

## Substance Abuse Affects Us All

Addiction is a primary and chronic disease. And for every substance abuser, four to seven friends, co-workers, or family members will also pay the price with depression, anxiety, and other stress disorders.

Nearly 20 million Americans use illicit drugs. With 6.4 million prescription drug abusers and 16 million heavy drinkers, substance abuse in the U.S. is epidemic.

While some patients in chronic pain show symptoms that look like addiction, their drug-seeking behaviors resolve with effective pain treatment. True addicts are physically dependent and compulsive users who continue no matter what.

People who have family members with certain mental health disorders or drug/alcohol abuse are at higher risk to develop these problems themselves. Environmental factors—such as domestic violence, abuse or untreated mental health issues—can also trigger substance abuse.

However, addiction is not a crime that needs to be punished. Addicts are people with illnesses who need to get well.

In fact, treatment for substance abuse is very effective for people who get it. Don't suffer in silence. Get help today.

Most health insurance policies cover the service of MFTs so long as the services are “medically necessary.” This typically includes coverage for face-to-face sessions for a diagnosable mental health problem. Such coverage may be limited. Please contact your health insurance company for detailed information about the coverage available to you and your family.



California Association of  
Marriage and Family Therapists

7901 Raytheon Road, San Diego, CA 92111-1606  
Phone: (858) 292-2638 Fax: (858) 292-2666  
[www.camft.org](http://www.camft.org)



# HOPE FOR SILENT SUFFERERS:

Recovery from Alcohol and Drug Abuse



Brought to you by the  
California Association of  
Marriage and Family Therapists



# OFFERING EXTRA SUPPORT

## About Marriage and Family Therapists

Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs) are relationship experts. They work with individuals, couples, families, children, adolescents, and the elderly, providing support and perspective as patients struggle with life's challenges.

Licensed by the State of California, MFTs are psychotherapists who are uniquely trained and credentialed to assess, diagnose, and treat a wide range of issues so individuals achieve more adequate, satisfying and productive relationships and social adjustment.

The California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT) is an independent statewide non-profit organization made up of over 29,000 mental health professionals. CAMFT is dedicated to advancing marriage and family therapy as a healing art, science, and mental health profession. In fact, CAMFT sponsors TherapistFinder.com™ so Californians can gain access to qualified local experts who can help.



Seeking a Marriage and Family Therapist or other mental health professional to assist with life's difficulties is a sign of courage and a step in the right direction. Always ask about a therapist's special areas of expertise (e.g. grief counseling, children's issues, relationship counseling) before you engage in therapy to ensure it's the right fit for you.

TherapistFinder™ is a California-wide interactive, online directory that is user-friendly and searchable by name, location, and area of expertise. It's your introduction to one or more qualified psychotherapists who hold a California license.



### ARE YOU DEPENDENT?

Sometimes when people start to use alcohol or other drugs, they begin to have problems, which are actually symptoms of chemical dependency or substance abuse.

If some questions below make you uncomfortable or create a tendency to rationalize or minimize your answers, you may have an urge to deny the problems. Think about these answers. Then talk to a therapist.

- Do you ever drink or use more than you originally intended?
- Have you ever failed to finish home or work commitments because you were using alcohol/drugs or were in withdrawal?
- Have you ever been too sick to go to work or school as a result of using drugs/alcohol (e.g. bad hangovers, withdrawal)?
- When you are using alcohol/drugs, do you ever put yourself in situations that raise your risk of getting hurt or hurting others (e.g. driving while using, unprotected sex, committing crimes)?
- Have you ever used alcohol/drugs to cope with uncomfortable feelings or manage stress?
- If you usually use the same amount, do you experience a reduction in the effect? Are you tempted to increase the amount you use?
- Have you had a persistent desire or made unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control your alcohol/drug use?

### WHAT YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW

- Admit there is a problem.** People who abuse drugs and alcohol typically deny they have a problem, even as the disease takes a heavy toll on their bodies, judgment, relationships, and spiritual well-being.
- Recognize and accept your feelings.** Many people use drugs and alcohol to avoid uncomfortable feelings of fear, shame, anger, grief, loneliness, and to mask their pain. By being honest about your feelings and bringing them out into the open, you can heal and regain self-respect.
- Commit to recovery...not just abstinence.** Recovering alcoholics and addicts are grateful for sobriety and are learning healthy ways to think, feel, and act. Moving through abstinence to recovery requires patience, time, and action.
- Intervene when someone who needs help refuses it.** A family intervention is the kindest and most loving thing that family and friends can do to end "business as usual" and get help quickly. A professionally trained leader can keep an intervention safe and orderly.
- Find the right therapist.** Look for a therapist with specialized training in substance abuse. Use short telephone interviews to shop for a good fit with potential therapists. Ask about availability, fees, if they accept your health insurance, and how they approach problems like yours.