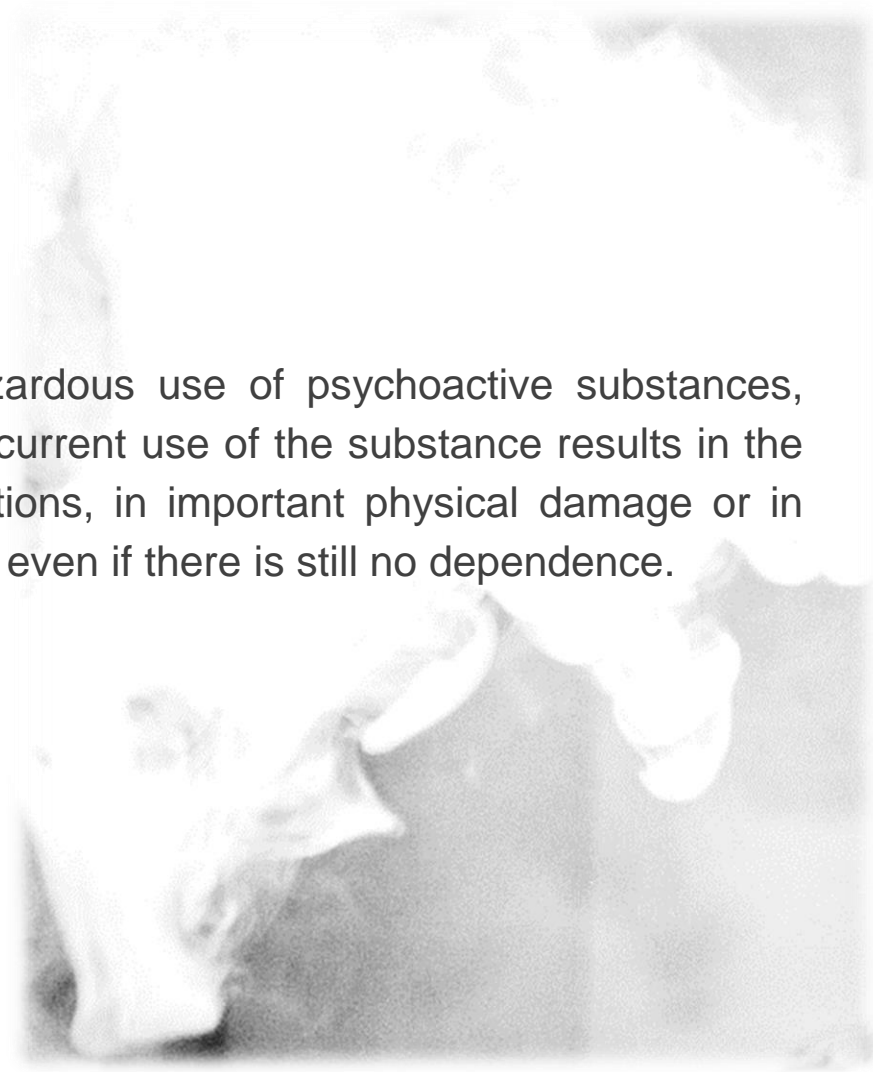


# Module 2: Substance Abuse



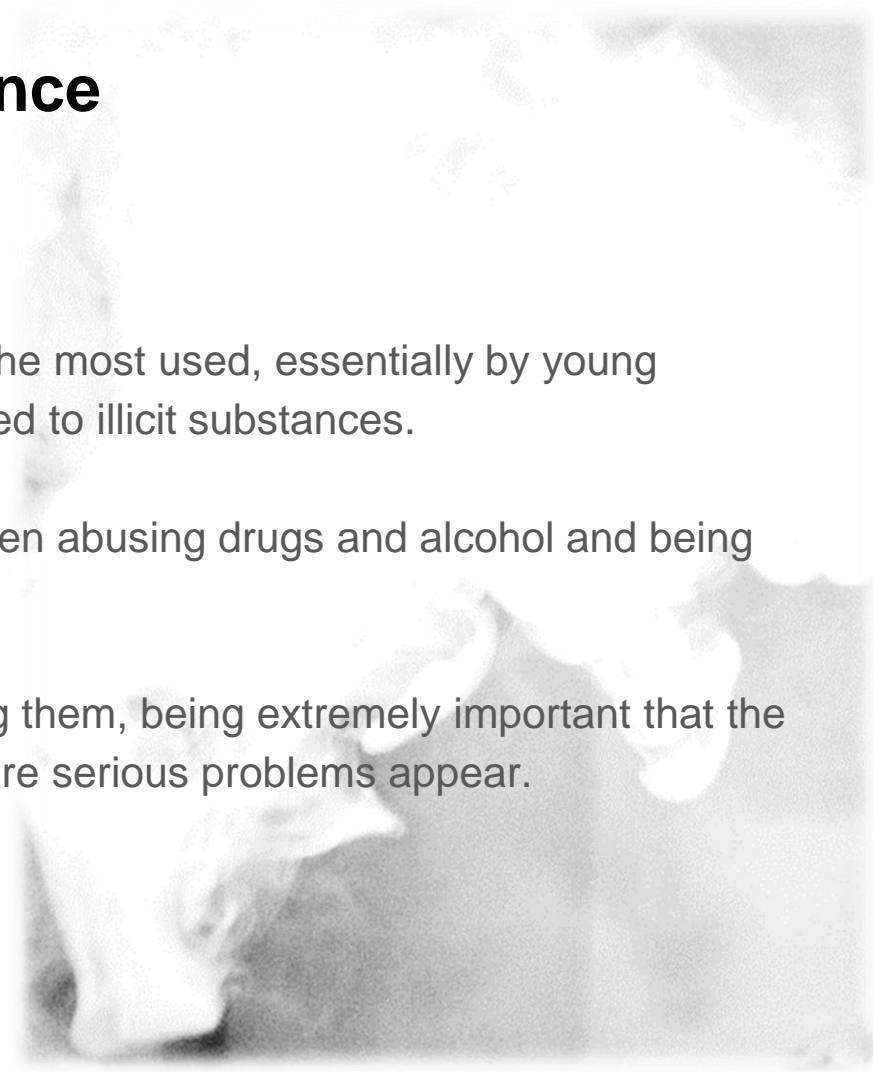
# Substance abuse

Substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs (WHO). The recurrent use of the substance results in the inability to fulfil professional or personal obligations, in important physical damage or in recurring social and legal problems. It may occur even if there is still no dependence.



# Substance abuse and dependence

- Among psychoactive substances, alcohol is the most used, essentially by young people, showing higher values when compared to illicit substances.
- It is noteworthy to make the distinction between abusing drugs and alcohol and being dependant on them.
- It is not so difficult to cross the line separating them, being extremely important that the progression into dependency is arrested before serious problems appear.



# Substance abuse and dependence (continuation)

A **definitive diagnosis of dependence** can only be made if three or more of the following criteria have been displayed at some point **in the last 12 months**:

An individual with at least three of these criteria is diagnosed as 'dependent' (*WHO, ICD-10*).

1. Strong desire or sense of compulsion to consume the substance;
2. Difficulties in controlling substance use, in terms of onset, termination and levels of consumption;
3. State of physiological withdrawal when substance use has ceased or been reduced, as evidenced by the withdrawal syndrome or when the same substance (or similar) is used to alleviate or prevent withdrawal symptoms;
4. Evidence of tolerance, such that increasing doses of psychoactive substance are required to achieve effects originally produced with lower doses;
5. Progressive abandonment of alternative pleasures and interests in favor of psychoactive substance use; or increased amount of time required to obtain or to consume the substance as well as recover from its effects;
6. Persistence in the substance use, despite clear evidence of harmful consequences such as: liver damage caused by excessive alcoholic drinking, depressed moods following periods of substance abuse, cognitive functioning impairment associated with the substance. In this case, an effort should be made to determine if the user was really aware of the nature and extent of the damage.

# Substance abuse and Dependence (continuation)

*One unit of alcohol corresponds to 10mL of alcohol (about 10g of alcohol)*

## BEVERAGES - ALCOHOL QUANTITIES

	Alcohol (g)	Units
1 can of beer (5%)- 350 mL	17 g	1.5
1 glass of beer (5%) – 200 mL	10 g	1
1 glass of wine (12%) – 90 mL	10 g	1
1 dose of distilled (whisky, vodka, etc, 40-50%) – 50 mL	20-25 g	2-2.5
1 bottle of wine (12%) – 750 mL	80 g	8
1 bottle of distilled (40-50%) – 750 mL	300-370g	30-37

Adapted from <http://www.psiquiatrialisboa.pt/alcool/alcool/>

## ***Different beverages – the same alcohol?***

- **Increased Risk for Alcoholic Liver Disease (ALD)**
  - > 80g ethanol/day (♂)
  - > 30g ethanol/day (♀)
- **According to the UK Health System, an excessive consumer is considered to consume:**
  - >3-4 units (♂)
  - >2-3 units (♀)

*Or a total of units per week higher than 21 for men or 14 for women*

# What differs?

## Cocaine/crack

drug extracted from coca leaves and consumed in powder form. It can be inhaled, rubbed on the gums or injected. It is associated to a rapid tolerance development, being required increasing doses to elicit the same feeling of euphoria. Its consumption can cause death associated with heart attack, brain hemorrhage or breathing problems.

## LSD/acids

drug produced as a crystal from lysergic acid. Sold in the form of colorless, odorless liquid, gelatin tablets, capsules or squares



Source:

<https://www.istockphoto.com/pt/fotos/%C3%A1cool?excludenudity=false&license=rf&assettype=image&phrase=%C3%A1cool&sort=best>

## Cannabis

most popular drug, often consumed by inhalation and ingestion. Causes sense of well-being, greater sensitivity to external stimuli and intensifies sensory awareness.

# What differs? (continuation)

## Heroin

made from poppy resin, such as opium and morphine. Most heroin is injected, thus increasing the likelihood of an infection, notably HIV (AIDS).

## Alcohol

consumption by drinking; Alcohol abuse strongly impacts the brain and also causes damage to the gastrointestinal tract, the liver, the heart, the pancreas... Moreover, there is a strong scientific consensus of an association between alcohol and several types of cancer.



Source:

<https://www.istockphoto.com/pt/fotos/%C3%A11cool?excludenudity=false&license=rf&assettype=image&phrase=%C3%A11cool&sort=best>

## MDMA/Ecstasy

group of synthesized drugs that cause a feeling of well-being and euphoria. They exist in the form of tablets and capsules. Its consumption causes hyperthermia, dehydration, hyponatremia, hypertension, nausea, and depression.

# Symptoms and behaviour

Frequent behaviour of drug abusers are:

- increased aggression and irritability;
- changes in attitude/personality;
- sadness, lethargy, depression;
- great changes in habits/priorities;
- engagement in criminal acts...

Depending on the substance abused, some symptoms and warning signs are more evident

Find out out more in the next slides...



# Symptoms and behaviour (continuation)

Depending on the substance abused, some symptoms and warning signs are important



Source: <https://pixabay.com/pt/images/search/alcohol/>

## Alcohol

- Alcohol changes the mood and behavior, making it harder to think clearly; alcohol also impairs coordination
- A common sign of alcohol abuse is the aggressive and violent behavior; pay attention to physical harm or illness
- Pay also attention to strained relations, problems at work and sleep disorder

# Symptoms and behaviour (continuation)

Depending on the substance abused, some symptoms and warning signs are important

## Cannabis

- The consumption causes anxiety, panic attacks, delusions and hallucinations
- Abusers show decreased reaction time (delayed reactions by responding to stimuli)
- Increased blood pressure and congestion of the conjunctival vessels are in the origin of the most known sign of cannabis consumption - red eyes (bloodshot).



Source: <https://pixabay.com/images/search/red%20eyes/>

# Symptoms and behaviour (continuation)

Depending on the substance abused, some symptoms and warning signs are important

## MDMA/Ecstasy

- Euphoria and empathy for others are important signs
- Heightened sensations: users has higher sense of sound, smell, touch,...
- Impairment of body temperature control and a foaming at the mouth can occur
- Calmness and relaxation usually occur
- Long-lasting energy and lowered inhibition
- Mouth movement like “chewing” is an important characteristic of consumers



Source: <https://pixabay.com/images/search/ecstasy/>

# Symptoms and behaviour (continuation)

Depending on the substance abused, some symptoms and warning signs are important

## Cocaine/crack

- The effects of cocaine are strong; contrarily to other drugs, it is rare a consumer can hiding it
- The consumer usually exhibit overconfidence, hyperactivity and aggressive behavior
- Dilated pupils, restlessness, burns of fingers are important signs
- Usually there is a mental obsession and the patient cannot maintain a regular conversation due to their obsession over their next “hit”



Source: <https://pixabay.com/images/search/drugs%20of%20abuse/>

# Symptoms and behaviour (continuation)

Depending on the substance abused, some symptoms and warning signs are important

## LSD/acids

- The consumption of acids causes a serious disconnection from reality and a sensory enhancement
- Thus, there is frequently hallucinations and delusions, accompanied by euphoria
- Also frequent are the increased sweating with dry mouth and tremors



Source: <https://pixabay.com/pt/photos/dj-euforia-festa-m%C3%BAsica-101797/>

# Symptoms and behaviour (continuation)

Depending on the substance abused, some symptoms and warning signs are important

## Heroin

- Drug that prompts the consumer to do everything to consume it again
- Needle marks are a telltale sign of heroin abuse. However, new users rarely uses it by injection
- Many users are really good hiding the consumption
- Frequently observed are blooshot eyes, sudden weight loss and changes in appearance
- Financial problems and borrowing money is a common sign of heroin addiction
- Heroin is coupled with severe withdrawal syndromes



# Symptoms and behaviour (continuation)

In all dependencies usually we can observe:

- damage to relationships
- poor work performance
- bad health performance



# Treatment

- Substance use disorder is a serious condition and not easy to treat.
- Treatment begins with recognizing the addiction problem.
- People who are addicted have far less denial if they are treated with empathy and respect, rather than told what to do or being confronted.



Source: <https://pixabay.com/images/search/substance%20abuse/>



# Treatment

- The treatment involves trained professionals (a medication or a detoxification treatment may be necessary). However, the family has a significant role in establishing and maintaining health.
- Your enrolment as caregiver for the individual has a great influence in the effectiveness of treatment.
- Many programs exist where support is given to the individuals and/or their families. **Find out self help groups!!**



# Treatment

- The recovery process doesn't finish after medical treatment. The transition back to life outside of rehab is full of risks with potential for relapse.
- Thus, aftercare programs and resources such as 12-step groups, sober living homes and family and friends as a fulltime support promote a life rich with rewarding relationships and meaning.



See below an activity (***Step by Step Calendar***) you can apply at home

# Concerns



Source: Adapted from <https://pixabay.com/images/search/drugs/>

# Concerns

Due to aggressive/violent and unpredictable behaviour of the individual, it is of utmost importance:

1. Try to find what is causing the abuse
2. Assure the security for both and take safety measures

# What can be done?

**1.** Find out what is causing the abuse?

**2.** Seek for professional help

**3.** Take safety measures



# Safety measures

Here are some tips:

*1.1 Prevent individual from driving (remove car keys, disable the car, move the car away,...);*

*1.2 Remove or lock away sharp objects and weapons to prevent injury;*

*1.3 Secure doors or add door alarms to prevent accidents;*

*1.4 Lock away cleaning supplies and other toxic liquids (they could be used as alternatives...);*

An orange starburst graphic with a black outline, containing the text 'Tips for the caregiver'.

**Tips for  
the  
caregiver**

# Do you want to learn more?

Our interactive Resource Pack will give you information about

- concerns that you as caregiver might have
- what can be done
- useful tips how to handle the burden of care
- how to avoid stress and burnout
- how to deal with your emotions
- acceptance of the disorder
- and more!

You will also find exercises and activities for YOU and for the care receiver!



**More information is available in the  
Resource Pack:**  
[https://developfc.csicy.com/?page\\_id=11708](https://developfc.csicy.com/?page_id=11708)