

Many Directions, One Self: How Substance Use Can Impact Your Well-being

We all have different experiences with our use of alcohol and other substances. Using alcohol and other substances can affect our physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental health in different ways too.

BENEFICIAL:

Using substances in ways that support our health and well-being.

"I use Adderall to help manage my ADHD and smoke tobacco as part of ceremony."



CASUAL USE:

Using substances occasionally in ways that does not impact our well-being in a negative way. This may be to experiment with drugs or to use in a social setting.

"After school on Friday, I went to my friend's house and we smoked a joint."



ADDICTION:

Using substances regularly and feeling out of control about our use. This results in thinking about use often, and has a negative impact on our health and well-being.

"When I wake up, the first thing I think about is using. I feel sick when I don't use. I spend a lot of money to use and it's also caused a lot of problems in my relationships."



HARMFUL USE:

When patterns and types of use start to impact one's life and well-being in a negative way.

"I binge drink on the weekend to make myself feel better when I'm down. Sometimes this makes things even worse when I've blacked out."



Our use of alcohol and other substances can always change. The impacts of substance use can change depending on the situation, type of substance we are using, or at different stages in our life. Some people choose abstinence and use no substances at all. This decision should also be respected and supported.

You don't need to be sober to deserve help. If you are struggling with substance use and would like support, please reach out to someone you trust. This might be a family member, teacher, counsellor or Elder.

Another support option is to connect with the **Hope for Wellness Helpline at 1-855-242-3310**, or use the chatbox at www.HopeforWellness.ca to speak with a counsellor online.

This resource was developed by a team of experts, including young people and a Knowledge Keeper, with support from Indspire, Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario and Shkaabe Makwa at CAMH.



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