

# Digital Mental Health for Substance Use Problems

## WHAT IS A SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER?

A substance use disorder occurs when someone continues to use a substance despite this leading to negative consequences, needs to use more to get the same effect, experiences withdrawal symptoms (like headaches, irritability, vomiting or fatigue when the substance effects start to wear off), spends a lot of time thinking about, obtaining and/or using the substance, or finds it difficult to cut down.

People often engage in addictive behaviours to feel good or to stop themselves from feeling bad. However, an addiction often leads to further problems. Getting help from a professional can significantly improve your chances of recovery.

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PDF version from the  
eMHPrac Website



## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A DRUG USE DISORDER?

### Physical

- Impaired sleep, eating habits or sex drive.
- The effects of intoxication or withdrawal (Find out more at the Better Health Channel).
- Frequent cravings or desire.
- Needing more of the substance to get the same effect.
- Changes in energy level.

### Psychological

- Feeling out of control.
- Minimising the consequences - "It won't happen to me".
- Thinking about your addiction when you don't want to be.
- Feeling anxious, angry or depressed.
- Fearing you are losing touch with reality (feeling paranoid, hearing things that are not really there).
- Relationship difficulties.
- Losing interest in other activities.

### Behavioural

- Finding it hard to cut down or stop.
- Using the substance more often or for longer periods that you set out to.
- Employment difficulties such as being late to work.
- Not paying bills or spending money you have kept for something else.
- Withdrawing from family or friends.
- Driving under the influence or doing other risky behaviours.

## STAYING SAFE WITH DRUGS

If you think you might have a problem with alcohol, benzodiazepines, GHB or ketamine **do not try to stop or cut down on your own**. It can be very dangerous. See your GP for safe ways to cut down - your details will remain confidential.

**Are you pregnant?** There is no healthy amount of alcohol, tobacco, or other substances.

Taking too much of a substance can be very dangerous. Taking different types of drugs together can also lead to serious consequences. Find out more on the **Drug Aware** website.

There is no safe way to use illicit substances, as they all create risks for your health and wellbeing. If you do choose to use despite this, please check the following "safer ways to use" guidelines on **Drug Aware** or **Touchbase** websites.

# Digital Mental Health for Substance Use Problems

This resource sheet is designed for mental health professionals to use, whether as a resource to share with clients or as a reference guide. Others are welcome to use or share this resource for general information purposes only and within the scope of their professional role.

## National Mental Health Website

### HEAD TO HEALTH

#### Head to Health

A website that links Australians to free or low-cost online and phone mental health services.  
[headtohealth.gov.au](https://headtohealth.gov.au)

## Information Sites



#### Your Room

Information about alcohol and other drugs.  
<https://yourroom.health.nsw.gov.au/>



#### AOD Knowledge Centre

Information to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reduce their use of alcohol and other drugs.  
<https://aodknowledgecentre.ecu.edu.au/>



#### Touchbase

Information and resources on substance use, mental health and sexual health in the LGBTIQ+ community.  
<https://touchbase.org.au>



#### Hi-Ground

Education, harm reduction and support platform for people who use drugs.  
<https://hi-ground.org>



#### Cracks in the Ice

Toolkit for people using crystal methamphetamine or ice.  
<https://cracksintheice.org.au/>



#### Drug Help

Information and tips for people concerned about their own or a loved one's drug use.  
<https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/drug-help>



#### Pivot Point

Self-assessment tool and information and tips for LGBTIQ+ on alcohol, tobacco and other substances and how to support a loved one with addiction.  
<https://pivotpoint.org.au/>



#### Turning Point

Information and self-assessment for addictions for health professionals, individuals and their support people.  
<https://www.turningpoint.org.au/>

## Phone Services



#### Alcohol and Drug Foundation

Information and tools to reduce the harm of alcohol and other drugs, including the 'Path2Help' referral tool.  
<https://adf.org.au>  
1300 85 85 84

## Counselling Online

Online, text-based service to communicate with a professional counsellor about your alcohol and drug use, or that of a loved one.  
<http://www.counsellingonline.org.au/>



## National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline

Connect to alcohol and other information services operating in your state/area.  
1800 250 015

## Apps

### Breathing Space

Moderated and secure social network for people wanting to improve their wellbeing and resilience while supporting someone with their alcohol or drug use.  
<https://breathingspace.community/communities>



## Online Programs

### Health Zone 'BDZ digital health'

Psycho-education program to help reduce and gradually withdraw from benzodiazepine use.  
<https://www.healthzone.org.au/>



### eCliPSE

Online programs for people with depression, anxiety, trauma and drug and/or alcohol use problems.  
<https://uoneclipse.com.au/ehealth-programs-on-eclipse>



### Family and Friends Support Programs

Programs for people supporting someone using ice, alcohol and/or other drugs, or people who live in rural or remote regions.  
<https://ffsp.com.au>



## For Young People

### Drug Aware

Credible information on drugs for young people to allow them to make informed decisions and stay safe. Online chat and 24-hour phone support for people in WA.  
<https://drugaware.com.au>



### Positive Choices

Information on substance use and addictive behaviours.  
[www.positivechoices.org.au](http://www.positivechoices.org.au)



### ReachOut

Information for people under 25 years, their parents and schools on drugs and alcohol, online referral tool to local services and moderated peer-support forums.  
<https://au.reachout.com>

