



# ADDICTION & TREATMENT GUIDE

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## ABOUT

Drug Rehab Comparison is an addiction and resources site for anybody in or seeking recovery. This guide has been created to assist addicts and family members in dealing with addiction and treatment options.

**Drug Rehab Comparison**  
Addiction and Treatment  
guide Toll Free (888) 891-  
1635



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## Introduction

*Drug Rehab Comparison is an online resource center for anybody involved in recovery from addictions. Our head office is in Scottsdale, Arizona and we are committed to providing quality information and an up to date directory of treatment centers. We are not a treatment center but we do work with quality partners who can connect you to the care you need.*

*Our primary goal is to be uniquely helpful to anybody in treatment or seeking treatment. By providing an abundance of quality information, research, and a list of treatment facilities we hope that you may find on our site the information you need to help you make the right decisions about your situation or that of a loved one.*

## What is Addiction?

The word “addiction” is derived from a Latin term **addictus** meaning “enslaved by” or “bound to.” Only an addict who has been through this will fully understand how poignant and real it is to be enslaved by a substance.

Addiction as a disease has the power to exert major influence over an individual’s mind and body. When considering if in fact you are an addict there are three main points to consider.



1. Do you experience cravings for the particular substance or behavior?
2. Do you experience a loss of control over its use?
3. Do you continue to engage in or use despite harmful/negative consequences?

Addiction is mostly associated with the abuse of drugs, such as alcohol or heroin. Addiction however is not alone the consumption of a substance but also relates to activities such as gambling or sex. Extensive research has determined that addictions to both substances and associated behaviors have the power to alter the way in which our brains function and develop, making it a disease of the brain. It is characterized as the persistent, compulsive dependence on a particular substance, with an inability to consistently abstain due to dependence resulting in withdrawals, cravings and mental and emotional distress. Due to the chronic and complex nature of the disease it can be difficult to overcome, often with people

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experiencing various cycles of relapse and remission. Unlike some chronic diseases, fortunately there is a solution, through treatment and a genuine desire for recovery.

## Signs of Addiction

If you are worried about your own drug use or a friend or family member's, there are signs to help you determine if in fact there is a problem. The use of a substance or partaking in compulsive harmful behavior does not automatically make someone an addict. If we solely determine addiction with the quantity of use or frequency of use we can confuse poor choices with addiction. Addiction is more about the consequences due to an individual's actions, particularly if you or someone you love continues to use or do a particular thing despite the damage it may be doing. The inability to abstain despite obvious negative impacts shows a trend greater than just habit, which usually means that a person is addicted. If you are sacrificing important aspects of your life such as family, relationships, work or health due to your use of a substance then it is likely that you have an addiction.

### Do any of the following apply to you?

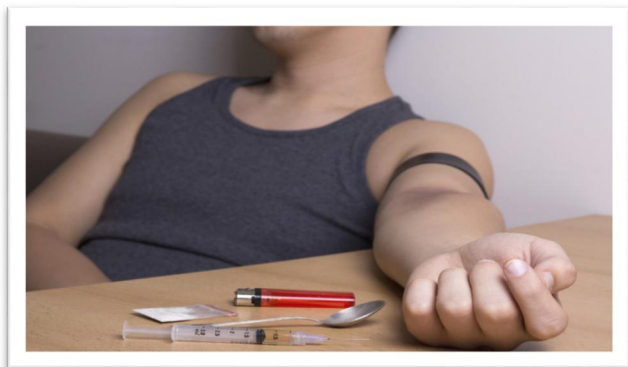
- Getting & using the drug has become increasingly important to you
- You find that you rely on the drug in order to function normally
- You are missing or late for work or school because of the drug
- Your performance at work or school has deteriorated because of the drug
- You are neglecting responsibilities or letting people down because of the drug
- You have minimized/disguised the drug use and have resorted to lying to the people in your life
- Your use and behavior has reached a dangerous level where your safety is at risk (e.g. Driving while under the influence, risky sexual behavior)
- Your drug use/ behavior has caused you legal problems
- Your relationships with family & friends have deteriorated or ended
- You need more of the drug/ behavior in order to feel satisfied
- You have started to experience withdrawals when you go long periods without the substance/ (e.g. nausea, restlessness, shaking, anxiety)
- You no longer feel in control about how much or how often you use the substance
- You continue to use even though you know that the substance/ behavior is hurting you (physically/ mentally)
- Your life revolves around the drug/ behavior- it is your main thought & focus

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## The Consequences of Addiction

The consequences of addiction are extremely broad but rarely positive depending on the particular substance or behavior involved. Some substances/ behaviors have a great effect on our mental wellbeing while others pose serious threats to our physical health. Addiction is a destructive disease and the



consequences are far reaching, it negatively impacts various aspects of an individual's life and often the lives of those who are close to them. If you are looking for reasons to seek treatment or embark on a journey of recovery the many potential consequences of an addiction make this option more and more appealing. It may be the resolution and prevention of these consequences that finally gives you the strength you need to take action and regain control of your life.

*Consequences can be categorized into three areas, medical/ physical, social, mental & emotional*

### Medical/ Physical

- Cardiovascular disease
- Stroke
- Cancer
- Lung disease
- Injury due to accidents
- Major dental problems
- HIV, Hepatitis and Other Infectious Diseases
- Respiratory Problems
- Gastrointestinal Problems
- Musculoskeletal Problems
- Kidney Damage
- Liver Damage
- Hormonal Problems
- Prenatal and postnatal Issues
- Death

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## Social Effects

- Relationship Problems- losing friends or family/ conflict/ relationship strains & breakdown
- Work Problems- decline in performance/ capability/ job loss
- Problems at school- decline in academic performance/ suspension/ expulsion
- Legal issues- possession of a legal substance/ stealing to support your addiction/ drunk driving convictions
- Financial problems- limited finances/ unpaid bills/ debt

## Mental & Emotional Effects

- Depression (two to four times higher among addicts than the general population)
- Anxiety
- Psychosis
- Memory loss
- Aggression
- Mood swings
- Paranoia
- Loneliness
- Self-pity
- Fear
- Guilt
- Irrational thinking
- Suicide (rate of 45% among untreated addicts)

## Recognizing & Accepting Addiction

If you think that some of the signs outlined in this guide relate to you or a loved one and you have been experiencing the consequences listed then it is time to consider the possibility of addiction. You will need to take a careful look at your own or a loved one's behavior and analyze the impact of this behavior on your wellbeing and day to day life. Determining if in fact there is an issue with addiction isn't a clear cut process as each person and their circumstances vary; this can make it difficult to definitively conclude you are an addict.

A basic rule to apply in helping you make a determination is if the particular use of a substance has been given priority over other important aspects of your life, such as family, friends, work or general commitments & obligations. If you find yourself sacrificing people and things that matter in your life so that you can use it is necessary to acknowledge the severity of this, only then can you move forward.

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Often the quantity or frequency of substance use is given far too much emphasis. It is not about quantity, a more effective gauge for addiction is the consequences you're experiencing as a result of your use. Is your life negative, chaotic, stressful or painful because of your use or, has normal day to day functioning stopped?

A huge element of addiction is denial, many addicts do not just deceive others but they actually deceive themselves. Often it takes a significant low point for someone to truly accept they have an addiction. This low point is often called rock bottom and it differs for each individual, you do not have to be homeless on the street due to your addictions to be at bottom.

The need and desire to use when addicted is far too strong to voluntarily stop without experiencing significant negative consequences. Even with such consequences addicts use excuses and reasons to continue using, they find ways to rationalize and minimize events that are clearly a result of their addiction. It is often easy to hide and deny the issue rather than admit and accept it for what it is. This is often due to the stigma and shame that is associated with addiction.

Actually recognizing you have a problem is the first step in doing something about it however there is a difference in knowing and accepting. Often people cannot accept the reality of their addiction even when they can see quite clearly there is an issue. It's hard to admit that you are that person; addicts often feel it is a reflection of their character or that addiction makes them a lesser person. This is absolutely not the case, anyone can become addicted and being an addict does not make you a bad person. Despite the reluctance to accept your addiction, you will feel immense relief when you finally do. When you finally release yourself from the deceit, shame and denial you are in a position to take the necessary steps to treating the problem. Acceptance and the admission that you are powerless to the illness allows you to change and take the necessary steps to recover.



## Planning an Intervention

Intervention is often a term or method used by family and friends to address a loved one's addiction. It is defined as a coming between two things, to interfere. In the case of addiction intervention, it is the act of coming between an addict and their substance or behavior. As difficult as it is, addiction intervention is often the key event leading up to an addict receiving treatment. If you are considering an addiction intervention for someone you love, ensure you understand the process and steps necessary. The goal of intervention is for the addict to accept help, with this in mind you need to be strategic in your approach.



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Planning and preparation are crucial in conducting a successful intervention. Everyone taking part should be clear on what will happen and what their role is, a meeting in advance of the intervention (rehearsal) is useful in achieving this. Interventions will not always work; it doesn't mean you have done something wrong. The addict may just not be ready to accept your help; it could take several attempts before they agree to treatment. It is advisable to work with a professional interventionist to help you navigate this critical emotional process. This will help you create a scenario which will lead to a more successful outcome.

## Pre-intervention

- Determine a clear goal and ensure that everyone is in agreement
- Ensure that the goal is reflective of the addicts needs and their specific addiction
- Spend time on preparation & planning
- Do some research- have accurate information
- Decide an appropriate and practical time
- Decide an appropriate and practical venue (private, familiar, non-threatening, neutral)
- Be clear what it is you want the addict to do- rehab/ counseling/ support group
- Post- intervention plan- specific steps to be taken immediately after intervention

## Who should be involved?

- Professional Interventionist (if possible)
- Decide on a lead speaker
- No more than ten people
- People who the person cares about/ have close relationships with
- People who genuinely care about the well-being and safety of the addict
- People who have a positive influence on the addict's life (avoid toxic/ negative people)

## What do we say?

- Not everyone needs to say something
- Tone- calm, positive, clear & firm (remember the aim)
- Express your love & support for the individual
- Explain the pain the addiction is causing the people around them
- Highlight the damage they are doing to their own life
- Avoid judgmental, accusing or confrontational language
- Be clear that you want them to seek treatment

***It is advisable to write down what you want to say clearly in advance. Emotions may lead you off track and you could become upset & angry.***

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## Getting Help

The task of becoming sober and overcoming an addiction is a daunting one, often times it can seem impossible. It is important to know that there is help available not alone in the shape of rehabilitation and treatment but among family and friends. Do not isolate yourself or try to handle it all alone, use the healthy people you have around you for guidance, love and support. For some addicts it can be especially difficult if you have had failed attempts in the past, don't let this deter you, if you truly want sobriety and recovery, it is possible and worth the journey. When suffering from addiction it is likely that the use has



not alone hurt the addict but those who love them. Family and friends who care will be more than willing to do everything they can to help you change your life. Let them know you need their help and you want them by your side, do not be too proud or stubborn to ask for the help you need. No matter what form of treatment you decide on you will always need support from the people around you, as well as professionals. You may get an unenthusiastic response from loved ones who have suffered as a result of previous relapses. This is understandable and not a

reflection of how they feel about you, they may have simply been hurt too many times before. Allow them the time to see that you are serious and that you truly want this.

## Types of Support

- Family members
- Close friends
- Physicians/ Healthcare providers
- Counsellors/ therapists
- Mentors/ recovering addicts
- Support groups (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous)

## Choosing Treatment

While addiction is used as a general term for a variety of addictions, it is extremely complex and there is no one size fits all option. Types of addictions vary as do people so it is crucial that you seek advice from professionals and do your research. This is a major step in your life and one that could actually save it so don't just settle for any type of treatment, be sure that the facility or program is the right one for you and fully meets your needs and gives you the best possible chance of recovery.



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Unfortunately studies undertaken by SAMHSA’s show that just one tenth of the American population who have a problem with drugs or alcohol actually seek help from a treatment facility; this includes hospitals and mental health centers.

Accessing the help available can be daunting and extremely scary but for your recovery will definitely be worth it. Seek help & choose the right recovery option for you. It is absolutely critical that you get medical advice regarding the need for detox before entering rehab. The Rehab center should be able to help you with this and many offer detox as part of the program. It can be life threatening to come off a drug particularly alcohol without appropriate medical supervision if you are at an advanced stage in the disease and a daily drinker.

## Types of Treatment

- Inpatient treatment (residential centers- usually 30-90 day programs)
- Outpatient treatment (availing of addiction services while living at home)
- Dual Diagnosis treatment (combined treatment for mental health & addiction)
- Support Groups (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous)
- Addiction Counseling
- Therapy (e.g. cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational enhancement therapy)
- Medically supervised detox treatment



## Things to consider

- Is detox necessary? (only a medical professional can determine this)
- Does the facility use a tested scientific approach?
- Does the facility use the 12 steps or a combination of therapy, medication and steps?
- Does the facility offer alternative therapies to aid spiritual growth and development?
- Rate of success at the facility
- Does it cater programs to patient’s individual needs?
- What is the duration of the treatment (is it long enough)?
- Is there outpatient support after discharge (extended care)?

## Funding Treatment



Addiction treatments can be expensive, but they are also lifesaving. Most of us are not in a position to afford luxury upscale treatment facilities that can cost thousands of dollars per week. So you need to be realistic while also ensuring that you make the best decision to aid your recovery. It is often the

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case that when addicts are at this point financial resources and health insurance are limited if not non-existent.

There are various options open to you in terms of funding your treatment. Obviously if you have savings, your own resources or assets this would be the best way to finance your recovery. This way you are being independent and not relying on anyone else to invest in this very personal journey. While family members may be more than willing to assist with payments, this can add to the pressure of becoming clean and sober and cause resentment down the line if everything does not go to plan. Another option would be to take out a loan in order to pay for your treatment. You may need a family member to act as a guarantor but this will yield less pressure than them handing over money directly.

Alternatively you can seek out facilities that accept private insurance or Medicare; more and more facilities are accepting this method of payment. All of their facilities, treatments and programs may not be covered therefore you need to clarify all of this up front. Another positive is that a lot of facilities also allow finance and payment plans. They will work with you in developing an affordable package within your budget while also meeting your needs. Drug treatment financing programs are often the best route for flexible and affordable payment of rehabilitation. Some treatment centers offer scholarships for adolescents this is worth exploring when you are watching your child self-destruct with no financial resources available.

There are some state and government funded facilities and programs. These facilities can often have long waiting lists and there are specific eligibility criteria that patients must meet. While a private facility may be more preferable and can offer more extensive services in a more luxurious surrounding, public services do offer the essential and basic elements of detox, counseling and long term outpatient care. While public services can be difficult to obtain recent studies demonstrate that results from public and private facilities are comparable.

***“You can bring to the table the most important factor for a successful recovery and that is your willingness to change your life and do the work. No amount of trips to rehab will get you permanently sober if you are not ready and willing to change”***

Credit cards are also an option, although they typically have a very high interest rate but will sometimes offer 0% financing for several months when signing up for a new credit card; which would help keep costs down. Also if you are lucky enough to have savings this can also be used towards the costs of your care. Some people may also be in a position to sell off valuable assets in order to fund their treatment; selling items such as cars, televisions, or jewelry.

Funding treatment is a daunting task, however, continuing a life of substance abuse will have even more negative effects on you, your health, and your family and it will cost you a lot more over the long-term,

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with the ultimate price being your life. If you make recovery your top priority, you will not use funding as an excuse. Consider it an investment in your future, your health, and your happiness.

If a professional has determined that you do not need detox and you truly have no financial resources try a 12 step program. These are free and if followed with the help of a good sponsor you not only become sober but you learn a wonderful way to live simply and in peace. Twelve steps are not for everybody but for the individuals who truly practice the steps they often have a spiritual, passionate and peaceful existence.

## Twelve Step Programs

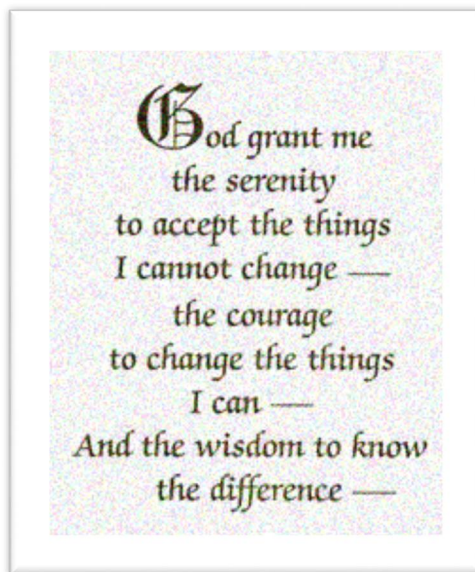


The twelve steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, originating from the Alcoholics Anonymous Fellowship. They were first published by founders Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith in 1953 in order to share their eighteen years of experience within the fellowship and how it assisted the recovery of members. The ethos and principles within AA have also been adapted for the treatment and recovery of other common addictions. The Twelve Steps are part of a process of evolution, experience and learning. The 12 steps program of recovery requires the individual to accept their powerlessness to the disease, (step 1) promotes self-awareness, self-evaluation and serve as a new way of living a spiritual, sober life.

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## *The Serenity Prayer*



## The Twelve Steps

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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## Living Sober

While admitting you have an addiction and deciding to seek treatment are extremely difficult, actually staying sober can be the biggest challenge of all. Your life will utterly change and while this is a positive, it can often be a confusing and difficult adjustment. Staying sober for the sake of staying sober isn't enough, you need to continually remind yourself why you wanted to change your life and give yourself a new purpose, something positive to focus on. Moving forward and living a positive life, one which allows you to live the life you deserve will have a chemical influence on your brain. While addicted and using, dopamine is released when you get a hit/high but when you live sober with purpose and positivity dopamine is triggered for the right reasons. Recovery is a work in progress, you are a work in progress, so keep investing in yourself and do not become complacent.



*“These suggestions have helped promote our own recovery and maintain long term sobriety”*

## Find a Mentor

While you may have supportive people in your life they often do not truly understand how it feels to be an addict or how it feels to be in recovery. A mentor is someone who is also recovering from addiction, who has had years of experience living sober and who can support you in your journey. Your mentor will be an educator, who provides encouragement, accountability and support. Their role will be immense during your recovery, so choose wisely. In twelve step programs mentors are known as sponsors. Many newcomers in AA will be offered sponsorship by established members. Spend some time with them and ensure you can work together as working the steps may become tough therefore it is important to have an open trusting relationship with them. We also suggest that females sponsor females and males sponsor males, this allows you to share the same life experience with a clearer understanding.

## Avoiding Temptation

As a recovering addict you will have times in your life when you are faced with situation which can trigger your addiction, truly recovering means not avoiding this temptation. You must learn to enjoy life without the substance of your addiction and this means facing it and no longer allowing it to control you. Initially it is wise to stay away from temptation but once you grow strong enough, you must exercise your willpower, control and affirm that you have the ability not to use even when surrounded by temptation. It is important to find a balance in exercising willpower and not jeopardizing your recovery. When finding your feet things like taking your own car to an event, always having access to your support system, ensuring your cell phone is fully charged will help limit your vulnerability. Do not ever be embarrassed to excuse yourself from a situation where you feel triggered, if you feel your sobriety is in jeopardy make the right decision.

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## Prayer and Meditation

As part of the 12 Steps Program the eleventh step promotes the use of prayer and meditation to assist in staying centered, grounded and sober. The 12 steppers who use this method are usually peaceful and happy people who have lost the desire to use. You do not need to be part of 12 steps to benefit from a spiritual path. You may benefit from finding and participating in a daily spiritual practice and speaking with a priest, minister, rabbi or other spiritual director to get you started. For example, in the Christian tradition many people in recovery follow the contemplative and centering prayer life. All the main religions from Western to Eastern have prayer traditions you can avail of. Meditation also has many benefits and will assist you in living a sober life. It teaches you how to relax deeply and qualitatively without drugs or alcohol. It can also act as an antidepressant, improves willpower and helps you to build self-awareness and control. There are several easy to use online Apps which you can use for meditation practices; one of our favorites is the *Insight Timer App*. It is wise to find a practice which you can attend and forge friendships and support on your spiritual path.

## Exercise

Exercise doesn't just have physical benefits, it also helps the mind. It can help to channel negative thoughts and work through the stress many can often feel in recovery. It also increases the release of chemicals in the brain such as dopamine and serotonin, boosting and improving your mood naturally without the use of drugs. Many recovering addicts have a tendency to switch addictions, be careful that you do not use exercise or indeed any other seemingly harmless substance (eg. sugar, caffeine) to replace your drug of choice. Even exercise can become addictive or used as a replacement for your original addiction, remember that moderation is key. Activities or hobbies should complement your life not take over your life.

## Socialize

Social interaction can seem daunting and uncomfortable in recovery. You may feel the urge to isolate yourself and hide while trying to overcome your demons; this is not helpful to your recovery. You need to socialize in order to retain relationships and to learn how to interact socially as the new you. Without social interaction you can isolate yourself, become lonely and fall into the hands of your addiction. Many towns have AA fellowships which organize social events especially around the holidays which can be very tough in early recovery. You will find social events, dances, holiday barbeques and many other events to choose from. Attending an event may seem daunting, maybe offer to help organize events, giving you a sense of purpose, helping to keep you busy and easing you into the social scene at your own pace.

## Stay connected to your support system

Now that you are sober continue to keep those who love and care for you close. You will have difficult days and there will be times you struggle; you need the people you love around you to remind you why you became sober and to encourage you through the bad days. Ensure the relationships in your life are

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positive and remove toxic people; particularly those who are directly associated with your addictive behavior and who may jeopardize your sobriety.

## Forgive yourself & others

To move forward and embrace a life of sobriety it is important that you do not harbor resentment and pain from the past. Holding on to these feelings will prevent you from growing into your true self and will leave you stressed, guilty and angry. If such feelings are left to fester then you are leaving yourself vulnerable to using again in a vain attempt to block them out. Acknowledge the past, accept it for what it is and look to the future.

## Conclusion:

*“It is from the greatest darkness that we find the brightest light”*

Recovery from addiction turns our darkest trials into light. It is not unusual for individuals with long term sobriety to claim they are grateful for the addiction. When you are newly sober this sounds insane. However, the joy we receive from our new life, rebuilding our relationships and the peace we find which we may never have experienced before is truly walking in a new light. Addiction can be a devastating and fatal disease which is why we come to cherish our sobriety in deep gratitude because we know how precious our sobriety is. We hope that this guide has helped you make a decision to get the help you need that is our greatest wish for you.

## More Information:

*Take the National Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependence- Drug & Alcohol Addiction Self-Test*

<https://ncadd.org/get-help/take-the-test/am-i-drug-addicted>

<https://ncadd.org/get-help/take-the-test/am-i-alcoholic-self-test>

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