Drug and Alcohol Addiction Q&A: A Sample of Common Questions Asked

Part of the reason we introduced this section to our website, was to provide an interactive component to the website that would allow you to have some of your burning questions regarding alcoholism and drug addiction answered. So on the following pages are a sample of typical questions we get on our Q&A: Ask the Expert feature that you’ll find at http://www.alcoholism-and-drug-addiction-help.com/drug-and-alcohol-addiction.html

I therefore encourage you to make use of this facility to ask a question relating to your own struggle with alcoholism or drug addiction, or from the perspective of someone you love, and we’ll get back to you as soon as we can.

We don’t maintain to have all the answers and you might not always agree with the suggestions we have given, so please also feel free to give your own thoughts and views to questions asked using the comments section. Ultimately the more feedback to a question provided, the better. All we ask is that you do so in a supportive and encouraging manner.

The point is to share our experiences so that we can help each other. Each of our experiences is unique, yet the effect of alcoholism and drug addiction on our lives is a common denominator that means we all have something to contribute.

There are no better people to gain support and strength from than each other – because the ravages of addiction has affected us all in some way, and so we understand and can relate to what the next person is going through.

The journey in the fight against addiction is a continuous one, where we continually question, learn and take action to keep moving forward. Because that’s what you have to keep attempting to do - keep moving, one step and one day at a time.

That requires above all honesty. Honesty with ourselves as to the extent of our problem, and that overcoming an addiction or somehow moving on from being in a relationship with an addict, isn’t just going to happen by itself. Our success in moving on from the ravages of a life of addiction is directly proportionate to the commitment and effort we put in.

So I hope you’ll learn something from the following questions and answers, and relate what’s been said to your own experiences. But most importantly know that the facility via the link provided above, is there for you to use to have your own question answered.

All the Best

Carl-Peter
How Do I Know if I'm an Alcoholic?

I’ve been drinking alcohol since the age of 13. I’m now 42. I’ve never thought of myself as having a problem with alcohol (even though I know I’ve often drunk too much) – but am now starting to wonder.

Alcohol has pretty much always been the main thing around which my social life revolves. Whether it be drinks after work, wine at dinner parties, beers to watch a game or big night outs with my male friends.

A couple of hangovers a week for me is pretty normal – but I always reckon I’ve coped okay with it. Have a good job and am good at what I do, am a decent husband and father – and so I’ve never really questioned my lifestyle.

But over the last year or so I’ve started noticing a shift. The hangovers are getting worse - sometimes I’m even blacking out now, I’m feeling more stressed at work so am drinking more at home in the evenings to unwind which is something I never really did before, my wife is starting to comment about my drinking and says I drink too much, I’m not nearly as productive as I used to be at work, and I think I may even be depressed.

I don’t know if my general lethargy and sense of depression is alcohol related or if I’m having some kind of mid-life crisis, but I think my drinking may becoming a real problem. How do I know if I’m an alcoholic and what should I do?

Answer

It certainly sounds like you’ve been a consistent alcohol abuser for many years, which in itself can cause a lot of long-term damage and I’m sure is a cause of your depression because remember that alcohol is a depressant. Whether it’s the only cause, I can’t tell you, but it might be worth speaking to a psychologist or therapist about.

Alcoholism is basically defined by dependence (mental and/or physical) and loss of control. There certainly seems to be an element of both in your situation. I suggest you take this test for alcoholism and look at the signs of alcoholism to get a more definitive answer for your situation.

As to what to do? It certainly seems like alcohol has become a problem in your life because it’s effecting your daily life so the worst thing you can do is nothing because things can very quickly escalate totally out of control. A form of treatment is definitely the way to go so I suggest you read about your alcoholism treatment options.

Remember the only person that can make the necessary changes in your life is you. The fact that you’re on here asking for advice is a good sign. Getting in touch with an Addictions Counselor in your area is also a good idea because they can do a more detailed assessment of your current situation and also talk to you about the help available in your vicinity.

Good Luck with everything and let us know how you get on.
Can a Marriage Survive Alcoholism?

Do you think it’s possible for a marriage to survive alcoholism? My husband and I have been married 13 years. The first 2-3 years were great, then he began sinking into his alcoholism which lasted around 8 years, and now for the last 2 or so he’s been sober.

I honestly just feel we have nothing really in common anymore. He is very focused on his recovery and is very involved with AA, and so there isn’t much really to talk about because he mostly just uses AA and recovery lingo nowadays.

Don’t get me wrong, I am happy for him, and am thrilled he’s sober again, but being married to him when he was drinking, was really hard, and I think I lost something then which we haven’t really been able to re-kindle, even since he’s been sober.

I’m not even sure I’m that sad anymore, maybe our time together has just run its course?

Carey

Answer

Hi Carey

Relationships are hard work at the best of times. Throw in a spouse suffering from an addiction, and it can become almost impossible, so the fact that you’re still together is a blessing in itself. So when it comes to alcoholism and marriage it’s almost impossible to predict how things will turn out.

Your husband has no doubt undergone a massive change and the fact that he’s so serious about his recovery is great, but that can still put a strain on the relationship because that’s where all his focus now lies, so feeling distant and probably a little left out and neglected is not unusual for someone in your position.

The best thing you can do is focus on yourself again, and discover the things you enjoy doing and that make you happy, because that would have been incredibly difficult no doubt while your husband was in the middle of his addiction. As much as your husband is focused on his recovery, you also need time to heal and re-discover yourself because addiction does affect family and loved ones massively as well. So make that your focus, and while you and your husband are both busy rediscovering yourselves, you will hopefully end up rediscovering each other.

But if that doesn’t work, then it may be time to consider counselling and see if that won’t help your marriage. You may be right that your relationship has run its course because I think that can happen, but in your case I still think it’s too early to tell, and there is a lot you can still do and try before making such a big and permanent decision.

Don’t also forget the importance of communicating your feelings to your husband. He may simply be so wrapped up in his recovery, that all he needs is a little prod to remind him that he also needs to work at your relationship.

So don’t give up yet. Things can still change.
I am in Active Addiction. I Know I am Dying but I Can Not Find a Way to Stop.

I was first addicted to heroin. I beat that addiction after one year. Then three months of being completely clean I was introduced to crystal meth and my addiction got me again - just it was a whole different type of drug.

Unlike heroin I truly did and still do LOVE crystal meth. I do not admit that to people I know because I know how stupid it is but it is my true feeling.

Anyway I was sentenced to prison for one year so I was forced to become clean from meth. After the time spent in prison I had gotten out but was able to stay away from people, places, and things that I figured would lead me to the location of my true love (meth).

I wanted to use so bad but I knew I couldn't use that drug again cause I would never come back alive. It was going to become the reason my mother would have to bury her daughter and I can't let that happen.

I am tired of hurting my mom, she is the only person I have that has always loved me through these addictions. I have no one else left. I was out of prison for about one and a half years when I was assigned a new head doctor at the counseling place I was attending for duel diagnosis groups.

I was receiving counseling for being an addict as well as having been diagnosed with bi-polar, depression, PTSS post traumatic stress syndrome, and anxiety problems that were caused by the long addiction and use of crystal meth.

I was seeing this doctor for about three months when he decided I had attention deficit disorder but it was never recognized by my other doctors because it was mild compared to the other problems I was diagnosed with.

He knew all my history and if I am remembering it correctly we even discussed my addiction to drugs in the past that same day he prescribed for the first time the drug that now is my active addiction. The one that is going to kill me if I can't find a way to stop one more time. I am addicted to Addorall.

I have tried to stop numerous times but don't even last one or two days. I feel like it has beaten me already. I think the last two addictions I beat ended up using everything I had to fight for my life.

I have grew a very high tolerance for this drug. On a normal day I have to use 400 to 500 mg as soon as I open my eyes just to be somewhat normal. Then through out the day I need like 700 to 1000 more milligrams to function.

I have severe panic attacks when I am close to running out. I am now diabetic so when I try not to use my sugar will do one of two things - it will shoot sky high past 400 and not be brought down with anything. Or it will bottom out to around 25 or 30 almost every couple of hours.

My doctor said I am severely under weight and am not getting any nutrition in me. Also I have had to have 5 blood transfusions in nine months because the doc said I am severely anaemic - but they can't figure out why other then the fact of having had a gastro bypass in 2003.

I almost forgot to mention that fact - I had a gastro bypass in 2003 because I weighted 360 pounds. I never used drugs, tried drugs, or imagined I ever would until after I had that damn surgery. I had never even drank alcohol and I was 24 years old.
I really think food was my real true addiction first but after I had that surgery and was unable to eat like I used to my addiction grasped on to something I could do, DRUGS. I regret that surgery so so so much and I would not do it again if I was given the chance to go back in time.

Please help me save my life because I don't want to die but I don't see myself alive without those drugs. Please help me.

Answer

Don't give up on yourself! You've beaten two addictions before - and even though you don't think you have it in you to do it again - you can!

The doctor who prescribed that to you is crazy considering your history with drug addiction - so I hope you've changed Doctors and no longer use him.

But the main thing now is not to blame or be angry with him - because you need to focus all your attention on getting clean.

The first step you need to take is get help. In other words you need to find a treatment program for your addiction. In your condition you can't do this alone. Here's a number you can call - 800-559-9503 and they can help you find a treatment program that is suitable for you. Don't wait - call them straight away!

Then I want you to get yourself to an NA meeting. NA is an excellent 12 step program that can help you recover from your addiction - like it has millions of others. And there you'll also meet other people you can talk to and guide you through this really tough period you're going through. The more you surround yourself with good people who understand what you're going through - the better your chance at recovery.

If you don't know how to find a meeting in your area and want to speak to someone first go this NA Page where you'll be able to look up the contact details of who to contact depending on where you live.

Just take one step at a time. Remember that addiction is a disease of the mind and spirit - and that's why it's so important you find a treatment and recovery program to help you. Don't try do this alone. There is hope - don't give up on yourself.

Take that first step by making that call ... then find an NA meeting you can go to (or at least call them) and then you'll already feel better. If it's too hard for you to call - ask your Mom or a family member/friend to help you. Don't hide this from them. They love you and will want to help you.

Your life is precious - so don't give up on it. One day you'll be able to use the experience of what you've gone through to help others and make a difference. I believe in you and know you can do this. Take those first steps now - and things will get better, you'll see.
Let me know how you're doing and if you need anything else. Keep posting here as often as you need to if it helps. We'll be here to help as best we can.

Don't give up and take those first steps now.

God Bless

**AA Isn't for Me. What Are My Alternatives?**

I’ve been going to AA on and off for about six months now. I just can’t seem to get into it and it certainly hasn’t done anything to help me stop drinking.

There’s all this talk about God and High Powers, which I just don’t buy into because I’m not religious at all. And having to introduce myself as an alcoholic every time I want to say something just seems juvenile – of course we’re all alcoholics, that’s why we’re there!

I’ve been to rehab and that obviously didn’t seem to work for me. AA isn’t working and I know I need to do something, but I’m running out of ideas as to what. Can you offer any suggestions?

**Answer**

I’m going to be honest and blunt with you here because I think you need to hear this so please don’t take this in the wrong way because I’m just trying to help.

What screams out at me is the first thing you need to do is change your attitude. It sounds like (and I could be wrong) that you have an expectation that treatment and AA somehow are there simply to ‘fix’ you without you having to do anything.

That’s not how it works. What you get out of treatment, AA or any other program is directly proportionate to what you put in. Only YOU can overcome your alcoholism. Rehabs and AA provide you with the tools if you like, but it’s up to you to use them.

Now another key and critical ingredient in overcoming an addiction like alcoholism is keeping an open mind and having a willingness to learn. Can you honestly say that you’ve taken those qualities into AA meetings with you because the message I’m getting from you sounds more judgemental than open-minded?

Because if you do take an open-minded and willingness to learn attitude into your AA meetings, I’m sure your experience will be totally different – and you’ll then also realise that AA in a non-religious program that is supporting of all beliefs.

AA is first and foremost a spiritual program that doesn’t have any religious affiliations. They use words like God and Higher Power because those are concepts most people can relate to. If those don’t work for you; maybe Force, Energy or Universe are concepts you can more easily relate – so don’t let that stop you.
Having said all that though – some people do sincerely try AA and realise it’s not for them. That’s okay. Alcoholism is ultimately a disease of mind and spirit – so try programs that help you develop those areas.

Spiritual programs and practices like Yoga and meditation can be very powerful and effective, self-help groups and organisations like 'A Course in Miracles' can make a difference, and anything that looks at holistic healing from a mind, body, spirit perspective can help tremendously - because alcoholism is a complex disease that affects us on all these levels so you need to work at all of these consistently to create lasting change. For further ideas take a look at this alcoholism self help piece and this article on alternative alcoholism treatment.

That means finding what works for you and may require some trial and error. But remember what I said earlier – whatever program you choose, you will only get out what you put in. There is no quick fix. Overcoming and recovering from alcoholism just doesn’t happen – you have to make it happen – and that takes work.

You can do this. Just consider making that attitudinal shift and begin taking ownership of your recovery - and I’m sure that’ll set you on the right path.

All the best and take care

---

**I’m a Regular Binge Drinker – How Do I Know if I’m Developing a Problem?**

I’m a binge drinker, i.e. get wasted just about every weekend, which is pretty normal I think for someone my age. I’m still pretty young – I’m only 29. What worries me though, is that for the last few months I’ve started blacking out regularly, and end up embarrassing myself and feeling terrible afterwards when my friends tell me what I did. I’ve noticed more recently as well that it takes me a few days to get over my binge and I tend to feel really depressed and withdrawn during that period.

I don’t usually drink much during the week (unless there is something social happening), but this blacking out thing has started worrying me. Once I start drinking, I also find it hard to stop. Sometimes I feel like I should give it a break, but because my social life revolves around going out and drinking, I can never bring myself to say no, even though I know how I end up.

I’ve always figured alcoholics as being people who drink every day and who are pretty much down and out so never thought I may have a problem. But I’m starting to get worried, especially with the depression and withdrawal symptoms I also seem to be getting. Should I be?

Concerned
Answer

Dear Concerned

There is a misconception that you have to drink huge amounts every day and literally be living out of the gutter to be regarded as an alcoholic. Many alcoholics appear to lead very normal lives, are ‘successful’ and would be the last person you’d expect to suffer from alcoholism.

So first thing to do is rid yourself of any existing misconceptions. Many people also get hung up on labels and things like the differences between alcoholic and alcohol abuser – when none of that really matters. If alcohol is causing a problem in your life (blackouts, embarrassment, depression etc.) and you can’t simply stop drinking or drink moderately to avoid those, you know you have a problem. Because having an alcohol problem isn’t about how much you drink, but about the affects it has on you and your life.

You need to also understand that alcoholism is progressive (familiarity with the alcoholism stages may help). In the early stages, it may not be obvious that there is a problem because your behaviour compared to others doesn’t seem that unusual, except you’re experiencing major undesirable affects because of your drinking (which are all major warning signs by the way that a more serious problem is developing). What you don’t want to do is ignore those and wait till things have gotten progressively worse and you end up with an advanced case of alcoholism, where you will literally be down and out.

The test for you now is to see if you can control your drinking, without it being a struggle to do so. If you can, maybe you’re just going through a phase, and all you need to do is learn to be a bit more assertive with your friends so that you don’t get roped into binge drinking so regularly.

The fact that you’re here means you sense alcohol affects you differently to how it affects everyone else, which is something to be careful of, because that tends to be the case with most alcoholics. If you find you can’t control things, let us know and we can try and look at your options for dealing with this.

My Boyfriend of 5 years Has a Serious Drug Addiction (Even Resorting to Prostitution). Don't Know What Else To Do?

by AnonoMS.
(Lost,Confused,USA)

My boyfriend is 31 years old and has a very bad addiction to street drugs - it seems like the only time he is clear headed is when he is locked up for a while.

We have been together for 5 years and I can’t believe after so many promises - rehab centres, arrests - we are still here. To briefly inform people who read this for the best advice possible - He is also HIV positive and has Hep C - and I found out 2 years ago he was even prostituting.

It’s so embarrassing, when I found up we broke up, but eventually got back together - he said that he
did he whole prostituting thing because he would need money for his high. Of course me like an idiot believed that it wouldn't happen again and that he just seriously has a bad problem.

Weeks later he turned himself into the police and did 8 months in jail (he had a warrant for his arrest). During this time I was working and saving up money cause I actually thought when he came out, being away from drugs he would be a changed person, especially the way he was speaking was so differently. It just felt like when he was incarcerated I was talking to the man I'm in love with not the junkie ...

So he came out and we moved in together but he relapsed and hit the streets again - here I am 1 yr later dealing with this crap. I'm hurt, mad, upset, disgusted, confused, and as I write this I begin to cry. I just want everything to be normal. Every time he goes into a program he ends up leaving a few days later, to then start with the same old crap.

He has no family and it's to the point that I believe he is prostituting for either money or drugs. I hate him so much but when I read letters or look at his pictures all of this negative doesn't exist to me in the time.

He's mentioned suicide, (he is also bipolar and schizo) and I don't even know what to think or say anymore! Sometimes I grow this hatred for him and tell him it's over and don't feel bad about it cause I know I deserve better and could get more out of life without a drug addict, but sometimes I feel so lost without his voice and face.

I guess my questions are - does he do it for me? Does he like the whole prostitution thing? Does he really want to change but just can't because of the craving and urges? Is there something else bothering him?

Please help!!!! I really don't know what to do ... I wish I could do some exorcism or something to see what happens. Or is it that I have a problem? I have a good job, a good family, a good home, why do I put up with this?

P.S. I'm also HIV positive now

**Answer**

Hi AnonoMS

Your story is really heartbreaking and shows the ravages of drug addiction at its absolute worst.

The thing is, you need to understand that your boyfriend's addiction is so strong and overpowering, he is powerless to control it. And because he's obviously using such highly physically addictive drugs - he can't function without them, and because his addiction is at such an advanced stage, he will go to any lengths to feed his habit, i.e. even prostituting himself.

It's not that he enjoys it or enjoys hurting you in the way he does, but drugs are his absolute number one. They totally rule his life - and he'll do anything to get them because his addiction is so strong and overpowering.

However, even though he is powerless to control his addiction, he can choose to do something
about it, i.e. get proper help and treatment for his drug addiction - and then make sure he does everything he can to stay clean by working a proper addiction recovery program.

But it doesn't seem like he's ready yet to want to do something about his addiction - because that's the key - he has to want to do it for himself before he'll ever turn his life around. It usually takes someone reaching their absolute rock bottom to get to that point, but you would have thought in your boyfriend's case - having been through prison, contracted HIV etc. that he would have done so. But it's different for each person, and unfortunately some addicts just never get there and their addiction ends up killing them.

The things you need to realise about your boyfriend's addiction are the three 'C's.' You didn't cause it, you can't control it, and you can't cure it. What I think you do need to examine though is your tendency towards codependency in a relationship like this because to have put up with everything you have means you're obviously drawn to codependent relationships.

So my suggestion to you is to surround yourself with people who understand what you're going through and who can support you in dealing with this. Nar-Anon (google them) is for family and loved one's of addicts, and Codependents Anonymous (codependents.org) is a fellowship for people whose purpose is to develop healthy relationships.

I think you realise your whole situation could almost be described as insane - but that's the insanity of addiction and the ugly truth of how it can play out in real life. So please read what I've said carefully and follow my suggestions. Your life isn't going to get better simply hoping it will - you need to take some kind of action towards making it happen. Your boyfriend will do whatever he's going to do (remember you can't control that) - but you can control what you do. So I think it's time you start taking control of your life again, and hopefully in time your boyfriend will do the same.

God Bless and Take Care

---

I am a Weekend Binger of Drugs - How do I Stop?

by Kerry
(Canada)

I first used heroin when I was 18, and I have used different drugs off and on ever since. My main drug is alcohol.

I have a boyfriend and he comes over once a week, and we start drinking, and we will egg each other on. He will say can we phone, for just a little one, and I will say and you will boot it, shoot it and you will do it.

We order cocaine and heroin for a chaser all to be injected. The binge will last over 2 days and will cost around 100 dollars or more. This has happened every week for the last 2 years. My money has flown out the window, I lay in bed sleeping 16 hrs at a time after, and feeling very guilty, it takes me 3 days to get over it.
I would like to stop since I am 57 and he is 44 and my soul comes alive after a week, and I spoil that
good feeling I have about myself by engaging in the cycle that has become routine.

Answer

Hi Kerry

If you're serious about wanting to stop using, the first thing you need to do is make the DECISION
that that is what you’re going to do.

Because if you don't firmly make the decision to stop using drugs for good, you always leave a back
door open for yourself to one day change your mind.

Then you need to find some solid reasons as to why you’re determined to stop using. Things that will
motivate you to keep going and not pick up when the urge to phone your drug dealer is
overwhelming. Because if you're not sufficiently motivated and determined to make it happen,
you're 'dead in the water.'

In your case then, if your problem is merely one of regular substance abuse, you can try simply
stopping by yourself and see how that goes for you. If you manage to come clean that way, maybe
you do have nothing more than a substance abuse problem.

My feeling however is that your habit stems deeper than just plain substance abuse, and that it
seems like you have addictive tendencies, even if you’re only binging on weekends. Take this drug
addiction test and this test for alcoholism because you may be surprised at the results.

So if these tests show what I think they will, and you find you can't just walk away from your drinking
and using habits despite knowing the damage they're causing you, you need to consider getting
professional help.

I would suggest contacting an Addictions Counselor in your area and have them help you decide on
what course of action is best. 12 step programs like AA and NA are also a great place to go to meet
people exactly in your position, and where you’ll discover what you need to do to successfully quit
drinking and using drugs for good.

Ultimately the only way to overcome addiction is I believe through adopting a holistic approach that
helps you heal and change on the spiritual, mental and emotional levels. The 12 steps can do that for
you, or if you know of other spiritual programs that you have an affinity with, they can too.

I think you should also examine your relationship with your boyfriend in terms of his influence and
how it seems to always end up in you using drugs when you're with him. I'm not saying he's to blame
or responsible, but some relationships are healthier for us than others, and if you hope to stop using
successfully, how are you going to manage if he still binges regularly?
The other obvious contributing factor is alcohol. I'm glad you recognise the role alcohol plays in leading to you ending up also doing cocaine and heroin. If you are inclined towards addiction, there is no way you are going to be able to stop taking drugs successfully, while still drinking alcohol. As you said yourself, alcohol is also a drug to you, so abstinence is going to be the only way for you.

I've given you a lot of information to digest. Don't let this overwhelm you. Just take it one step at a time. And the main thing is, don't be scared or ashamed to get help or go to an AA/NA meeting.

God Bless and I'm sure everything will work out for the best.

Are There Different Signs of Alcoholism?
by Lynn
(Maine)

I'm worried about my boyfriend. He comes from a family with several alcoholics including both parents, his sister and probably an uncle or two, I'm unsure of the mother's side but I do know both parents had drug problems.

He knows this, and doesn't drink too often, but when he does go out he doesn't seem to be able to stop drinking and it's getting worse. He doesn't drink everyday, but he is having a beer in the evening more frequently as his problems with work get worse.

Tonight he got so drunk he ran away from me when I went to pick him up from a friends house and I had to call the police to get him home. He was so belligerent he didn't know where he was and couldn't speak and could barely walk. I'm staying up watching him sleep now because I'm worried about alcohol poisoning.

He's progressively getting more and more drunk on the occasions that he does drink a lot. I didn't think one drink in the evenings, maybe three times a week was bad, but now I'm concerned. I've never seen him this bad before.

I usually think of alcoholism as needing to drink everyday, but can it manifest in other ways? Is the inability to know when you've had way too much a symptom? Should he even be drinking at all coming from a family of so many alcoholics?

I have no real experience with this since, luckily, I do not have anyone with substance abuse issues in my immediate family, and I'm worried I may have been missing warning signs. Please, I really need some advice. I don't know what to do.

Thank you.

Answer

Hi Lynn

The fact that your boyfriend has a history of alcoholism in his family definitely places him more at
risk, because it is now widely accepted that one of the primary causes in alcoholism is that it's hereditary.

You also don't necessarily need to be drinking every day to be regarded as an alcoholic. Many alcoholics go through periods where they binge heavily, and then stay sober for a while again, only to repeat the pattern consistently.

Alcoholism is also a progressive disease - so even though your boyfriend doesn't drink too often yet - being aware of the alcoholism stages and how your boyfriend's drinking may evolve will be helpful. And yes, not knowing your limits and when you've had enough consistently is definitely a symptom of alcoholism because all alcoholics are unable to control their drinking once they've started.

Then I would also suggest you take a look at these three pieces and try and apply them to your boyfriend:

- Early Signs of Alcoholism
- Ten Warning Signs of Alcoholism
- Alcoholism Test

They will give you a good idea of the kinds of things to look out for, and how serious your boyfriend's drinking is at this stage.

But irrespective of all these things and whether one is labelled an alcoholic - I believe the biggest sign to look out for is whether someone's drinking is becoming a problem.

So if your boyfriend's drinking is serious enough to be causing problems with things like his own sense of well-being (mood, state of mind etc.), relationships, work etc. - then I would say it's serious enough that he should do something about it and consider getting help.

Especially considering the fact that he does have a family history of addiction and the drinking patterns you describe, suggest he shouldn't drink at all because he's at too high a risk of this developing into a serious addiction.

And the best time to do something about it is now, while he's still in the early stages of a problem, because the longer you leave it, the more difficult it becomes to overcome.

So when your boyfriend sobers up again, it may be time to have a serious chat with him about this. The fact that he is conscious of his family history make it seem like he will be receptive to you broaching this subject with him.

I hope everything works out for the best and let us know what happens or if you have any other questions.

Good luck and take care
Help Me Save My Relationship From My Addictions

by Jared

I am an alcoholic, drug addict and liar. I've been in a relationship with the girl I love for over 4 years now. During this time my drug/alcohol use has become a major problem.

My girlfriend has had enough with my crap and about a year ago she said quit or get out. I maintained sobriety for most of the year until a few months ago. I began using again and hiding it very well. My addictions have turned me in to a liar and just recently I have been caught again.

This time she wants me to leave but we have a son and its not easy. Now I truly love this girl with all my heart and want to spend the rest of my life with her. The crazy thing is that I again relapsed knowing the consequences. It's like I can't help it.

I guess the advice I am looking for is why do I relapse knowing what will happen? She thinks that I keep relapsing because she has given me lots of second chances in the past and that I deep down don't believe she will throw me out. I really want to quit and change my life for her and make this work but I have said this before and then relapsed after not even a year. How can I quit and not relapse?

Should my girlfriend kick me out this time because I certainly don't deserve anymore chances? And finally how do I make these wrongs right again? I have lied so much to feed my addiction, and I fear that she will never be able trust me.

Answer

Hi Jared

If you were really serious about wanting to quit, you would have done so by now. The fact is, you are choosing drugs and alcohol over your girlfriend and son. You're saying all the right things, but if you had that total desperation to turn your life around and do whatever it takes to build a life of sobriety, you would be doing so.

Do I think your girlfriend would be justified in throwing you out? Absolutely! Do I think that she hasn't followed through on her threat yet may be enabling your behaviour - probably. So if you really are serious about wanting to overcome your addictions once and for all and saving your relationship, it's time to stop making excuses and get really serious about quitting once and for all. You have to draw a line in the sand and say 'this is it' and adopt the attitude of being prepared to do whatever it takes.

Then you need to humble yourself and realise beating an addiction isn't something you should be doing alone. Book yourself into a drug and alcohol rehab program to begin the work of recovery - and then once you've done that you need to commit to working at a recovery program, whether it be 12-step based or something different, to ensure you maintain your sobriety and keep moving forward.

Because there is no quick fix in overcoming an addiction. You need to realise it takes consistent work and effort to make the changes on a spiritual, mental and physical level, so that the urge to use leaves you. Are you really prepared to commit to doing that?
You have all the motivation you need - a loving girlfriend and beautiful son. Now it's up to you to make the decision. It won't always be easy - but the rewards in the end will be well worth it, I can promise you that. And the only way to right the wrongs and regain trust from your girlfriend is by earning her trust and respect again through the things you do, not by what you say.

The actions you now take will be worth a thousand words - so you have to decide what path you are going to travel, and trust that by doing the 'right' things, everything will end up taking care of itself in the long run.

You Can Do It!

Good Luck and Take Care

---

**My Husband and I have Been Separated for a Year Due to his Drinking and Alcoholism. He’s Been Sober for a Year Now – Should I take him Back?**

I finally kicked my husband out about a year ago now because of his alcoholism and ongoing drinking. It had reached the stage where I just had had enough and couldn’t continue anymore. I was tired of the continued broken promises, feeling let down, and I was conscious of the effect his drinking and our continuous fighting was having on our kids.

It’s now a year later and he says he wants me to take him back and give him a second chance. I’m torn as to what to do? I feel like I’m starting to get my life on track again and am scared that if I let him back and he lets me down again, I don’t know how I’ll get through it. But I do still love him and know that it’s important for our children to have their father around.

**Answer**

You don’t mention what your husband has done to get a year of sobriety under his belt. Has he worked a program of recovery like the 12 steps through AA, or has he simply managed to somehow abstain from using alcohol for this long?

Because that makes a very big difference on the likelihood of him staying sober going forward should you get back together. If he hasn’t been working a program of recovery, he may be no more than a **dry drunk** – who apart from no longer drinking, still experiences most of the same mental and behavioural characteristics an active alcoholic would. So then also having got what he wants, i.e. a reconciliation - there may be no further reason for him to continue abstaining - and hitting the bottle hard again may well be the result.

But if he is actively working a **program of recovery**, it shows you he is serious about his recovery, and that he’s undergoing the mental, emotional and spiritual changes required to hopefully ensure he avoids relapsing.

At the end of the day though – there are no guarantees and there is a risk involved. So before you even think about taking him back, you may want to sit down with him and have a serious discussion about where he’s at – and ensure you put sufficient boundaries in place as condition of a
reconciliation.

Those might include things like him having to actively work at his recovery by attending regular AA meetings and working the 12 steps (you might agree to go to Al Anon as support), going to couples therapy so you guys can work through and unresolved issues, and that if he does ever touch a drink again, that’s it and he will be out for good this time.

So don’t just rush into allowing him back. Give it some serious thought – and think about the kinds of boundaries you need to put in place. You want to get some outside help on that from an Addictions Counsellor or Therapist.

It is a difficult decision to make, but I’m sure with some reflection and deep contemplation you’ll make the right decision. And don’t under-estimate your ability to get over things if they do go wrong again. You’ve proved to yourself you can do it ... so there’s no reason you couldn’t do it again. You’re more resilient than you think.

Take care and God bless

My Girlfriend Wants to try Ecstasy, What should I do?

by Gilberto
(Oceanside)

Hi Everyone,

I'm G from Mexico. I've been living in the United States for about 5 years, and I'm happy to tell you that I have had great times with my American girlfriend. By the way, she is my first American girlfriend. She is 19, and I'm 20.

We met at school 3 months ago. To be honest, I was not expecting to have a girlfriend at all! It all started when I invited her to a rave. But I really started to like her a week before this event. She started to kiss me, and hug me, and so did I. Her actions on this rave motivated me to ask her out.

Before inviting her to the rave, I knew that she consumed weed and that she had a previous relationship where she consumed a lot of this drug with her boyfriend. And even worse, the boyfriend's parents consumed this drug. So they never had a problem or seen this drug as bad.

Now, where I am getting is that two weeks ago, she told me that she was anxious to try ecstasy, and that she was not consuming weed anymore. I told her that I was totally against her choice and we agreed that she was not going to do it.

This week, she told me again about her anxiety, and for some reason we ended up agreeing that we both are going to try ecstasy at our next rave adventure. However, I've been thinking about my choice, and I am determined to tell her that I changed my mind.

I am planning to tell her that I will accompany her to a rehab clinic and that if she really loves me so
much, it should not be hard to go. Also, she has previously told me that she is motivated to quit weed and that's why she is not doing it. But, I think that she is just tired of it and that's why she is curious to try ecstasy.

I just don't know how to approach this problem, and I've been looking for the best method to help her. Today, I went to my local clinic, and they just told me to call CMS and apply for some medical insurance, and stuff. I need advice on how to help her soon before it's too late. What can I do? How can I help her? Should I tell about this to her parents? What's the best way to help her, and soon?

Thank you so much for your time,

G

Answer

Hi G

Tough position you're in. The girl you love wants to try ecstasy, which you're totally against, so what do you do?

First things first, you know that the whole rave culture is not just about the music, but also tends to involve people taking a lot of drugs, especially ecstasy. So putting yourself in that kind of environment consistently, is not conducive to avoiding the predicament you currently find yourself in.

You might be able to go to a rave and not taking anything, but that might not be the case for your girlfriend, especially when she sees how much 'fun' everyone else seems to be having who are high on ecstasy. I know, I've been there. You feel like you're on a different vibe. So I guess it's not surprising that your girlfriend wants to try ecstasy if she's going to raves and sees what it does to other people there.

I'm not saying you shouldn't go to raves, but understand that for someone like your girlfriend it provides a lot of temptation, so you might want to think about taking your girlfriend in future if you don't want her doing ecstasy.

Whether her wanting to try ecstasy makes her a drug addict is a bit early to tell. Some people experiment with drugs etc. and it never becomes a problem. Others go onto develop serious addictions. Which category your girlfriend falls into, we don't know yet. So suggesting rehab to her may be a bit premature.

I think a better approach for you to follow would be to suggest activities that aren't conducive to drug taking in the way raves are, and that way your girlfriend won't be surrounded by the temptation. There's a lot of cool and fun stuff you can do together without going to raves.

At the end of the day though, you need to accept and understand that your girlfriend will in all likelihood do what she really wants to do. Hopefully she doesn't want to take ecstasy badly so that you can talk her out of it. But if she does, she'll find a way, and there isn't a lot you can do about it.
And if that's the case, then you'll need to decide if she's still the kind of girl you want to be with. There are a lot of girls out there that don't do drugs so you've always got the option of choosing differently.

I'm sure everything will work out for the best.

Take Care

P.S. Here's an addiction test you can try and apply to your girlfriend if you're really worried she has a problem. Anything above 6 points means you should be concerned ... and then would be the time to suggest treatment/rehab and talk to her parents.

**Did I Do the Right Thing Confronting My Father About His Alcoholism?**

by Tami

(Phoenix, Arizona)

I know that there are a lot of people that don't realize the affects of being raised by an alcoholic, until much later in their own adult life. And, I am one of those.

There has been a lot of emotions flying through my household since we confronted my dad with his alcoholism. I still have those nagging voices in my head that ask me over and over if we did it right? If I should of handled it different?

After, reading the article on having only one chance to confront the alcoholic and making sure to address the alcoholic the correct way, I am wondering if it was handled correctly?

After allowing my dad to move in a trailer in our back yard, I realized for the first time, yes, my dad is an alcoholic. It was like someone turned on the light. It took about one year to realize this.

On the eve of coming to this great revelation, my dad was in one of his bad mood drunks. So, he decided to challenge my husband with something he disagreed with that we choose to do as a family. My husband handled him very well...considering. To make a long story short, he went to bed angry at us, went to my sisters the next day and didn't hear from him for two days.

We needed to get a hold of him to know what he wanted us to do with his dog and when he was planning on coming home. I also let him know that we had the key to his house and the only way he could get in was by coming to see us first. We needed to talk with him.

He avoids confrontation at all costs. Sounds familiar because that is exactly the way I am...hmmmm??? It was hard for me to even call him at my sisters and tell him we needed to talk.

There happened to be a family dinner at my sisters that evening when all of this came down and we, my husband and I are now the black sheep of the family. My sister, mad at me would not answer the phone so, we finally got a hold of my brother in law and my husband talked with him to let him know what was going on. It seemed like they had a good talk.
Brother in law agreed to take my dad for the week. By the time they got to my house, which is only about 15 min. away, my dad already had used the 'alcoholic psychology', on my brother in law and caused him to side with him.

When he came in our house to retrieve the key to his house he had asked my husband something ... Miles addressed my dad as an alcoholic. Brother in law defended my dad and said he had not been drinking that much and he was not drunk. That's funny, why was he slurring then?

I have to admit, I was angry at everybody that night .... angry at myself for enabling my dad all these years, angry at my dad for who my mom, sisters, and myself have become because of his alcohol. I was so angry that my dad caused all my family to be mad at us. Alcohol lies, cheats, and destroys relationships.

Needless to say my sister is still not talking to me. She tried to email me and I deleted right away because she is approaching me as being the main problem of all of this. I am not the one to blame and it is not my fault. I will acknowledge her when I know she will not be controlling the situation because she is a major control freak.

I pray it will all come out in the wash eventually. My dad is now with his sister and we haven't talked since he left for my sister's. My emotions are on a roller coaster, because I want to talk with him so badly. But, I also know I am not strong enough. Hopefully, someday soon I will be strong enough.

My dad was told by my husband that he can't talk to me until he talks to him. I am not sure if this is right or wrong?

Honestly, realizing that my dad is an alcoholic took such a burden off of me but, opened up a new can of worms, so to say. I know now that I took the initial step to recovery, there is no going back. That would be the worst thing I can do to myself, my dad, and my family.

I need some assurance I did the right thing. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

**Answer**

Hi Tami

Don't beat yourself up because you've done nothing wrong. It's amazing how cunning alcoholics can be and the deception they can cause - like you've now witnessed in your Dad - so that you almost feel like you're the one with the problem.

Confronting or initiating a conversation with someone to share your beliefs that they have a problem like alcoholism, isn't necessarily the same thing as performing an organised intervention - which is a planned and organised family intervention where you're basically saying enough is enough and that the person in question better get proper help or there will be severe consequences. So you don't need to feel like you've blown anything.

Alcoholics are brilliant manipulators - so your Dad is simply doing what most addicts would do in his position - play you against your sister, and somehow make it seem that you're basically delusional and the one with the problem.
You need to understand that's just part of the 'game' of addiction unfortunately. There's nothing you can really do or say that will convince anyone of your argument. Your sister and the rest of your family have to see it for themselves.

Remember too these 3 key principles in relation to someone you know suffering from an addiction like alcoholism: You didn't Cause it, You can't Control it, and You can't Cure it.

The only person that can ultimately help your father is himself. In other words, if and until he acknowledges he has a problem and is ready to receive help for it - no matter what you say or do is going to change or make a difference to his situation.

Denial is the biggest obstacle to sobriety any person suffering from an addiction faces. And your Dad is a clear example of someone living with a massive dose of denial.

It's sad that he's managed to create a rift between you and your sister, but you simply need to see that for what it is, due to his ability to cleverly manipulate the situation.

What could be helpful for you is to spend time amongst others who know what you're going through and will be able to offer valuable advice and support. Al-Anon is a group for family members and loved one's of alcoholics - so you might want to check them out.

I know what it's like to see a parent manipulate and deceive due to their alcoholism. As hard as it is, you've now seen the light as to what's going on, so hopefully that will help you deal with the situation and realise there really isn't a heck of a lot you can do.

**My Son and His Ex-girlfriend both have Addiction Problems. What Can We Do To Be Certain That Their Son Will Not Have Dependency Problems too?**

My son has been treated twice for being addicted to alcohol. His ex-girlfriend has had treatment for drug addiction, and has similar problems with alcohol.

They have a son together who lives primarily with his mother temporarily. She lives with her boyfriend who is a heavy drinker, both at home and socially, and she joins in.

She just received a DUI the other day. What are the chances that if our grandson remains in that atmosphere (where alcohol is readily available) he will develop alcoholism or dependency?

Isn't there more of a chance of him becoming dependent when he sees that as an accepted behavior? His mother has a brother and father with alcohol dependency, and I have an alcoholic brother and my grandfather was an alcoholic.
Answer

The primary cause of addiction or dependency is widely accepted as being the genetic or hereditary factor, with children of alcoholics or drug addicts being more likely predisposed to addiction than those those children who don't have that kind of family history. So I suggest you read more about that on the [addiction and alcoholism hereditary](https://www.Alcoholism-and-Drug-Addiction-Help.com) and [addiction and alcoholism genetic](https://www.Alcoholism-and-Drug-Addiction-Help.com) pages.

But being predisposed to addiction only explains part of the cause. Environmental influences also play a huge role, and so of course the behavioural influences of others, especially parents is also a significant contributing factor. Parents, through example, educating, and helping establish healthy boundaries towards things like alcohol and drugs have a massive role to play in helping prevent a child go down the road of addiction and dependence.

So unfortunately it doesn't sound like your grandson is being brought up in an ideal environment at all. Even in a perfect environment there is nothing you can do to be totally certain someone won't end up going down the road of addiction - because all it takes is getting in with the wrong crowd, experimenting with a highly addictive substance, and you're hooked before you know it. All you can ever do is try and minimise the chances of it happening.

And the opposite is also true - others with a history of addiction in their families and brought up in an environment 'conducive' to going down the path of addiction - manage to avoid doing so.

So my advice to you is that when you get the opportunity, try and pass on solid values to your grandson, educate him as to what addiction is all about and the potential dangers alcohol and drugs pose, and hope that chemical dependency in any form is a path he never travels.

Too many people try and brush the problem of addiction in families under the carpet, whereas it needs to be brought into the open and spoken about - so that it can be understood and so hopefully dealt with.

But ultimately there is only so much you can do - and for the rest you can only hope addiction is a road your grandson never ends up going down. Sorry if that's not quite what you were hoping to hear and lets pray your grandson's journey through life manages to stay clear of any form of addiction or dependency.