


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 Depression



What is depression?

Depression is a common but serious mood disorder that affects how someone feels, thinks, and acts. This mental health condition is often characterized by feelings of sadness and hopelessness over a certain period of time (i.e., an “episode” of depression). In order for an episode of depression to be diagnosed, symptoms of depression must last for at least two weeks.

Some common types of depression include the following:

- Major Depressive Disorder (MDD)
- Persistent Depressive Disorder
 - Less severe than MDD (but lasts longer)

What are common symptoms of depression?

- Loss of interest in activities
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Weight loss or gain
- Fatigue
- Depressed mood most of the day
- Trouble concentrating
- Feeling worthless
- Suicidal thoughts

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 depression. 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 are depression and AUD connected?

- People may drink alcohol to cope with the symptoms caused by depression
- Individuals who have alcohol use disorder may develop depression over a period of time
- Alcohol can help someone with depression temporarily feel better, but it can cause them to feel worse later
- Drinking to cope with symptoms of depression can lead to long-term health problems
- When someone with an alcohol use disorder stops drinking, depressive symptoms may appear, making it harder to quit.

What can I do if I have AUD and depression?

- **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 a depressive disorder can have a positive impact on an alcohol use disorder 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.