

What are co-occurring conditions?

You may know someone who suffers from depression or has an emotional or mental illness, and have started abusing alcohol or drugs attempting to feel better.

That's a co-occurring condition.

The mental/emotional health issue and the substance abuse problems are separate health concerns, but they are closely intertwined. In order to fully recover, the person needs treatment and recovery support for both conditions.

Co-occurring conditions are more common than you might imagine:

- Nearly **50% of people with severe mental illness** also have a substance abuse problem.
- Almost **30% of people diagnosed as mentally ill** abuse either alcohol or drugs
- **37% of alcohol users, and 53% of drug users** also have a serious mental illness

Source: Journal of the American Medical Association

To learn more contact the
Vermont Department of Health
Division of Mental Health

1-802-652-2000

or toll free at:

1-800-464-4343

<http://healthvermont.gov/mh/visi>



P.O. Box 70
Burlington, VT 05402-0070
healthvermont.gov

What do these people have in common?



Judy Garland



Winston Churchill



Drew Barrymore

They all have substance abuse and mental health conditions.

Co-Occurring Conditions





Why this matters

Mental health and substance abuse issues often go hand in hand.

Drugs and alcohol are often used, and sometimes abused, by people trying to feel better – drinking or using drugs to forget or numb themselves to a physical or mental concern.

The frequent use of substances may lead to dependence, and the need for treatment to break the addiction. In addition, a person with a substance abuse problem may develop or have symptoms of a mental illness.

For people with a mental health condition, these co-occurrences create additional challenges for successful treatment and recovery.

It is important for these conditions to be managed and treated equally, in an integrated manner.

What can help

Treating both conditions:

Same Time. Same Place.

Integrated treatment is the most effective approach for successfully treating people with co-occurring conditions, offering both mental health and substance abuse services at the same time and in one setting.

Support for Recovery

People with co-occurring conditions can and do recover. One of the keys to success is contact with others in recovery, including those in self-help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Double Trouble, and Dual Recovery Anonymous.

Contact information can be found in the telephone directory or through some of the organizations listed in this brochure.

Tips for Yourself, Family and Friends

- Find out more about co-occurring conditions and treatment options
- Recognize that recovery is a process that takes time.
- Consider joining a support group.
- Listen. Have patience. Avoid criticism.
- Set limits and stick to them
- Focus on accomplishments, rather than on setbacks.

For more information

Friends of Recovery—Vermont
P.O. Box 1202
Montpelier, VT 05601
1-800-769-2798
www.friendsofrecoveryvt.org
recoveryvt@aol.com

National Alliance on Mental Illness
(NAMI)-Vermont
1-800-639-6480 (Toll-Free)
www.namivt.org

Vermont Association for Mental Health
(VAMH)
1-800-639-4052 (Toll-Free)
www.vamh.org

Vermont Psychiatric Survivors
One Scale Ave. Suite 52
Rutland, VT 05701
1-800-564-2106
www.sover.net/~vpsinc/
vpsinc@sover.net

Vermont Department of Health
Division of Mental Health
1-802-652-2000
<http://healthvermont.gov/mh/visi>
Division of Alcohol & Drug Abuse Programs
1-802-651-1550
<http://healthvermont.gov/adap/adap>

U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services Substance Abuse and Mental
Health Services Administration (SAMSHA)
1-800-662-HELP (Toll-Free)
1-800-487-4889 (TDD, Toll-Free)
www.samhsa.gov