

Contact us

Consultant Nurse for Dual Diagnosis
Hillview Lodge, RUH
Coombe Park
Bath BA1 3NG
01225 362728

www.awp.nhs.uk

PALS

To make a comment, raise a concern or make a complaint, please contact the Trust's Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

Tel: 01225 362900
Freephone: 0800 073 1778
Email: awp.pals@nhs.net

Other formats and languages

If you need this information in other formats (such as large print, audio, Braille) or in another language, please call PALS.

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Avon and Wiltshire
Mental Health Partnership
NHS Trust

Dual Diagnosis

**Information for people with
both mental health
and alcohol/drug problems**

You matter, we care

This leaflet gives some information about managing dual diagnosis. It suggests some things you can do to support yourself and how services can help.

AWP provides treatment which is in line with the recovery approach. This means that we will support you to build a life that you find meaningful and satisfying - whether or not you have ongoing symptoms or problems.

What is dual diagnosis?

There are many reasons why people use alcohol or drugs. It may be for pleasure, to help with relaxation, to fit in with a social group or because there is nothing else to do.

Not all alcohol and drug use will cause problems for people. However, for some it does and will have some effect on mental health.

Exactly how it affects someone will depend on the person, the drugs which are used and how they are taken.

When mental health difficulties and alcohol /drug difficulties are happening at the same time (co-exist), the person is said to have a dual diagnosis.

This is common, with between a third and a half of people using mental health services having co-existing mental health, and alcohol and drug problems at some time in their lives.

What can I do?

Get the right prescribed medication

Taking a regular prescribed medication which stabilises, or improves your mental health can improve your chance of long term recovery.

Sometimes people stop taking their prescribed medication because of unwanted side effects. Those who use alcohol and drugs are less likely to take their prescribed medication regularly.

If you have any side effects from prescription medication, talk to your care coordinator who will try to make sure that side effects are minimised. They may suggest another medication which will suit you better.

Alcohol and drugs reduce the effectiveness of many prescribed medications, and some can increase the risk of overdose.

Reduce alcohol and drug harm

If you have been told that alcohol or drugs may be causing problems, it might be useful to stop for a while and see what difference this makes.

You might not want to stop right now. Even so, it is still important to think about how you might reduce the harm that alcohol and drugs may cause you and others.

You may want to try to reduce your use - reduce the number of times you use, the strength of the drugs, stop mixing drugs together at the same time, or not to inject drugs.

This can be difficult if you have been using regularly for some time. Staff can support you in identifying possible risks and help you gain more control. This may include: identifying triggers for use, alcohol and drug refusal skills and coping with cravings.

We will also help you become more aware of the signs that mean your mental health is starting to get worse to have an agreed recovery plan of what to do if this happens.

Information and education

You need to know what effect alcohol and drugs have on your mental health difficulties and your general day to day functioning. Your care coordinator will discuss this with you.

Involve carers, family and friends

Carers and family can play an important part in supporting you in your recovery. It may be helpful to invite them to any meetings or appointments.

Developing other interests and returning to work

Keeping up or developing interests, that are not just alcohol and drug focused, can support your recovery.

Returning to paid work can be an important goal in long term recovery.

Further information

Re-think

Information and support for mental health

Tel: 0845 456 0455 Link: <http://www.rethink.org/>

Frank provides information and advice on drugs to anyone concerned about drugs and solvent misuse, including drug misusers, their families, friends and carers.

Tel: 0800 77 66 00 Daily 24 hour service
www.talktofrank.com

Drinkline is the national alcohol helpline. They provide information and self-help materials for callers worried about their own drinking, and to support the family and friends of people who are drinking. They are confidential; you do not have to give your name and they can give advice on where to get help.

Tel: 0800 917 8282 Monday – Friday: 9am – 8 pm
Weekend: 11am- 4pm

Alcoholics Anonymous Wiltshire 0845 769 7555

Narcotics Anonymous 0300 9991212

Office opens 10am until 10pm, seven days a week.

Adfam is a national charity for families and friends of drug users, offering confidential information and support.

Adfam will call you back if the cost of a call is a problem.

Tel: 020 7553 7640 Open 10am-5pm. Answer phone out of hours.

Email: admin@adfam.org.uk Web: www.adfam.org