at: [walker.tisdale@dbhdd.ga.gov](mailto:walker.tisdale@dbhdd.ga.gov).

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:**  
1-800-273-TALK (8255).