Co-Occurring Disorders

What can you do to help?

Whether you are an addiction professional, mental health professional, addict, or family member or friend of someone with an addiction or someone with a mental health disorder, think carefully and ask yourself the following questions:

Substance Use

When did the person start using possibly addictive substances (drugs, alcohol)?

What was going on in their life at the time?

How does substance use affect their mental health symptoms?

Have they tried to limit or stop their use?

Has anyone in the person's family struggled with substance abuse?

Mental Health

Have they been diagnosed with a mental health condition in the past?

How do they feel when they are sober?

Do they have any unresolved emotional trauma?

If so, when did the person start feeling any emotional trauma?

Has anyone in the person's family struggled with a mental disorder?

Integrated Treatment

Don't try to fight addiction and mental health separately. It would be best if you had a dual-diagnosis treatment center that's right for you and start on the path to recovery. According to SAMHSA, integrated treatment can improve outcomes and quality of life for people with co-occurring disorders, including:

● Reduced or discontinued substance use
● Improvement in psychiatric symptoms and functioning
● Increased chance of successful treatment and recovery for both disorders
● Improved quality of life
● Decreased hospitalization
● Reduced medication interactions
● Increased housing stability
● Fewer arrests

Helping a Loved One with a COD Diagnosis

Helping someone with a COD diagnosis can be very difficult. Your loved one may deny they have a problem and resist treatment. When they do begin treatment, their road to recovery may be extended.

Accept what you can and cannot do. You cannot force your loved one to remain sober, take medication, and go to therapy. However, you can make positive choices for yourself, encourage your loved one to seek help, and offer them unconditional support.

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