A diagnosis of substance use disorder is based on symptoms. Each substance has a separate diagnosis and therefore may have different treatment options.

Substance use does not just affect the user- it affects their loved ones as well. If you have a loved one who is experiencing a substance use disorder, it is normal to feel hurt, angry or frustrated.

Substance use is extremely common. It does not discriminate - it can affect people from every rank, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, etc..

Substance use disorder takes over people's thoughts and they may not seem like themselves. PTSD, TBI and depression can exacerbate substance use.

Seeking treatment for the substance use is important for the individual who is using, but individual therapy and support groups can be helpful for the family members and loved ones of someone who has a substance use disorder.

Treatment is possible - see the resources below.

It can be difficult to acknowledge how a loved one's substance use has affected you. Spend some time thinking about how you may have been affected and how you can seek help for yourself.

**Tips: Important Strategies**

- Remember, addiction is not a choice.
- Try to withhold judgment when a loved one discusses his or her substance use and/or recovery.
- Become educated on substance use disorders to have a better understanding of how they affect people and their loved ones.
- Voice your concerns. See the resources below for guidance on how to address a loved one's substance use.
- Avoid using hurtful language.
- Don't use substances with your partner/family member who is struggling with substance use disorder.
- Remember you cannot fix the problem alone - support your loved one by talking about treatment. See resources below for help in seeking treatment.

**Takeaways: Things to Remember**

- A diagnosis of substance use disorder is based on symptoms. Each substance has a separate diagnosis and therefore may have different treatment options.
- Substance use does not just affect the user- it affects their loved ones as well. If you have a loved one who is experiencing a substance use disorder, it is normal to feel hurt, angry or frustrated.
- Substance use is extremely common. It does not discriminate - it can affect people from every rank, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, etc..
- Substance use disorder takes over peoples’ thoughts and they may not seem like themselves. PTSD, TBI and depression can exacerbate substance use.
- Seeking treatment for the substance use is important for the individual who is using, but individual therapy and support groups can be helpful for the family members and loved ones of someone who has a substance use disorder.
- Treatment is possible - see the resources below.

**Related PsychArmor Courses**

- Coaching a Loved One Into Care

**Personal Reflection**

- It can be difficult to acknowledge how a loved one's substance use has affected you. Spend some time thinking about how you may have been affected and how you can seek help for yourself.

**Resources**

- [SAMHSA's National Helpline](https://www.samhsa.gov) 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- [Alcoholics Anonymous](https://www.aa.org)
- [Narcotics Anonymous](https://www.na.org/)
- [VA Coaching Into Care](https://www.mirecc.va.gov/coaching/)
- [Veterans Crisis Lines](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/)
- [Al-Anon](https://al-anon.org)
- [Nar-Anon Family Groups](https://www.nar-anon.org/)
- [Veterans Crisis Lines](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/)
- [Al-Anon](https://al-anon.org)
- [Nar-Anon Family Groups](https://www.nar-anon.org/)
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