



ALCOHOL AND DRUG MISUSE

In Missouri during 2013, over 5,200 servicemembers and veterans received services for substance misuse through the MO Department of Mental Health and the VA.

Problems with alcohol or drug misuse (also known as Substance Use Disorder) may happen because of stress, or with health concerns like posttraumatic stress, depression, or other medical issues.

For those in the military, the stress of deployments or the hazardous duties of military life, along with the stigma of asking for help, can lead to problems. Veterans sometimes misuse alcohol or drugs as a way to numb the tough feelings and erase the memories related to their military experiences.

▼ Symptoms

- Physical signs: bloodshot eyes, changes in appetite and sleep patterns, poor grooming habits, unusual smells (on breath, body or clothing), slurred speech or impaired conditions, tolerance (the ability to drink or use greater quantities over time), and withdrawal.
- Behavioral signs: drop in attendance/performance at work or school, financial problems, sudden changes in friends/hobbies (losing interest in activities that were once enjoyable), frequently in trouble (fights, accidents), compulsive behavior (the inability to stop drinking or using in spite of negative life consequences), craving to use substances, often taking in larger amounts or over longer periods of time than was intended.
- Psychological signs: changes in personality/attitude, irritability, periods of hyperactivity, agitation or giddiness, lethargic or paranoid.

▼ Diagnosis

For a diagnosis, visit a clinician.

▼ Treatment

There are several tools used to treat problems with alcohol and drugs:

- Individual and group counseling
- Detoxification
- Outpatient treatment medication
- Recovery support services
- 12-Step fellowship
- Peer supports

The type of treatment you receive are determined by the clinician's assessment and diagnosis.

There are several ways to find medical help for alcohol and drug misuse:

- Contact your doctor
- MO Department of Mental Health Service Member, Veterans & Their Families webpage has a provider map: <https://dmh.mo.gov/veterans/>
- Contact your local VA Medical Center. All VA medical centers take walk-ins either at the behavioral health clinic or through the emergency room. Here is a listing of Missouri VA Medical Center locations: <https://www.va.gov/directory/Guide/state.asp?STATE=MO&dnum=ALL>
- TRICARE Provider directory for those of you using TRICARE insurance: <https://www.tricare-west.com/content/hnfs/home/tw/bene/provider-directory.html>

▼ Additional Resources

Make the Connection

A one-stop resource where Veterans, families and their friends can privately find information about health conditions ranging from leaving military service, injury, death of family or friends, PTSD and substance misuse. This website provides personal stories and resources to help learn ways to improve their lives.

<http://maketheconnection.net/>

Veterans Affairs (VA)

The Veterans Affairs can offer care to eligible Service Members and Veterans: screening, counseling, and more.

www.mentalhealth.va.gov/mentalhealth/substance-abuse/index.asp

Vet Centers

Vet Centers provide confidential counseling services and screening to combat Veterans and their families. Counseling services include: bereavement, military sexual trauma, substance abuse, screening and referral for medical issues including TBI, Depression, etc.

<http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/index.asp>

For your convenience in finding behavioral health resources, the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) Veterans Services has compiled this list. These links will take you out of the DMH website. DMH does not endorse or take responsibility for the content of other organization's websites.