

Emergency. Help Lines



Crisis Line Association BC
1-800-784-2433



Health Link BC
8-1-1



**Alcohol & Drug Information &
Referral Services**
1-800-663-1441

Addiction can
impact anyone
regardless of
age, gender, or
race

References

Abreu Minero, V., Best, D., Brown, L., Patton, D., & Vanderplasschen, W. (2022). Differences in addiction and recovery gains according to gender-gender barriers and specific differences in overall strengths growth. Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy, 17(1), 21. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13011-022-00444-8>

Alhammad, M., Aljedani, R., Alsaleh, M., Atyia, N., Alsmakh, M., Alfaraj, A., ... & Alzaidi, M. (2022). Family, individual, and other risk factors contributing to risk of substance abuse in young adults: A narrative review. Cureus, 14(12).

Brown, R. A., Dickerson, D. L., & D'Amico, E. J. (2016). Cultural identity among urban American Indian/Alaska native youth: Implications for alcohol and drug use. Prevention Science, 17(7), 852-861. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11212-016-0680-1>

Cleary, M., & Thomas, S. P. (2017). Addiction and mental health across the lifespan: An overview of some contemporary issues. Issues in Mental Health Nursing, 38(1), 2-8.

Dingle, G.A., Cruwys, T., & Frings, D. (2015). Social identities as pathways into and out of addiction. Frontiers in psychology, 6, 1795.

Canva. (N.d.). Magic Media [Artificial Intelligence]. <https://www.canva.com/>

Earp, B.D., Skorburg, J.A., Everett, J.A., & Savulescu, J. (2019). Addiction, identity, morality. AJOB empirical bioethics, 10 (2), 136-153.

Fonseca, F., Robles-Martínez, M., Tirado-Muñoz, J., Alias-Ferri, M., Mestre-Pinto, J. I., Coratu, A. M., & Torrens, M. (2021). A gender perspective of addictive disorders. Current Addiction Reports, 8, 89-99. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40429-021-00357-9>

Halladay, J., Woock, R., El-Khechen, H., Munn, C., MacKillop, J., Amlung, M., ... & Georgiades, K. (2020). Patterns of substance use among adolescents: A systematic review. Drug and alcohol dependence, 216, 108222.

Howard, M.O., Garland, E.L., & Whitt, A. (2012). Historical and contemporary perspectives. In Social work practice in the addictions (pp. 3-21). New York, NY: Springer New York.

Ives, N., Denov, M. S., & Sussman, T. (2020). Introduction to social work in Canada: Histories, contexts, and practices. Oxford University Press.

Kulesza, M., Matsuda, M., Ramirez, J. J., Wertz, A. J., Teachman, B. A., & Lindgren, K. P. (2016). Towards greater understanding of addiction stigma: Intersectionality with race/ethnicity and gender. Drug and Alcohol Dependence, 169, 85-91. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2016.10.020>

Pettersen, H., Landheim, A., Skeie, I., Biong, S., Brodahl, M., Oute, J., & Davidson, L. (2019). How social relationships influence substance use disorder recovery: A collaborative narrative study. Substance Abuse: Research and Treatment, 13, 1-8.

Stewart, S. A., Copeland, A. L., & Cherry, K. E. (2023). Risk factors for substance use across the lifespan. The Journal of genetic psychology, 184(2), 145-162.

Watkins, N., McNeill Brown, A., & Courson, K. (2021). Identity Transformation Through Substance Use Disorder Recovery: Introducing the Six Stage Model. The Qualitative Report, 26(7), 2127-2151. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2021.4918>

Winters, E., & Harris, N. (2019a). The impact of indigenous identity and treatment seeking intention on the stigmatization of substance use. International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction, 18(5), 1403-1415. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-019-00162-6>

Wood, E., & Elliott, M. (2020). Opioid addiction stigma: The intersection of race, social class, and gender. Substance Use & Misuse, 55(5), 818-827. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10826084.2019.1703750>

Social Identity
and substance
use are
closely
intertwined



SOCW 4660

Identity
Formation
Through
Addiction

Understanding the
Intersection of Identity
and Addiction



How Social Identity Shapes Addiction

Addiction affects people's identities, especially those who feel isolated or marginalized. Over time, addiction can replace who they used to be, and being judged by others can cause emotional pain and damage relationships. Instead of just judging people, care for addiction is becoming more understanding. Teenagers are particularly vulnerable, and struggles with self-esteem or trauma can lead them to turn to substances.



An Indigenous Lens

Research shows Indigenous youth have higher substance use rates, often linked to intergenerational stress and cultural disconnection. Reconnecting with culture and using holistic healing is important for recovery. Addressing systemic racism and historical trauma is crucial, as they create barriers to treatment. To help Indigenous youth, treatment must be culturally sensitive and respect their unique traditions.

Age & Addiction

Risk Factors Across Ages:

- **Adolescents:** Peer influence, curiosity, and an undeveloped frontal cortex drive risky behavior, with trauma and parenting style also playing a role.
- **Young Adults:** New stressors, overestimating peer use, and underestimating risks contribute to binge drinking and dependence.
- **Older Adults:** Isolation, chronic illness, and grief increase risk, with fewer support systems despite more psychosocial challenges.

Gender-Sensitive Care

Women face unique challenges in addiction recovery, like dealing with health issues, domestic violence, childcare, and societal stigma. These challenges are shaped by biology, society, and culture. Using gender-sensitive care, along with feminist and empowerment-based approaches, helps make treatment more accessible, understanding, and better suited to women's needs.

Identity in Recovery

- Recovering from substance misuse often means changing who you are, including your social circles, environment, and how you see yourself.
- It's important to distance yourself from people who use substances and surround yourself with supportive friends, family, and professionals.
- Watkins' six-stage model explains the recovery process:
 - **Stage 4:** The Moment of Clarity, when someone feels scared or unsure, sparking the desire to change.
 - **Stage 5:** Early Guided Agency, where they start rebuilding their life with trust, new goals, and hope.
 - **Stage 6:** Recovery Identity, where they create a stable sense of self based on being sober.
- Relationships play a big role and good supports can help keep someone you love sober, while bad influences may cause relapses.
- Recovery isn't always smooth; relapse can happen, and it takes ongoing effort and support.
- Social workers can help guide people through this process, helping them find healing and build a new, sober identity.