

Who can I contact for help?

Substance Abuse Service Helpline

 (844) 804-7500

Alcoholics Anonymous

 www.aa.org

National Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependence

 (800) 622-2255

Families Anonymous

 (800) 736-9805

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

 (800) 273-8255

Alcoholics Anonymous—Online Chat Meetings

 aa-intergroup.org/directory_chat.php

Co-occurring Alcohol Use Disorder and Anxiety Disorder



What is an anxiety disorder?

Anxiety is an emotional response that happens when someone thinks about a future event that may seem threatening.

Anxiety is a normal emotion for nearly everyone. When someone has anxiety that is very intense or that lasts for a very long time, they may have an anxiety disorder.

Symptoms of anxiety disorders can include the following:

- Feeling distressed before events
- Feeling easily fatigued
- Frequent worrying
- Feeling on edge
- Trouble concentrating
- Trouble sleeping

What are common types of anxiety disorders?

- Generalized anxiety disorder
- Panic disorder
- Social anxiety disorder
- Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Specific phobias

What is a co-occurring alcohol use disorder (COD-alcohol)?

A person with an alcohol use disorder (AUD) may also have a mental illness, such as bipolar disorder. This is called **co-occurring alcohol use disorder (COD-alcohol)**.

Alcohol can influence the onset of mental health symptoms and vice versa, although the direct cause for each can be uncertain.

How might anxiety disorders and AUD be connected?

- Alcohol is a depressant drug, which means it can create feelings of calmness
- People may drink alcohol to cope with symptoms caused by anxiety
- Alcohol can help someone with anxiety temporarily feel better, but later they can feel worse
- Drinking to cope with anxiety can lead to long-term health problems
- It is also possible that anxiety can develop from drinking too much
- When someone quits drinking, anxiety may result as a side effect, making it even harder to quit

What can I do if I have AUD and anxiety?

- **Ask for help.** The sooner you get treated, the sooner you can reduce the risks associated with a co-occurring disorder.
- Receiving treatment for one or both conditions is entirely up to how ready you feel. Your treatment plan will be decided with a health care professional.
- Treating an anxiety disorder can have a positive impact on an AUD and vice versa. Speaking with health care professionals can help in finding the root source of distress.
- Receiving treatment for one or both conditions means a step forward in living a healthier lifestyle. You will be on the right path to participating in daily tasks that might have been hard to do before.