

Prescription drug abuse: There is help

Facing the reality that “I need help” and knowing where to actually get it are crucial initial steps for anyone battling prescription drug addiction. The process to recovery can be one ridden with pain, denial and shame.

If you search on the Internet for “Where to get help for prescription drug abuse?” search results are in the millions. Trying to find the best treatment options for yourself or a loved one can be overwhelming. But it is not impossible. Death from prescription opioid overdose has quadrupled since 1999, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). The [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#), known as SAMHSA, estimates that in 2014 about 15 million people in the United States older than 12 were non-medical users of pain relievers. On SAMHSA’s website, it offers an online [Behavioral Health Treatment Services locator](#) where individuals can type in their ZIP code and get directions to treatment centers in their community. SAMSHA also offers a 24-hour free [hot line](#) for treatment referrals and support: 1-800-662-HELP (4357). Calls are confidential and offered in English and Spanish. For treatment options tailored to the needs of veterans, the [Veterans Crisis Line](#) directs vets and their loved ones to “qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hot line”: 1-800-273-8255, option 1.

The department’s website says veterans of all “ages and circumstances” can also chat online and text 838255 for support options. All contact points are accessible 24 hours a

days, seven days a week, 365 days a year. The organization says since its inception it has answered more than 1 million calls and has made 37,000 lifesaving rescues. According to the National Survey of Drug Use and Health, approximately 10 million Americans, aged 12 to 29, need treatment for substance abuse and addiction. [The Partnership for Drug Free Kids](#) offers a toll-free hotline (1-855-DRUGFREE) to help parents who are seeking help for their children. Once referred to a treatment center, knowing what to look for is key. Treatment options are not created equal or one-size-fits-all. When considering a program, the [National Institute on Drug Abuse, or NIDA](#), recommends choosing a treatment method that is backed by solid scientific evidence. The organization also recommends asking if a program customizes treatment to the individual needs of each patient, taking into account a patient's background and particular history with drug abuse.

“Without attending to the social issues (of an individual) we will not see as great of an effect as potentially possible,” says Jack Stein, director of the office of science policy and communication at NIDA. “We need to approach substance abuse disorder from a whole person perspective.”

Stein also recommends selecting a treatment program that uses a combination therapy approach: one that addresses both detoxifying and the continuing needs of the individual.

NIDA offers advice about questions to ask upon starting a treatment program, such as whether the duration of treatment is sufficient for the need. On its website, NIDA says research suggests most addicted people need a minimum of three months in treatment. However, the best treatment strategies track one's progress and develop plans that will maintain a long-term recovery. One way to guarantee continued support during

and after a treatment program is to find a local chapter of [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) or [Narcotics Anonymous](#). You can do so online.

Unfortunately, when it comes to prescription drug abuse, relapse can happen. It's important to realize, says NIDA, that even if relapse occurs, it doesn't automatically equal failure.

The organization encourages families to view substance abuse similarly to a chronic disorder such as heart disease or asthma, which will require "support and vigilance on the part of the individual." Staying connected to a community like a local support group is key. So is recognizing there maybe setbacks.

"If someone returns to (drug) use, the key is there is an opportunity for the individual to return to treatment and continue on the path to recovery," Stein said. "We try to encourage families to understand that relapse can occur but the individual can recover."

(Source: [CNN.com](#))