

**Meta Description:** Understanding dual diagnosis is key to treating people with this issue. Read more about dual diagnosis, conditions, and how it is treated in this article.

## What is Dual Diagnosis?

Dual diagnosis is the combination of both substance abuse and mental health issues. One has been known to link up to the other, but this combination plagues a large number of people today. Whether it's depression and alcohol use or harsher medical conditions mixed with heavy drug use, this is a problem that is not getting enough exposure in our current world.

## Statistics on Dual Diagnosis

- According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 45 percent of Americans have a dual diagnosis. In addition, people with mental health issues are more likely to have a drug use problem than the general public<sub>1</sub>.
- Co-occurring illnesses affect 7.2 percent of patients over 50, compared with 28% of those with mental health problems but no drug addiction issues<sub>1</sub>.
- More than half of the patients suffering from mental health statistics did not receive a single treatment regimen that could have improved recovery rates and allowed them to return to everyday life quicker<sub>1</sub>.
- Some people with a Dual Diagnosis are only treated for one of their illnesses. According to projections, 34% of persons with coexisting disorders receive mental health treatment, 2% participate in opioid recovery programs, and 12% get the treatment they require for both issues<sub>1</sub>.
- Only 6% of Americans with a substance abuse problem and a mental illness received only mental health treatment. In comparison, 2% got just alcohol rehabilitation care, and 12% received dual diagnosis treatment, which combines both issues. Therefore, it is critical to improve mental health statistics by treating both conditions at the same time<sub>1</sub>.

## How Common is Dual Diagnosis?

According to the NSDUH, approximately 45% of Americans have a dual diagnosis. People who have a mental illness are roughly twice as likely as the average person to have an addiction.

This is one of the most significant issues with treating dual diagnosis; it needs to be acknowledged. Unfortunately, many people with mental or substance abuse disorders are only treated for one of the issues. This could be due to the patient not being aware of the additional issue or not being found during treatment.

# Common Dual Diagnosis Conditions

Even though dual diagnosis symptoms can happen with many combinations of mental and substance abuse issues, many are more common than others.

People with mental health issues tend to misuse the following<sub>7</sub>:

- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Opioids
- Stimulants
- Marijuana
- Hallucinogens
- Prescription drugs

Mental illnesses frequently go hand-in-hand with substance abuse, in some cases even worse than addiction. Similar situations cause many addictive behaviors as mental disorders, such as family history, intellect capacity, and shock. When coexisting issues are treated simultaneously, You must address both the addictive disease and the mental illness for long-term success.

## Anxiety and Addiction

Addictions to substances can develop due to frequent usage, providing an escape. Addicts with panic disorders frequently use drugs or alcohol to alleviate their anxiety. Attempts to self-medicate with alcohol or drugs exacerbate the condition because they may induce panic attacks.

Rather than alcoholism, substance abuse is frequently used as a self-medication for anxiety. A study from Behaviour Research & Therapy<sub>8</sub> showed that alcoholism occurs between 10 – 40% of all people who have anxiety. Also, they found that between 10-20% of people who have panic disorder abuse drugs.

Most anxiety symptoms begin long before alcohol addiction develops. Although substance misuse may have unforeseen consequences, many people with a Dual Diagnosis believe that drinking or taking drugs helps solve their issues.

Patients with Dual Diagnosis who struggle with alcohol addiction might benefit from learning healthy, sober methods to cope with their panic symptoms to get back on track and break the cycle of problematic drug use. Through therapy, the patient with panic disorder will preserve inner well-being as they work on their drug or alcohol rehabilitation.

## Depression And Addiction

Too often, depression is a stepping stone to substance abuse and alcohol abuse. There are several causes for this. First, it's no secret that individuals who are depressed frequently turn to alcohol or drugs to alleviate the painful symptoms of severe sadness. However, as long as patients do not seek help, those not treated will continue to be sad for a more extended period.

Furthermore, assume that such people are commonly addicted to drugs and alcohol. Because men and women frequently self-medicate with alcohol and other drugs to relieve their severe depression, the chance is that they will continue to use these substances in even more hazardous ways than before.

If you've been drinking to hide your symptoms of sadness for years, when you stop drinking, your depression may worsen. Likewise, your depression can worsen if you quit taking medications, especially if you have severe depression.

Treatment for both substance abuse and major depressive disorder must be handled carefully, which is why they must also be treated simultaneously as severe depressive illness.

## PTSD and Addiction

The symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder are highly destructive to one's mental state, and many people with PTSD are unable to adapt and go on medication or alcohol as a means to cope. As a result, 52 percent of males and 28 percent of females fall into the lifetime models for liquor misuse or dependence. In terms of sedate maltreatment, similar statistics from this survey indicate that 35% of males and 27% of women meet the standards<sub>9</sub>.

Endorphin withdrawal impacts the usage of liquor or prescription pills to treat PTSD. For example, when a person experiences a bad accident, their mind creates endorphins, which are neurons that reduce suffering and offer a sense of well-being - as a response to the stress they face outside of anything else.

When the individual's use of alcohol is increased, they may become artificially reliant on the medication. To achieve those desensitizing effects, the individual will need more liquor or drugs. Finally, reliance might develop into a habit in which the person uses the substance impulsively, has poor tolerance to it, and places importance on mishandling it despite its severe consequences.

As the endorphins wear off, the sufferer requires more alcohol to get away from their nightmares and flashbacks of PTSD. Naltrexone, a narcotic adversary, might block the beneficial effects of drinking by disrupting this negative cycle. To prevent relapse, naltrexone, buprenorphine, acamprosate, and other substance dependence medicines may be used.

## Schizophrenia and Addiction

According to recent research, individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder are three times more likely to fall into heavy alcohol use than the general public, according to recent research<sub>10</sub>.

People battling a dual diagnosis of schizophrenia and alcohol addiction have worse outcomes. Depression, suicide, medication nonadherence, chronic physical issues, homelessness, aggression, violence, incarceration, and hospitalization, are all exacerbated by it.

The use of alcohol may be a symptom of, or an indication of, mental illness. Alcohol reduces activity in the brain's central nervous system, dulling the senses and making people less aware of their psychotic symptoms. Long-term alcohol consumption can, however, contribute to psychotic disorders such as hallucinations that might be mistaken for schizophrenia symptoms.

Alcohol addiction is both physically and psychologically addicting, which can cause psychotic symptoms when people stop drinking. That's why it's essential to conduct a thorough evaluation whenever a person's problems are thought to be connected to schizophrenia and alcohol use.

Unlike alcoholism, substance abuse among persons with schizophrenia is linked to poorer treatment outcomes. Substance abuse can induce psychotic symptoms and cause people to resist or avoid therapy. Individuals who have both mental illness and drug addiction are more likely to suffer from illness or injury, require emergency care, and go to jail.

## Dual Diagnosis Symptoms

The most significant factor of dual diagnosis is that the mental health disorder and the substance abuse disorder occur simultaneously (this is also why it is referred to as co-occurring disorders).

The general symptoms of dual diagnosis include<sub>3</sub>:

- Sudden changes in behavior
- Distancing oneself from friends and family
- Increase of dangerous behaviors when under the influence
- Withdrawal symptoms
- Tolerance to drugs and alcohol
- The inability to function without the drug

## Symptoms Of Mental Health Disorders

While many of the symptoms are similar, some are more closely related to mental health issues.

Some common mental health symptoms include<sub>4</sub>:

- Feeling unhappy or depressed
- Poor thinking or attention deficit
- Excessive fears or worries, as well as extreme emotions of guilt
- Highs and lows in mood
- Withdrawal from friends and activities
- Low energy or sleeplessness due to tiredness
- The presence of false beliefs or deluded thinking (delusions), anxiety, or hallucinations
- Inability to handle day-to-day issues or tension
- Difficulty comprehending and relating to situations and people
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Changes in eating habits
- Sex drive changes
- Excessive anger, rage, or violence
- Suicidal thoughts

## Symptoms Of Substance Use Disorder

Along with the mental health symptoms, you should also be mindful of the substance abuse symptoms that a patient may exhibit.

Some of the substance abuse disorder symptoms include<sub>5</sub>:

- Feeling compelled to use the substance daily or several times each day
- The desire for the substance overwhelms any other thoughts.
- Requiring more of the substance to achieve the same outcome.
- Taking greater dosages of the substance for long periods than planned
- Maintaining a reliable supply of the drug
- Spending money on the drug, even though you can't afford it
- Because of drug use, you may not keep up with your job or work responsibilities, or you might reduce the amount of social or recreational activities to avoid missing them.
- Even if you know it's causing difficulties in your life or harming your health or emotional well-being, you should continue to take the drug because of personal denial, peer pressure, coercive persuasion techniques, peer review biases, and other psychological/social factors.
- Doing things to obtain a substance that you would not otherwise
- You take risks like driving or engaging in other dangerous activities when you're high.
- Spending a significant amount of time obtaining the drug, taking the drug, or recovering from its side effects
- Trying to quit using drugs has proved ineffective.
- When you try to quit taking the drug, you experience withdrawal symptoms.

## Why Co-Occurring Disorders Are Treated Differently

Co-occurring disorders are complicated and interdependent; thus, treatment that addresses only one diagnosis at a time is founded on a fundamentally incorrect understanding of co-occurrence. In reality, mental health and substance abuse are intimately connected and must be treated as such.

If you don't treat your process addiction while also treating your schizophrenia, your risk of relapse rises significantly. Similarly, suppose your sadness is treated without addressing your worry; you will be left with not only the original problem to deal with but also a high chance of experiencing another depressive episode as a result of uncontrolled anxiety.

Some of the overlapping risk factors include:

- Early age exposure to trauma
- Brain response
- Genetics
- Triggers in one's environment

Integrated treatment is the best way to combat dual diagnosis because it provides mental and substance abuse treatment and skills to help the patient in the real world.

## Dual Diagnosis Treatment Options

The key to treating dual diagnosis is treating other ailments simultaneously. Depending on which issues are behind the dual diagnosis, some medications can help along with support groups, rehab, and medical care.

### How to Find the Right Treatment Program?

When dealing with dual diagnosis, you should look for the best dual diagnosis treatment centers in your area. It can be tricky to find alone, and dual diagnosis therapy is highly recommended. The right program will be what is best for you and your loved ones. Several options are available for dual diagnosis rehab or dual diagnosis addiction treatment.

#### Dual Diagnosis Residential Treatment

Residential treatment is comparable to any type of drug rehabilitation center. The patient will reside at the treatment center for the duration of the process and will follow a schedule of therapy, exercise, and support group meetings.

This is also a good option for those who need support 24/7. This is especially true of heavy drug users with severe mental issues. Residential treatment can provide a safe place for the patient where they can be monitored throughout detox and withdrawal symptoms.

## Dual Diagnosis Outpatient Treatment

A dual diagnosis intensive outpatient program is one of the most common treatment methods. The treatment can work around the patient's schedule, making it ideal for those with less severe addiction issues. Treatment will include many different services, including medication-assisted detox, support groups, and therapy.

Outpatient care is also a good step for those who have just finished residential care. It helps them to avoid relapse.

Outpatient care can be just as rigorous as residential care. Many dual diagnosis treatment centers will have day programs where patients are at the center all day getting help with detox, withdrawals, and attending support groups and therapy.

## Support Groups

Support groups can help people get on the right track and help them maintain sobriety. Many groups are available such as AA or NA. Most groups will meet once or twice a week, making it a great supplement to dual diagnosis program outpatient care.

## Self-Medication

Self-medication is an option for dealing with substance abuse and a mental health diagnosis. It is not recommended as there are no recommendations from a doctor or therapist to guide you down the right path. Dual diagnosis addiction treatment is the best way to work through issues.

Self-medication is dangerous for anyone with severe addiction or mental issues. Most people who self-medicate use alcohol or drug to feel better. Unfortunately, this leads to more issues instead of improving their overall condition.

This isn't to say some people might not find help with self-detox and changing their habits, but addiction is a problem that needs help from an outside source. This is especially true for withdrawals, as they can be life-threatening if not done correctly.

Using a dual diagnosis treatment center is always the best option, whether residential or outpatient, it will offer a higher success rate.

## Dual Diagnosis Rehab at Concise Recovery

The decision to seek treatment for a dual diagnosis recovery is the beginning of a new life for you, but you could have any number of questions about how it works. You don't want to go through addiction on your own. Learn what to anticipate when attending one of our residential treatment centers.

Enrolling in addiction treatment is one of the finest decisions you'll ever make, and we work hard to make this choice as easy as possible for you. You're receiving the most excellent care with a team comprised of experienced therapists, physicians, nurses, and addiction specialists. Our approach to treating patients is centered on the idea of creating a treatment plan that is entirely tailored to their specific requirements.

Please [contact Concise today](#) to start your new life with a free consultation or fill out the online form for a confidential callback.

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## Resources

1. [Important Statistics on Dual Diagnosis](#)
  2. [The Challenge of Dual Diagnosis](#)
  3. [Dual Diagnosis](#)
  4. [Mental illness - Symptoms and causes - Mayo Clinic](#)
  5. [Drug addiction \(substance use disorder\) - Symptoms and causes - Mayo Clinic](#)
  6. [The Most Common Co-Occurring Disorders | Dual Diagnosis](#)
  7. [Co-Occurring Disorders and Other Health Conditions | SAMHSA](#)
  8. [Substance abuse and panic-related anxiety: a critical review](#)
  9. [Alcoholism and Drug Abuse in patients with PTSD | SpringerLink](#)
  10. [Alcohol Use Disorder and Schizophrenia or Schizoaffective Disorder](#)
  11. [The Case for Screening and Treatment of Co-Occurring Disorders | SAMHSA](#)
  12. [Treatment Options for Individuals with Dual Diagnosis](#)
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## Infographic Stats

- Substance misuse affects about 50% of people with serious mental illnesses. In addition, 37% of alcoholics and 53% of opioid addicts use alcohol.
- In the previous year, employed men were twice as likely as employed women to have suffered from substance abuse or addiction (13.2 percent compared to 6.9 percent). Nonetheless, working women were almost twice as likely to have experienced severe mental health problems in the previous year (14.2 percent compared to 7.3 percent).
- The number of patients in opioid rehab seeking treatment for addiction problems diagnosed with a co-occurring mental health condition rose from 12 percent to 16 percent over six years.
- In a recent study, just 62 percent of patients who were only diagnosed with a mental health condition were working, compared to 67 percent of Dual Diagnosis patients.