

# MYTHS VS. REALITY

Behind generations of misunderstandings

## "ROCK BOTTOM" MISCONCEPTION

**Necessary before seeking help ?**

The belief that a person needs to "hit rock bottom" before the person is ready to get help is a complete myth. Addiction can be a very long process; the earlier a person searches for treatment, the less damage will be done. The idea of waiting until the worst comes to pass may be inspired by dramatic depictions of addiction in TV and movies.

## PEOPLE CAN QUIT USING AT ANY TIME

**You are totally in control**

The reality is when substance abuse turns into drug addiction, it takes a powerful hold over both mind and body. This is because chronic substance use alters brain response. While initial substance use is usually voluntary, most substances actually rewire the brain, leading to feelings of short-lived pleasure that turns into anxious cravings. A quality drug rehab program and addiction counselors can help break this cycle.

## THE ADDICTION GENE

**Decides your individual will?**

Scientifically, there is no single gene, or a set of genes, that decides whether an individual will develop a substance use disorder despite even if the person's parents had drug or alcohol problems. However, genes do play a role in the determination of whether a person develops a substance use disorder, but, the nature and the extent of the role is debatable, hence the lasting myth that genes cause addiction.

## "NATURAL" DRUGS ARE SAFE

**Better than the synthetic ones**

Marijuana, mushrooms and other "natural" highs still alter brain chemistry and produce dangerous side effects. It is a complete myth that drugs such as these aren't harmless just because they grow in the ground.

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND ADDICTION ARE ONE IN THE SAME

**Often considered synonymous, but not the same thing**

Substance abuse generally refers to the use of drugs or alcohol in unhealthy or even dangerous ways. Substance use disorder is the diagnosis given to people who continually struggle with substance use, or who have developed a dependence on the substance. An individual who has a drug addiction has developed a physical, chemical and/or a psychological dependence on drugs or alcohol.

People who engage in substance abuse without an active addiction are more likely to still experience the novel euphoric or depressive effects of the substance. Once addiction sets in, the individual develops a tolerance to the drug and will require more and more of the substance to achieve that original high, if it can be recreated at all.



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