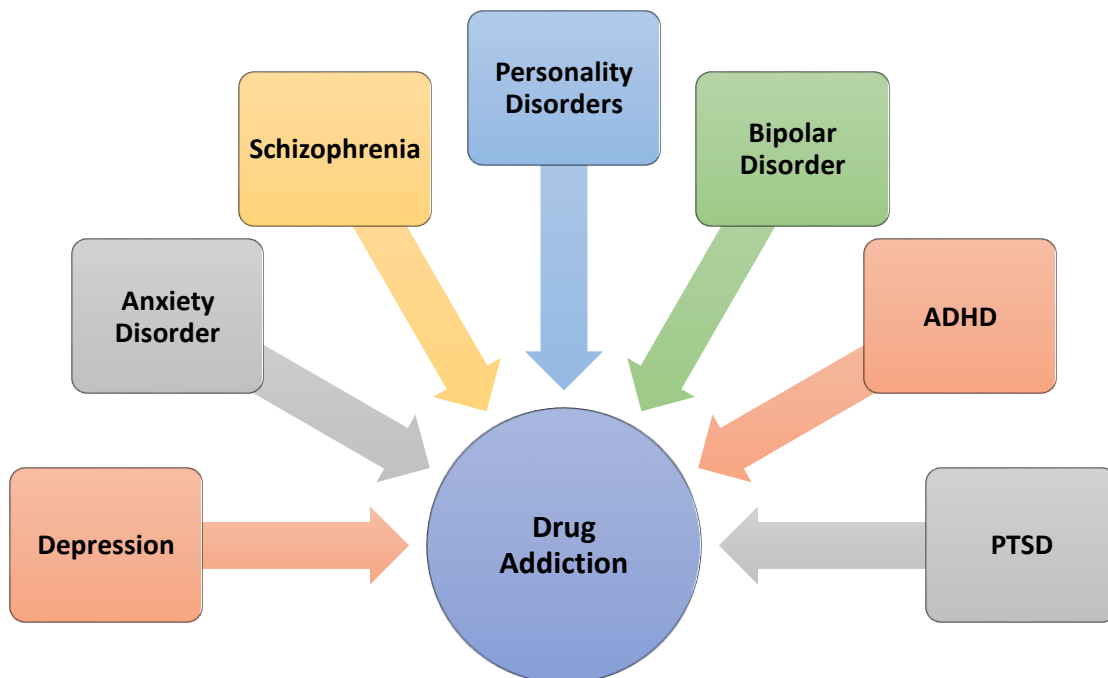




Mental Health, Self-Medication, and Drug Addiction

- ◆ The self-medication theory of addiction is based on the idea that people use substances to relieve dissatisfaction with life or to change a distressful emotional state. Self-medication commonly occurs with mood disorders and anxiety disorders.
 - ◆ Individuals with mood and anxiety disorders use substances to cope with the uncomfortable symptoms associated with the disorders because they lack access to better treatment options, treatment options have not been effective, or they stop taking prescription medicines that treat their mental health disorder.
-
- ◆ According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, there are approximately 7.7 million adults that have co-occurring mental health disorders and substance use disorder.
 - ◆ Individuals with a mental health illness are two times more likely to have a substance use disorder when compared to the general population.
 - ◆ At least 20% of people with mental health illness have a substance use disorder.
 - ◆ Approximately 40% of adults with substance use disorders have mental illness.
 - ◆ People with schizophrenia may have a co-occurring substance use disorder as high as 50%.

Mental Health Illnesses Linked to Drug Addiction:





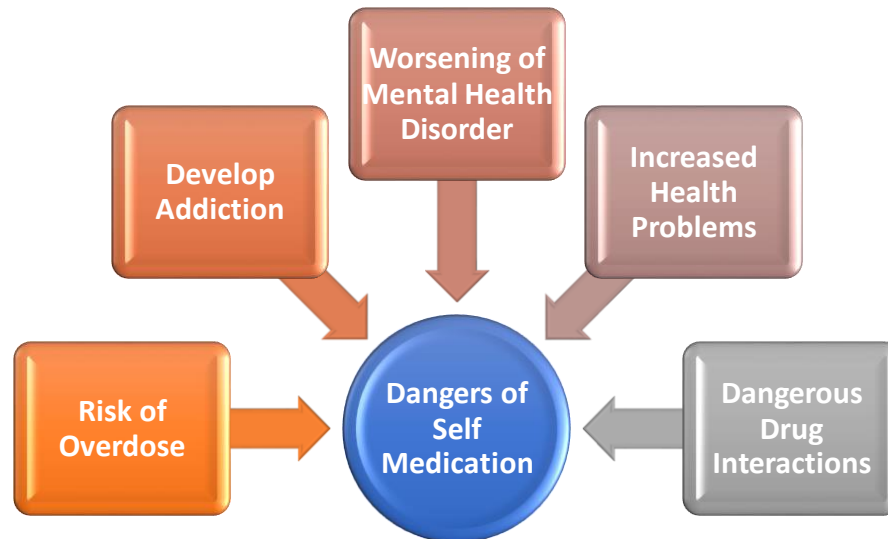
The Realities of Drug Addiction

Other Risk Factors for Self-Medicating With Illicit Drugs:

- **Childhood Trauma:** Neglect, abandonment, abuse
- **Abuse:** Physical, sexual, emotional, and verbal abuse
- **Pain:** Uncontrolled, chronic pain

- ◆ Self-medicating with substances may offer short-term relief from physical and emotional distress, but over time, the drugs may make the symptoms worse.
- ◆ The chronic use of drugs causes changes in brain structure and function, which increases the risk of an individual developing a mental health disorder.

The Dangers to Mental Health With Self-Medication of Illicit Drugs:



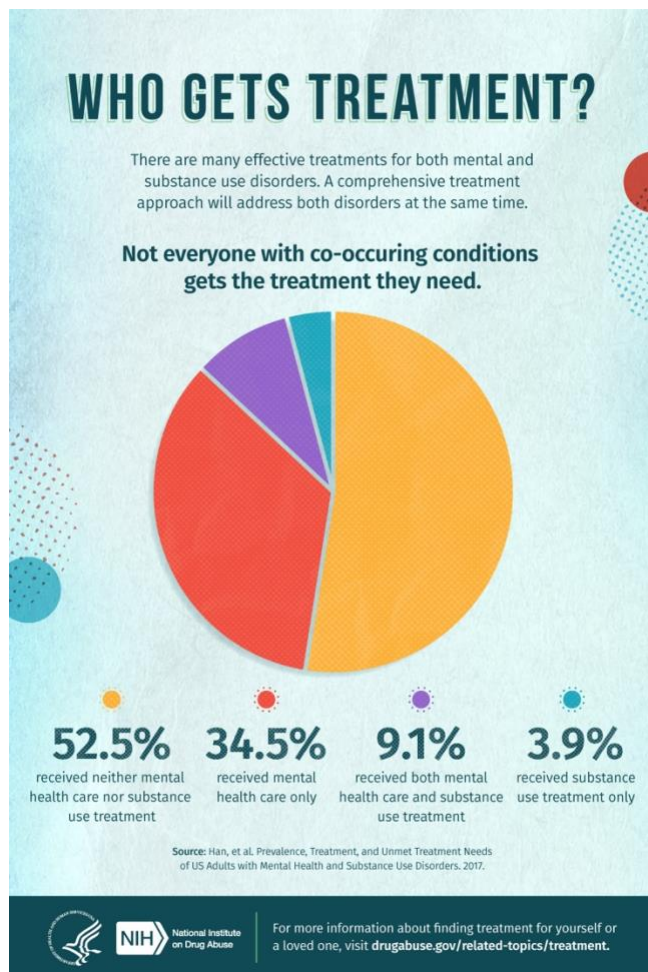
Examples of Self-Medicating:

- ◆ Taking opioids (Oxycodone, etc) that were not prescribed to you to manage pain and stress.
- ◆ Taking stimulant drugs (Cocaine, Meth, etc) to increase energy, alertness, and confidence.
- ◆ Taking depressant drugs (Benzos, Heroin, Fentanyl, alcohol, etc) to calm down and relax.
- ◆ Taking hallucinogenic/dissociative drugs (LSD, PCP, ecstasy, salvia, etc) to escape stress, relieve anxiety, for fun, and to alter perception.
- ◆ Using cannabis (marijuana, hash, etc) to feel relaxed, happy, social, excited, or calm.

Individuals with mental health disorders and addiction would benefit from a dual-diagnosis treatment program. These programs treat the addiction and mental health illness. Unfortunately, many individuals do not receive adequate treatment.



The Realities of Drug Addiction



Top Reasons for Lack of Treatment:

- ◆ Could not afford treatment
- ◆ Not ready to stop using drugs
- ◆ Might cause problems with employer
- ◆ Did not know where to go for treatment
- ◆ Might cause neighbors to have a negative opinion of them
- ◆ Believed treatment would not help
- ◆ No program had the type of treatment needed or wanted

Important Points:

- Screening and treatment of mental health disorders should be done early to provide appropriate mental health treatment and help prevent drug use and addiction.
- A rehab program should include a dual diagnosis program, which will treat the drug addiction and mental health disorder. Both conditions need to be treated to maximize recovery.
- An out-patient treatment program will be recommended to maintain sobriety and to ensure continued management of a mental health disorder.
- If you have no insurance, check for community mental health services that offer no and low cost services and drug treatment programs (some have scholarships) in your area.
- Call 911 for emergencies (i.e.: overdose), 988 (Suicide/crisis line), or go to the emergency room for an emergency and/or mental health crisis.
- Check if you qualify for Medicaid services.
- Go to no cost clinics for drug treatment (Methadone program).
- **Contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).** They provide confidential information on substance abuse and mental health and can provide guidance with finding services. **SAMHSA National Help Line: 1-800-662-4357**



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