
The Battle Within: Confronting Teen Drug Addiction and Building Resilience

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In Pakistan, disappointingly, many teenagers especially university going students consider experimenting with drugs and alcohol to be an important part of growing up. Regardless of the major risk, it poses many terrible consequences yet this phenomenon is crucial for jelling up with their peers otherwise their so-called friends and fellows will not accept them. Some teenagers are introduced to drugs and other substances directly through friends and treatment prescription which perpetuates into frequent use eventually resulting in addiction (Ahmed et al., 2020).

Many of them begin experimenting with drugs in an upshot of curiosity since their friends are using and even from heeding to a song referencing drug abuse. Teens may even gain access to drugs by pocketing their parent's medicine in an attempt to satisfy their curiosity about what their parents are consuming (Wade et al., 2021).

It does not matter how an innocent teenager or any other person starts drug abuse and becomes addicted, drug addiction is actually a big threat. Many teenagers, when inquired about the reason for their drug usage, commonly say to fit in with their peers, to get rid of stress, easy approach to drugs, learned behavior from family, and poor control on impulse (Nawi et al., 2021a). Some answered with a genetic susceptibility towards drugs being the

reason, some of them used drugs to find balance in everyday jobs whereas some answered that they self-medicate for mental and emotional problems. The most common answer, however, was to satisfy their curiosity (Ahmed et al., 2020).

Some of the substances that teenagers use most frequently are Opioids, Benzodiazepines, Cocaine, Cannabis, Meth, Artificial Cannabis Inhalants, Adderall, and Anabolic Steroids. Teens go through a range of social, mental, and emotional transformations as they navigate the highs and lows of growing up (Krogh & Madsen, 2023).

Friends and family may find it challenging to distinguish between typical hormonal/personal changes and warning indicators of drug usage. Yet, there are certain signs that family members should be aware of, such as anxiety, depression, or other mental illnesses, traumatic individual experiences, initiation of Pop culture combined with drug and alcohol use, low regard for oneself, sleeping too much, declining achievement in school, missing funds, sluggishness, severe mood fluctuations, making new friends in a different group regularly, ending prescriptions too soon, removing oneself from friends and family, giving up on previous activities, and alterations in behavior or appearance (Nawi et al., 2021b).

There's always a sliver line behind dark clouds, one can find solution to come out from this dark phase of life. Behavioral therapy, medicine, medical detoxification, and continued support are often used in the treatment of drug addiction (Magill et al., 2020). The brief details of these therapies are given under:

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1. Medical detoxification: It includes treating withdrawal symptoms while safely eradicating contaminants from the body. In order to ensure comfort and safety, medical guidance is frequently needed.

2. Behavioral Therapy: Several kinds of therapy, such as motivational interviewing (MI) or cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), assist people in comprehending their addiction, creating coping strategies and trying to change toxic behaviors (Moreno et al., 2024)

3. Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT): Particularly for alcohol or opioid addiction, certain drugs, such as methadone, buprenorphine, or naltrexone, can help control withdrawal symptoms and lessen cravings (Nawi et al., 2021a).

4. Support Groups: Engaging in a support group such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Narcotics Anonymous (NA) can offer beneficial transparency, supportive peers, and inspiration.

5. Maintained Support and Follow up: Since recovery is a lifetime process, it is crucial to provide continued support and aftercare. The long-term healing also requires treating any underlying mental health concerns and customizing treatment to meet each patient's needs. (Agin-Liebes et al., 2020)

Therapy, medication, and support groups are common interventions used in the treatment of drug abuse and addiction. Behavioral therapy to address underlying issues and teaching coping mechanisms may come after detoxification (Magill et al., 2020). Medicine can assist in controlling cravings and the symptoms of withdrawal. Family, friends, and support programs such as Narcotics Anonymous can offer continuous motivation and responsibility. It's frequently a lengthy procedure adapted to everyone's preferences and situation (Ersche et al., 2020). Above all, the most crucial battle one has to win is one's inner battle. How strongly one can resist damaging not one life but a whole generation is of pivotal importance.

Every year on June 26, we observe World Drug Day, also known as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, to encourage action and collaboration towards the realization of the vision of a drug-free world. And every year, to increase awareness of the serious issue, people, entire communities, and several organizations participate in this global observance. It is believed that drug epidemic can be combated with the combined efforts (Fedorov, 2020).

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Iqra Tariq: Conceptualization, Investigation, Writing – Original Draft, Writing - Reviewing & Editing

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