



# Addiction/Recovery Toolkit

We are Here to Help.

*Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources to help you stay balanced during an emotionally challenging time.*



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## The Statistics and Impact of Alcohol and Substance Use

### How Common are Substance Use Problems?

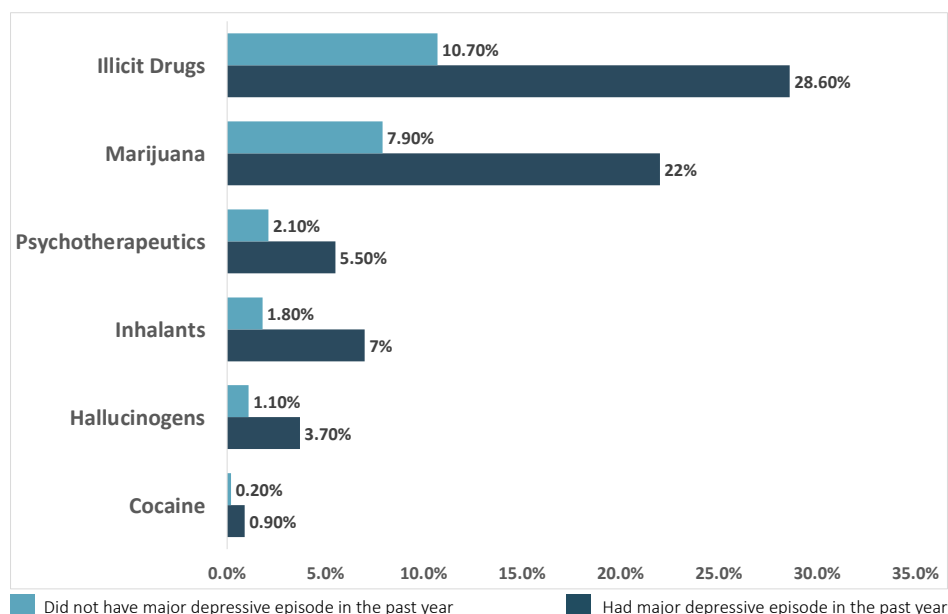
Problems with alcohol and addictions are common, and there is a strong correlation to mental health conditions. More than **7%** of people in the U.S. aged 18 or older have or have had a substance use disorder (SUD). That's **19.3 million** Americans.<sup>1</sup> Among those with a substance use disorder:<sup>1</sup>

- 73.1% struggled with alcohol use
- 38.5% struggled with illicit drugs
- 11.5% struggled with both illicit drugs and alcohol

Over **49%** of people with a substance use disorder also had a mental illness.<sup>1</sup>

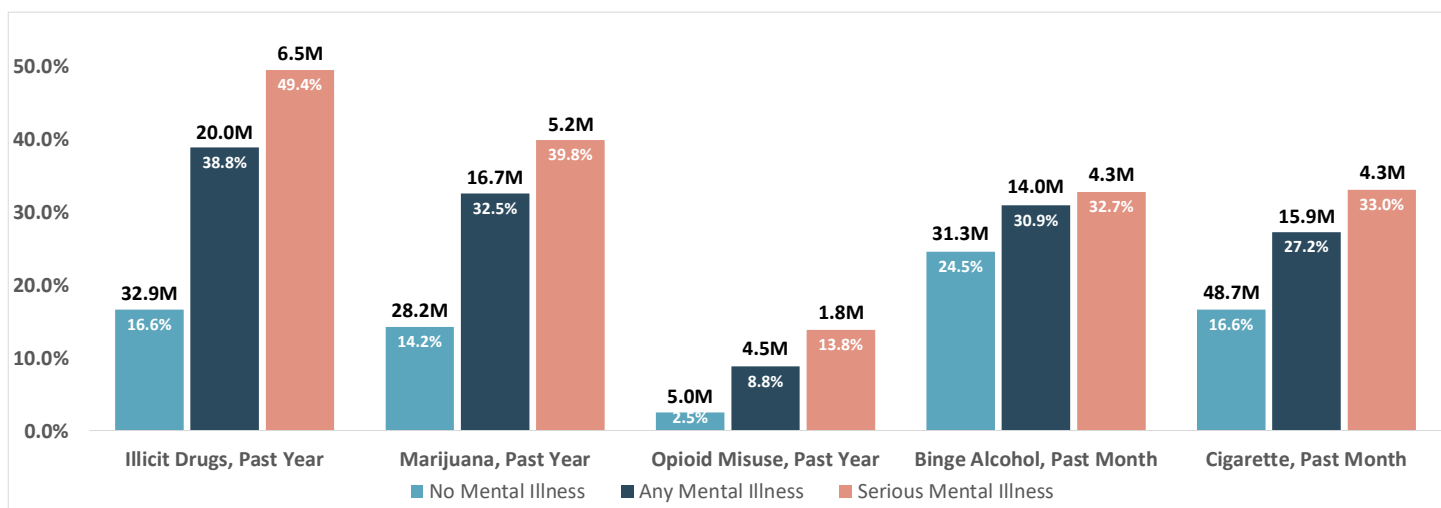
Substance use is significantly higher for individuals who struggle with mental illness:

### Substance use among youths in the United States as of 2020, by major depressive episode\*<sup>2</sup>





## Co-Occurring Substance Use Disorder and Any Mental Illness in Adults



**Rates of substance use and poor mental health are getting worse. In part because of the negative mental health effects of COVID-19, the United States has seen:**

- **1000%** increase in calls to the Disaster Distress Helpline relative to same period in 2019<sup>3</sup>
- Increases in calls to domestic violence hotlines<sup>4</sup>
- Increases in suicides in some areas<sup>5</sup>
- Increases in opioid overdose deaths in some areas—as much as **25-50% increases** over the comparison 2019 time-period<sup>6</sup>
- Emergency housing for those leaving psychiatric hospitalization converted to COVID-quarantine space in some areas increasing homelessness for those with a serious mental illness<sup>7</sup>



## The Impact of Substance Use is Profound

Substance abuse has an overwhelming effect on millions of households in the United States. With numbers of substance use disorders, deaths, and excessive alcohol use as high as they are, substance use impacts almost everyone in some way. And sometimes profoundly.

- An estimated **1 in 5** deaths among people ages **20 to 49** is attributable to excessive alcohol use.<sup>8</sup>
- Opioid deaths have increased by **more than eight times** since 1999.<sup>9</sup>

### Impact of Substance Use Disorders on Society

- Exacerbates and worsens mental health issues
- Exacerbates and worsens mental health issues of friends and family
- Leads to premature deaths
- Increases violence and destructive activity
- Impacts family structures
- Decreases economic productivity
- Increases financial distress on individuals and families
- Increases health-related costs

### Health-Related Impact of Alcohol and Drug Use

*Excessive use of alcohol and illicit drugs can cause:*

- Serious liver damage
- Memory loss
- Brain damage
- Depression and/or anxiety
- Heart disease
- Kidney failure
- Infertility
- Chronic pain
- Increased risk of hepatitis C and HIV
- Stroke

Substance use disorders are common and cause profound harm. Removing the stigma associated with seeking help is an important step to increasing the number of people who seek treatment help. If you or a loved one are struggling with substance use, reach out to your healthcare provider, contact an addiction treatment specialist, or call your EAP for more information on resources and support.





## Understanding Alcohol and Alcohol Awareness

Alcohol is the most used addictive substance in the United States.<sup>10</sup> In 2019, 14.5 million people—one in every 12 adults—suffer from alcohol use disorder.<sup>11</sup> Unhealthy consumption includes any use that risks your or others' health or safety or causes other alcohol-related problems. Consuming alcohol is a personal choice. People drink to celebrate, socialize and commiserate, and to alter their mood to feel more relaxed, confident, or courageous. These effects are temporary, but repeatedly abusing alcohol has long term negative effects.

### How Common are Substance Use Problems?

According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, alcohol interferes with the brain's communication pathways and can affect the way the brain works.<sup>12</sup> These disruptions can change mood and behavior and make it harder to think clearly and move with coordination. Drinking a lot over a long time or too much on a single occasion can damage the heart, causing cardiomyopathy—the stretching and drooping of heart muscle—irregular heartbeat, stroke, and high blood pressure.

Heavy drinking takes a toll on the liver and can lead to steatosis, or fatty liver, alcoholic hepatitis, fibrosis, or cirrhosis. Alcohol causes the pancreas to produce toxic substances that can eventually lead to pancreatitis, a dangerous inflammation of the blood vessels in the pancreas that prevents proper digestion. Increased risk of breast, liver, colorectal, and esophageal cancer have all been linked to alcohol consumption.<sup>13</sup>

Excess alcohol consumption can weaken your immune system, making you more susceptible to disease. Drinking excessively on a single occasion slows your body's ability to ward off infections – even up to 24 hours after getting drunk. Alcohol consumption can temporarily alleviate feelings of anxiety and depression, but the effects don't last long and can make mental health problems worse.



## Understanding Alcohol and Alcohol Awareness

### Triggers to Drinking<sup>14</sup>

Reasons for alcohol consumption are different for everyone, but they can be organized into a few different factors.



**Human triggers.** This is when a specific person or group of people encourages you to drink. This can be a friend, family member, coworker or a team like softball or bowling.



**Social triggers.** Many people drink due to social issues such as isolation from family or friends. Trouble with romantic relationships, children, or extended family can make drinking an attractive way to deal with stress. Social triggers may also include feeling implicit pressure to drink because others are drinking—even if no one encourages you to drink.



**Environmental triggers.** Sometimes a specific town, restaurant, or setting can trigger the urge to drink. These triggers may include visiting your favorite hometown bar or your old college or a specific date like St. Patrick's Day or Super Bowl Sunday.



**Emotional triggers.** This includes positive and negative emotions. When you feel sad, angry, or lonely you may turn to alcohol, but happiness and positive emotions can be triggers as well. When we celebrate, we can lose track of our consumption and lose our power to say 'no.'





## Understanding Alcohol and Alcohol Awareness

### How to Support Loved One

If you have a friend or loved one who is struggling with alcohol use, there are a few things you can do that might help:

- Speak up and offer your support.
- Be sure to show your willingness to go with them to get help. The earlier addiction is treated the better.
- Express love and concern, as well as specific examples of behavior that you worry about—but don't wait for your loved one to hit rock bottom.
- Support recovery as an ongoing process. Even once your loved one is receiving treatment, it's important to continue to show your support. It can help your loved one make long-term recovery possible.

### Where to Get Help

Talk to your doctor or a mental health professional or contact organizations that provide help to people who may be consuming too much alcohol.

#### Organizations include:

- Al-Anon Family Groups
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- SMART (Self-Management and Recovery Training) Recovery
- Secular Organizations for Sobriety (SOS)

Remember, you and your loved ones are not alone. If you or a family member are struggling with substance abuse or mental health issues, your EAP or mental health provider might be able to help. Uprise Health offers comprehensive support at many levels for any member who is struggling with alcohol abuse and addiction or has a loved one who is.





## Understanding Drug Addiction and Substance Use Disorders

Drug addiction, now commonly referred to as substance use disorder, is a disease that impacts a person's brain and behavior. When a person is addicted to drugs, they are frequently unable to control the use of a legal or illegal drug and continue using the drug despite the harm it can cause. Although drug use does not start off as a substance use disorder, drug use can become more frequent and lead to a substance use disorder.

Substance use disorder is an umbrella term that can refer to illicit drugs, legal drugs, alcohol, and nicotine. But frequently, alcohol is separated and referred to as an alcohol use disorder, with substance use referring more specifically to the use of illicit and legal drugs. In this resource, we are focusing on illegal and prescription drugs. We have separate information above for alcohol use and alcohol awareness.

The risk of addiction and how fast a person can go from occasionally using drugs to developing a substance use disorder varies by drug and by person. Some drugs have a much higher risk, and some people have a predisposition to addiction.

### Health Risks Associated with Substance Use Disorders

All drug use comes with some amount of risk. Legal drugs can cause side effects even when used properly and as prescribed. Different drugs pose different dangers. For instance, excessive and reoccurring use of most drugs cause significantly more risk than lower or one-time use of drugs.

#### Some of the more common and higher risk drug categories include:

**Opioids:** This drug is currently the highest concern and fastest-rising drug by use. Opioid is an umbrella term that includes illicit opioids (e.g., heroin), prescription opioids (oxycodone, hydrocodone, fentanyl, morphine, and codeine), and over-the-counter (OTC) opioids. OTC opioids are the least concerning but can still cause harm and misuse is risky; 72% of overdose deaths include opioid use.<sup>15</sup> Although the legal use of opioids with a prescription and medical monitoring can be incredibly beneficial, the risk of addiction is high and excessive opioid use is extremely dangerous. Health risks include overdose, death, respiratory distress, adrenal insufficiency, sleep disorders, osteoporosis, tremors, and gastrointestinal distress.

**Methamphetamine:** Meth is a synthetic stimulant that can be smoked, snorted, injected, or taken orally. It causes a temporary sense of heightened euphoria, alertness, and energy. Meth changes how the brain works and speeds up body symptoms to dangerous and often lethal levels. Meth health risks include overdose, high blood pressure, respiratory distress, anxiety, paranoia, aggression, mood disorders, permanent brain damage, liver and kidney damage, skin sores, and severe dental problems. Meth makes up 4% of overdose deaths, and chronic meth use can lead to damaging, long-term health concerns.<sup>15</sup>

**Cocaine (including both powdered and crack):** Cocaine is highly addictive and associated with almost 21% of overdose deaths.<sup>15</sup> Health risks include overdose, mood disorders, cardiovascular disease, respiratory illness, seizures, stroke, bowel decay, brain damage, increased risk of HIV, and nose collapse.



## Understanding Drug Addiction and Substance Use Disorders

### Symptoms of Substance Use Disorder

Some symptoms of substance use disorder overlaps with healthy, doctor-prescribed use of legal drugs. If you or a loved one has one or more of the following symptoms, it does not mean there is a substance use disorder. But if you have any concerns, you can speak with a healthcare professional to help you assess. Common substance use disorder symptoms include, but are not limited to:

- Having an intense use for the drug that overwhelms other thoughts and behaviors.
- Needing more of the drug to get the same effect.
- Taking a larger amount of the drug over a period of time.
- Feeling that you must use the drug every day to function.
- Spending money on drugs at the expense of other necessities.
- Not meeting family, work, social, or personal obligations.
- Continuing to use the drug even though you and loved ones are being negatively impacted by the drug use.
- Taking part in high-risk activities while under the influence of the drug, including driving, stealing, or risky sexual behavior.
- Trying and failing to stop using the drug.
- Experiencing withdrawal symptoms when you stop using the drug.

### Symptoms of Withdrawal

Although some drugs lead to more specific withdrawal symptoms, there are many symptoms of withdrawal that are common across multiple drug types. These include:

- |                                 |  |                                 |
|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| • Agitation & anxiety           | • Chest tightness & breathing difficulty | • Sweating                      |
| • Muscle aches                  | • Tremors                                | • Abdominal cramping & diarrhea |
| • Insomnia & sleep disturbances | • Poor concentration                     | • Dilated pupils                |
| • Headaches & dizziness         |  | • Nausea and vomiting           |





## Understanding Drug Addiction and Substance Use Disorders

### How to Support Loved One

If a friend or loved one is struggling with substance use, there are a few things you can do that might help.

- Speak up and offer your support.
- Be sure to show your willingness to go with them to get help. The earlier addiction is treated the better.
- Express love and concern, as well as specific examples of behavior that you worry about—but don't wait for your loved one to hit rock bottom.
- Support recovery as an ongoing process. Even once your loved one is receiving treatment, it's important to continue to show your support. It can help your loved one make long-term recovery possible.

### Where to Get Help

Talk to your doctor or a mental health professional about treatment options, or contact research organizations that help people who are concerned about their drug use for more information about addiction and substance use disorders.

#### Organizations include:

- National Drug Helpline: 1-844-289-0879
- SAMHSA: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- National Institute on Drug Abuse
- Partnership to End Addiction
- Parents of Addicted Loved Ones
- Narcotics Anonymous
- Division on Addictions – Find a Treatment Center

Remember, you and your loved ones are not alone. If you or a family member are struggling with substance abuse or mental health issues, your EAP or mental health provider might be able to help. Uprise Health offers comprehensive support at many levels for any member who is struggling with drug use and addiction or has a loved one who is.



## All About Recovery

Alcohol and drug use disorders are complicated diseases, but there is hope. Treatment and recovery offer helpful tools to abstain from continued drug use and encourage healthier practices for overall health and wellbeing improvement.

Although relapse is common—**85%** of individuals relapse within a year of treatment—the relapse rate goes down over time.<sup>16</sup> About **30%** of people with alcohol use disorder relapse after their first year of sobriety; **21.4%** relapse in their second year; but only **9.6%** relapse in years three to five, and the rate drops further in the following years.<sup>17</sup>

### What is Addiction Treatment?

Substance use disorders have several types of treatment. For many people, many treatments may last for the rest of their life. Treatment options depend on several factors, including type of drug, the length and severity of use, and how it has impacted the individual. A healthcare professional can help a person assess the substance use disorder and identify the treatment options available. Common treatment options include:

- Detoxification
- Inpatient and outpatient programs
- Counseling
- Self-help groups
- Medication

### Types of Treatment Options

#### Detoxification

This is usually the first step of treatment. Detoxification means clearing the body of the substance in a controlled manner that limits withdrawal side effects. For any severe or prolonged substance use circumstances, detoxification should be handled with the help of a healthcare professional or treatment center. Withdrawal can be deadly at worst and uncomfortable at best.





## All About Recovery

### Inpatient and Outpatient Programs

After detox, many people go through a rehabilitation program, which can be either inpatient or outpatient (or, in many instances, a person goes to an inpatient program first and then transfers to an outpatient program). Rehabilitation helps transition back into daily life, receiving around-the-clock care, therapeutic options, education, and more. These programs are crucial because substance use disorder recovery is not merely about getting the drug out of a person's system; it's about learning crucial tools to stop drug-seeking behavior, improve mental health, reinforce positive lifestyle changes, reduce negative lifestyle behaviors, and more.

At an inpatient program, a person lives at the treatment facility. This provides the maximum level of support and monitoring. At an outpatient program, a person has some amount of treatment and care at a clinic or outpatient facility but returns home (or to other living arrangements) during non-treatment hours. An addiction counselor or healthcare provider can help you examine which program option is right for you after detox.

### Counseling

Whether during an inpatient/outpatient program, after a program, or in place of a program if that isn't the right choice, counseling is crucial. Substance use disorders are more than a physical dependence— psychological and social factors are powerful triggers that can lead to relapse. During therapy, people can examine and find support handling:

- Stress
- Needs from a social network
- Trauma
- Environmental triggers
- Mental health conditions
- And much, much more

### Self-Help Groups

Self-help groups might also be an excellent choice for support and recovery. A self-help group is a group of individuals who come together to address a common issue. These groups help participants find understanding from others in the same situation, meet new sober people, learn skills to conquer cravings, hold each other accountable, and more. Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is one of the most famous self-help groups for addictions, but there are many options depending on the person's situation.



## All About Recovery

### Medication

Depending on the type of substance use disorder, medications may help. Certain medications can mimic the effect of specific drugs, which relieves withdrawal symptoms and cravings, and other medications can treat the withdrawal symptoms directly. Speak with a healthcare professional about medication-assisted options. Medications are frequently prescribed as part of an inpatient or outpatient rehab program.

This time each year can be stressful for anyone, but the holidays may present a different challenge for people in recovery and trying to maintain their sobriety. Substance use can have both genetic and environmental components. Seeing family members during the holidays can be difficult for some people in recovery. Family members may also have their own substance use issues; other times, past unhealthy emotional patterns make the holidays difficult.

### Recovery

Detoxification, treatment, and rehabilitation programs are only the first stages of lifelong recovery. It's important to have a post-treatment plan, have established plans and strategies for continued care, and coordinate coping mechanisms that help with sober living. Important keys to recovery include:

- Building healthy relationships
- Getting professional support when needed
- Developing structures and healthy schedules
- Dealing with past mistakes
- Celebrating important milestones and achievements
- Practicing a healthy lifestyle
- Recognizing and managing triggers
- Avoiding old routines and substance use related habits
- Recognizing relapse warning signs
- Being prepared if relapse occurs





## Tips to Enjoy Celebrations and Maintain Addiction Recovery

Holidays and major celebratory events can be stressful for anyone, but they may present a different challenge for people in recovery and trying to maintain sobriety. Substance use can have both genetic and environmental components. Seeing family members during the holidays can be difficult for some people in recovery. Some family members may also have their own substance abuse issues; other times, past unhealthy emotional patterns make the holidays difficult. Here are some specific tips for enjoying major events and maintaining recovery.<sup>18-21</sup>

**Create a plan** to take care of yourself and connect with your recovery community to navigate what can be a difficult time of year.

**Make a “Top 5” list:** Choose 5 people you can call if you’re craving alcohol or drugs. Let them know in advance you will be calling them for support!

**Change your routes:** Avoid triggers by listing and staying away from places where you used to drink or get high.

**Give back:** Volunteer your time or services during the holidays.

**Don’t stay hungry:** Avoid HALT during the holidays getting too Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired. Choose frequent small healthy snacks like yogurt, hummus and raw veggies, high fiber cereal, milk, avocado, and nut butters to name a few. Don’t miss meals.

**Tune in, not out or play it forward:** Create a special recovery playlist. Include songs from any season or genre that inspire you to maintain your recovery. Keep this playlist on your phone as a handy tool to turn to resist triggers.

**Walk about it:** The holiday season brings shorter days and less sunlight, but a brisk walk in nature under a starry winter sky can restore your spirit.

**Strength training:** Regular exercise is a powerful tool for building your recovery muscles and improving your fitness. Like drugs and alcohol, exercise releases dopamine and endorphins, the hormones that make you feel happy.



## Tips to Enjoy Celebrations and Maintain Addiction Recovery

**Avoid known risks:** If you know your aunt is going to grill you about rehab, avoid her. If your uncle will try to mix you a stiff drink, stay away from him. If a holiday party is centered around drinking or other drug use, make a brief appearance, or don't attend at all. It is unrealistic to put yourself in the position of having to "power through" an obstacle course of relapse triggers.

**Graceful exit:** If you are at an event and feel tempted to get high, give yourself permission to leave early.

**Soothe your spirit:** Engage in activities daily that uplift your spirit, i.e., meditation, yoga, prayer, gratitude journal, spending time with a pet or visiting an animal sanctuary.

**Become a groupie:** Attend recovery support groups near your home or online during the holiday season.

**Life support:** Get connected with some top-rated online sobriety support groups.

- Alcohol Recovery: Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
- CBT-Based: Self-Management and Recovery Training (SMART)
- Secular Group: LifeRing
- Mindfulness: Club Soda
- For Women: Women for Sobriety (WFS)





## 10 Emergency Emotional First Aid Skills to Help Yourself

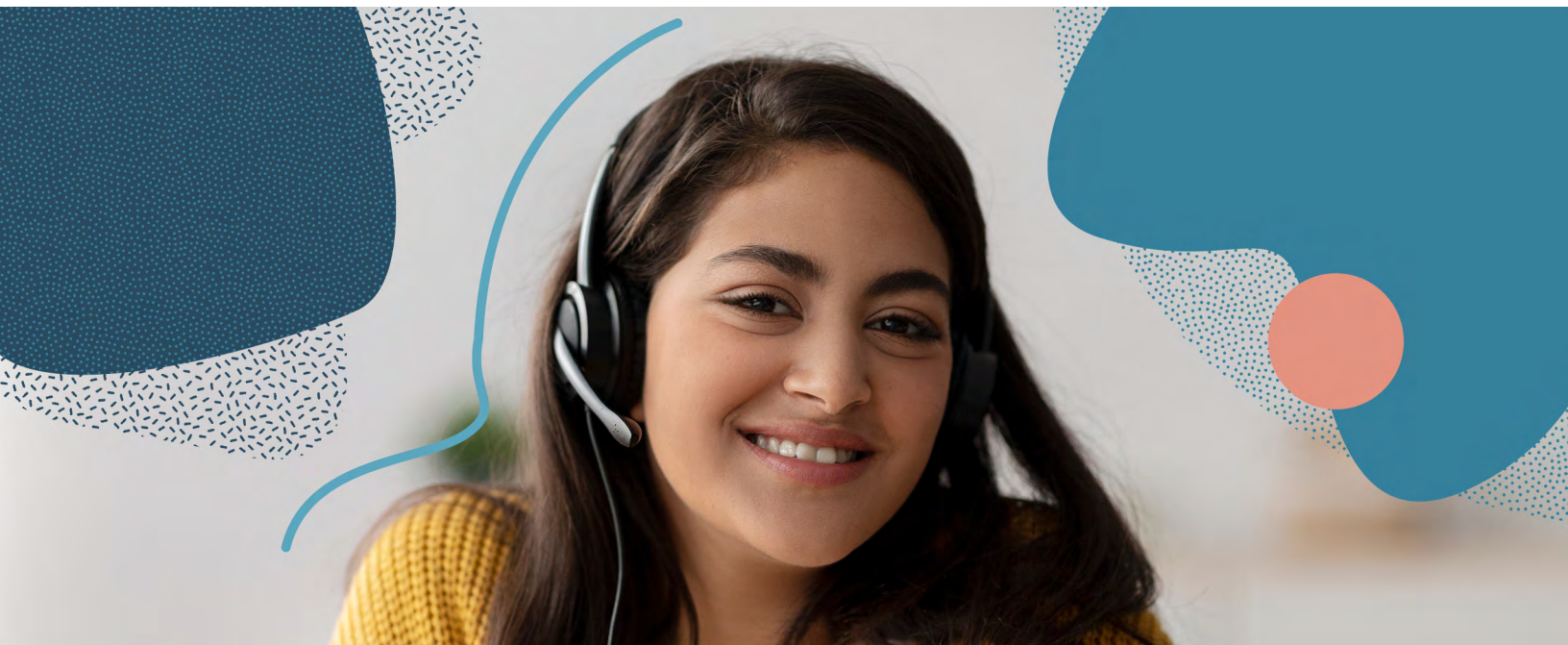
- 1 Take five slow, deep breaths.
- 2 Remind yourself that this, too, shall pass.
- 3 Accept all of your feelings.
- 4 Have faith in you. You can handle more than you might believe at this moment. Use meditation or prayer for added support.
- 5 Don't take anything personally.
- 6 Try to stick with your routine, even if you feel dazed or numb. It will help anchor you.
- 7 Eat, sleep, or get some fresh air.
- 8 Picture your 6-year-old self, and lovingly embrace that child. Gently reassure the frightened self inside you.
- 9 Understand you are here, in this life, for everything, good and bad. Visualize yourself as a river of experiences, and let life flow without judgment.
- 10 Connect with someone. Talk to a friend, family member, or EAP counselor. Helping a co-worker might also help you feel better.

Source: [goodtherapy.org](https://goodtherapy.org)



## References

- \* Major depressive episode in the past year.
- \*\* Illicit Drugs include marijuana/hashish, cocaine (including crack), heroin, hallucinogens, inhalants, or prescription type psychotherapeutics used non-medically.
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- 20. <https://www.samhsa.gov/>
- 21. <https://www.verywellmind.com/>



## We Are Here to Help

EAP benefits are available to all employees and their families at NO COST to you. The EAP offers confidential advice, support, and practical solutions to help you through your grief and loss. You can access these confidential services by calling the toll-free number below and speaking with our care team or accessing online.

### Short-Term Counseling

For a deeper level of support, members can request short-term counseling by calling Uprise Health. Our nationwide provider network of more than 60,000 counselors can be filtered by criteria including geography, clinical specialty, cultural background, and other preferences, to ensure a perfect fit for you. After speaking with our care team, you will be provided with a list of providers. You can schedule an appointment yourself or ask the care team for assistance scheduling.

### 24-hour Crisis Support

During business hours, members who are in crisis are connected with an Uprise Health clinician who will stabilize your situation and refer you to appropriate support. After-hours calls are answered by behavioral health professionals located within the U.S. If you are in life threatening situation, please call 9-1-1 as you would do for any other medical/life emergency.

### Online Peer Support Groups

As part of your EAP program, you can request up to 10 online peer support groups where you will have a safe and confidential place to speak with others who have similar issues. Please call Uprise Health and speak with our care team to learn more about the Grief and Loss support group.



#### Contact Uprise Health

Call: 800.395.1616

Visit: [members.uprisehealth.com](https://members.uprisehealth.com)