

* When is an assessment for drug or alcohol problems indicated?

1. There is (are) problem(s) that could be caused or could be made worse by the use of a mood altering substance.
2. The person has used a mood altering substance more frequently.
3. The person has made unsuccessful attempts to control, cut back or stop using (including previous treatment attempts, promises to "do better,") etc.
4. Family members and/or friends have identified the person's alcohol or drug use as a concern.

* Adapted from [More than Accommodation: Overcoming Barriers to Effective Treatment of Persons with Both Cognitive Disabilities and Chemical Dependency](#), Jerry Annand, M.A.

Helpful Resources

SAN DIEGO REGIONAL CENTER . . . under contract with the State of California, provides casemanagement and referral for people with developmental disabilities to a broad range of services which are provided by existing agencies/providers. The goal is to assist people with developmental disabilities to live in their home communities as independently as possible. California law defines developmental disabilities as mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism and closely related conditions requiring similar supports. Call 858-576-2996.

SAN DIEGO ALCOHOL, DRUG AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES RECOVERY TASK FORCE . . . is a network of individuals and agencies that have been working since 1999 to improve access to prevention, treatment and recovery services for adults and youth with developmental disabilities. The Task Force sponsors recovery support groups for people with developmental disabilities and hosts a monthly networking meeting on the first Tuesday of the month in National City. Call Ann Harris - MFT, 619-336-6600.

TOWARD MAXIMUM INDEPENDENCE . . . offers innovative programs serving San Diegans with Developmental Disabilities since 1981. Services include: Forensic Advocacy Services - designed to address the unique needs of persons with developmental disabilities who are involved in the criminal justice system. Community Living Services - providing a wide range of supports within the community. Community Employment Services - assisting people to find and maintain employment in typical community work settings. Family Support Services - assisting children to be supported to live successfully with their own family or a foster family. Call 858-467-0600.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY; ALCOHOL & DRUG SERVICES . . . provides an integrated system of community-based alcohol and other drug prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery services throughout San Diego County via contracts with local service providers. For referrals to services, please contact the Behavioral Health Access and Crisis Line at 1-800-479-3339.

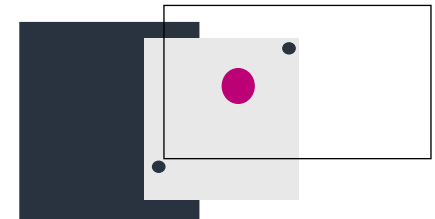
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION ON ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND DISABILITIES . . . promotes awareness and education about alcohol and drug problems among people with physical, sensory, cognitive and developmental disabilities. NAADD creates public awareness of issues related to substance use disorders faced by persons with other co-existing disabilities, and favors a peer approach to enhance access to services, information, education and prevention through the collaboration of interested individuals and organizations nationwide. Call 650-578-8047.

PROJECT CONNECT

Alcohol, Drugs and Developmental Disabilities

Funded through a grant from The California Endowment

A Collaboration Between Toward Maximum Independence (TMI) And The National Association On Alcohol, Drugs and Disability (NAADD)



VISION

To create links between the Recovery Community and people with developmental disabilities.

MISSION

To assist and educate the Recovery Community in San Diego by providing support to individuals who are experiencing alcohol and drug problems.

GOAL

To enhance and improve the access to prevention, treatment and recovery programs for adults and youth with developmental disabilities.

Alcohol and drug problems among people with developmental disabilities are increasing

For years it was believed that people with developmental disabilities had few problems with alcohol and drugs. However, the increased opportunity for community living and employment has resulted in increased exposure to addictive substances and illicit drugs with devastating consequences. Recent studies have indicated that the problem of alcohol and drug use is increasing. For example, 18% of a sample of community residents with a developmental disabilities reported "misusing" alcohol (McGillicuddy & Blane, 1999). Another study indicated that 11% of consumers surveyed reported heavy or abusive alcohol and other drug use (Edgerton, 1986). A study that looked at the numbers of clients in alcohol and drug treatment found 13% had a diagnosis of mental retardation or developmental disability (Westermeyer, et al, 1996).

What are some of the risk factors?

There are a number of factors that contribute to alcohol and drug problems among people with developmental disabilities, including:

- Lack of access to alcohol and drug prevention, education and early intervention services.
- Acceptance-seeking behavior and peer pressure.
- Exploitation and victimization.
- Chronic pain and misuse of prescribed pain management medications.
- Excessive unstructured time due to unemployment or under employment.
- Family history of alcohol or other drug problems including those leading to fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) or effect (FAE).
- Client choice and self determination issues blur screening or intervention policies.

What are some of the problems?

Individuals with disabilities, like those without, sometimes experience problems because of alcohol or other drug use. Areas of people's lives where concerns typically arise include:

- Employment
- Family
- Finances
- Arrests or other legal problems

- Medication side effects or interactions.
- Difficulty with social interactions.
- Mood swings or personality/psychological health changes.

Improving services, creating solutions

Project Connect is the first effort of its kind in the United States to improve links between alcohol, drug and developmental disability services through a county wide needs assessment and planning process. For more information about project connect contact John de Miranda at 650-578-8047, or solanda@sbcglobal.net

Alcohol and drug services in California are organized at the county level. Prevention, treatment and recovery services are required to serve persons with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities under state and federal law pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act. The web site of the California Department of Alcohol & Drug Programs www.adp.ca.gov includes a comprehensive listing of programs by county including information about the cognitive, mobility, and sensory accessibility of each facility.