

Self-Medication

WORKPLACE
TRAINING
& SUPPORT
SERVICE

What is Self-Medication?

Signs of Self-Medication

Types of Self-Medication

Getting Help

What is Self-Medication?

Self-medication refers to the practice of using substances, such as alcohol and drugs; or other addictive behaviours, such as eating or gambling as a way of dealing with life issues.

There are numerous reasons why people self-medicate. Most commonly people will attempt to hide or mask a condition, such as anxiety or depression; or they may be too afraid to seek medical diagnosis from fear of personal/career repercussions.

Unfortunately, self-medication often leads to substance abuse, and in time, addiction.

Signs of Self-Medication

Many people have at some stage turned to alcohol or other ways of self-medicating to wind down in the evenings after a tough day. For some this use is fairly benign, but for others this way of solving issues can slip into dependency and over time even addiction.

Typical signs that self-medication is becoming a problem are:

- Self-medicating to remove stress, depression, anger or other uncomfortable emotion.
- Your mood or mental health symptoms become worse the more you self-medicate.
- You are experiencing more health, relationship, social and financial problems.
- You feel reduced levels of self-esteem and self-confidence.



Getting Help

Types of Self-Medication

There are many different ways that people can self-medicate. Below are some common examples:

- Alcohol
- Cannabis
- Psychostimulants
- Opiates & Opioids
- Gambling
- Food
- Caffeine

Self-medicating is dangerous in the long run. It can cause serious physical, emotional and mental health problems.

Seeking help early is vital. Talking to your doctor, other health professional, family members and friends can help you feel supported. They can help you identify available services such as doctors, counsellors, rehabilitation centers, EAP... If you are experiencing depression, anxiety, addiction or other forms of mental illness, different forms of treatment are available.