



## Substance Abuse: Critical Questions to Ponder

If you find the answer is “yes” to even two or three of these questions, you should seriously consider the possibility that your alcohol or drug use is a problem. If there are more than a few “yes” answers, you should seek help now.

- Have you ever felt you should cut down on, or tried to control (successfully or un-), your drinking or drug use?
- Have you ever felt bad or guilty about your drinking or drug use?
- Do you ever take a morning eye-opener to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover?
- Do you use drugs daily or weekly?
- Do you use prescription drugs more often than prescribed? Have you ever asked more than one doctor to prescribe a drug for you?
- Are alcohol or drugs sometimes more important than other things in your life—your family, your job, your school, your values
- Do you find yourself lying to your spouse, your kids, your friends, your employer, to cover up your drinking or drug use
- Have you had problems connected with drinking or drug use during the past year (DUI’s, lost work or school days, missed appointments, failed exams, financial problems, auto or other accidents with or without injury)?
- Has your substance use caused trouble at home or work?
- Have you gone to work or driven a car while intoxicated, high, or in a drug-induced haze?
- Have you been drunk or high more than four times in the past year? Do you sometimes stay drunk for days at a time?
- Do you need to resort to chemical assistance in order to do something (start the day, work, have sex, socialize, for example) or to change how you feel (sad, scared, anxious, or angry), to banish shyness or bolster confidence?
- Do you notice you need more alcohol or more of your drug of choice in order to get a reaction? Can you handle more than before? Or do you suddenly find you can’t drink or drug as much?
- Do you panic when you have to be somewhere where no booze or drugs will be available? Do you keep going when everyone else has had enough?
- Do you create situations where you can drink or use drugs?
- Do you tell yourself you can stop drinking or using drugs anytime you want to, but find you keep getting drunk or high when you don’t mean to?
- Do you wake up the morning after with no memory of the night before?

- Do you do things while under the influence that you wouldn't do otherwise? Or you find yourself regretting them later?
- Have you ever thought that your life might be better if you didn't drink or take drugs, or that life as it is just isn't worth living?

### **Who Can Benefit from an Outpatient Treatment Program?**

You are a good candidate for outpatient treatment if most of the following are true:

- You've been having problems with alcohol and/or drugs for only a short time and have decided to take action.
- Your physician has determined that the risk of serious problems with withdrawal is not great, or the plan is for you to go through detox as an inpatient and then move into an outpatient program.
- You have completed an inpatient program but feel too shaky about your recovery to go into a traditional, less intensive continuing-care (or aftercare) program.
- Your physician has determined that you have no serious medical problems that could put your health at risk if you attempt recovery as an outpatient.
- You are not seriously depressed, manic, or psychotic, and haven't been thinking about- or attempted- suicide.
- You have a relatively stable and supportive home environment, and are confident that your treatment won't be sabotaged by family or friends. Your family is receptive to attending Al-Anon/Nar Conon and open AA/NA meetings.
- You don't feel residential treatment is necessary, but believe you need a program more structured than AA alone.

### **Who can Benefit from an Inpatient Treatment Program?**

Not everybody needs inpatient treatment. You should seriously consider it, however, if:

- You've had severe withdrawal symptoms when going without your drug of choice before, or fear you may have a hard time withdrawing.
- You've relapsed after failing to stick to a less intense plan.
- You've failed to stay sober after previous out- or in patient treatment
- You have medical problems (such as liver disease, lung disease, AIDS, heart disease) that could possibly complicate recovery.
- You have serious psychological, behavioral, or emotional problems—such as depression, manic depression, schizophrenia, or thoughts of suicide—that could possibly complicate recovery.
- You have a particularly stressful or drug-oriented environment to return to. The distance may not only help you focus on recovery, but also help you consider an alternative place to live.
- You are, or may be, addicted to both alcohol and other drugs, or to more than one drug.

- You feel total immersion in a controlled environment would give you the best start on the road to recovery.
- You have a desire to understand completely the nature of your disease.

**Reference:** The Recovery Book, Al J. Mooney, MD, Arlene Eisenberg, Howard Eisenberg, 1992.