

Area 68, AA-SWTA District 2 Newsletter

July 2023

PART 6 ON UNDERSTANDING ALCOHOLISM

ALCOHOLISM AND DIVORCE

Alcohol use can come with severe costs. It can lead to legal problems, financial stress, unemployment, and cause serious health issues. It can also destroy a family and romantic relationships. *Alcohol use is one of the leading reasons couples file for divorce in the United States.* According to the National Institute of Health, alcoholism and divorce statistics indicate that one liter more of alcohol consumption per capita can increase divorce rates by as much as 20%.

Beyond the anxiety, stress, and worry that a sober spouse endures with daily drinking, they often experience traumatic events ranging from abuse, deceit, mental health issues like depression, and more.

Around 50% of marriages end in divorce. When alcohol abuse is present in a household, the chances of divorce nearly triple.

THE PROBLEMS OF ALCOHOLISM AND DIVORCE

Problems with alcohol extend beyond health concerns. It can permeate family settings, particularly having a powerful impact on spouses and children. Alcohol can account for a large number of cases involving domestic abuse, child protective services, and divorce.

Alcoholism and divorce trends continue to increase. According to a study by the National Library of Medicine, ongoing and regular drinking among couples showed lower quality marriages. Marital issues involving continued drinking ultimately stem from the effects of alcohol abuse.

Alcohol addiction can be a progressive disease. In other words, in some individuals, casual use

may morph into dependency for many different reasons. Some individuals are predisposed to alcohol problems due to genetics and socioeconomic factors. Others are battling underlying mental health issues and are choosing alcohol to self-medicate. *Regardless, it's one of the leading substances abused by nearly 15 million Americans in 2019.*

PHYSICAL CONCERNS

Alcohol is one of the most prevalent and widely accepted substances in the nation. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2018, two-thirds of American adults ages 18 and older consumed alcohol in any given year. According to the 2019 NSDUH, 5.3% (or 15 million) people ages 12 and older had a diagnosable alcohol use disorder (AUD). Of those, only about 6.4% will receive alcohol abuse treatment.

Alcohol – although common in an everyday setting – also carries heavy consequences. For example, drinking regularly shows an increased risk of health complications and general wellbeing. Diseases more prevalent among habitual drinkers, according to the CDC, include:

- High blood pressure
- Cancers including breast, mouth, throat, esophagus, liver, and colon
- Dementia
- Mental illnesses like anxiety and depression
- Liver disease
- Heart disease
- Stroke

Understandably, these health concerns can cause strain within a marriage. In addition to personal illness, alcohol is a leading cause of:

- Car accidents
- Crime

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- Risky behaviors
- Abuse

Romantic partners can face numerous challenges as they navigate substance abuse and its ongoing effects. It might include covering for a spouse when concerned family members recognize signs of alcohol issues. It may also mean dealing with financial troubles or legal problems.

BEHAVIORAL CHANGES

Why do alcoholism and divorce show a correlation? In many cases, an AUD can change a person into someone nearly unrecognizable. A spouse – once vibrant, energetic, and fun-loving – may withdraw from daily activities and behave secretly or erratically. These changes can occur over time, or they may be abrupt. Couples often don't survive relationship problems caused by the stresses of alcohol dependency.

Behavioral changes may include things like losing focus at work, poor performance, sudden outbursts, risky spending, and changing circles of friends. Other behavioral changes that accompany alcohol abuse include:

- Increased expressions of anger
- Public outbursts
- Insomnia or oversleeping
- Violent behavior
- Overall negative outlook on life

Alcohol can cloud a person's judgment and their ability to consider the consequences of their actions. It can numb the feelings that would otherwise prevent someone from engaging in antisocial behavior.

RISING TRENDS IN DIVORCE AND ALCOHOL ABUSE

The current COVID-19 pandemic has increased the use of alcohol nationwide. According to the

National Public Radio, alcohol consumption rose 14% during 2020. It is also reported that the largest percentage increase in use of alcohol in 2020 was for women. Women's use of alcohol increased by about 17% in 2020.

Alcohol sales increased 400% in the last year. The pandemic and media exposure to alcohol are not the only factors that contribute to *the increased alcohol use in the U.S. Research suggests that underlying mental health issues continue to be prolific among Americans* and with lack of available resources and amid pandemic shutdowns, receiving treatment is difficult.

ALCOHOL AND DIVORCE STATISTICS

Is alcohol a reason for divorce? In 2003, an 18-year study (Anato & Previti) found that, along with drug use, alcohol was the third most commonly cited reason for divorce, following infidelity and incompatibility. There are other important factors when considering alcohol and divorce statistics. They may include things such as:

- Verbal aggression is twice as likely to occur if alcohol has been consumed in the previous four hours. Physical aggression is three to four times more likely with alcohol due to the ways in which it impairs logic, reasoning, and judgement.
- Divorce is more common in marriages when only one spouse is heavily drinking
- There are higher rates of divorce when a wife in a heterosexual's marriage is the main consumer of alcohol.
- Children experience devastating outcomes when both parents are facing AUD issues.

According to the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, 26.8 million children in the United States are exposed to alcoholism by their family, resulting in a higher risk of becoming an alcoholic.

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Area 68 AA-SWTA District 2 Newsletter

July 2023

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HOW DO I KNOW IF MY DRINKING IS IMPACTING MY FAMILY?

Alcohol can be a tricky substance. It can catch many users by surprise. It is highly accepted throughout the world and carries less stigma than other illegal substances such as heroin, cocaine, or meth. Alcohol use can grow over time and consequences are usually more severe with prolonged use. Monitoring alcohol use is important when considering the potential for an AUD.

According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, an alcohol use disorder is a chronic relapsing brain disorder characterized by an impaired ability to stop or control alcohol use despite adverse social, occupational, or health consequences.

It can be hard to know if alcohol has a negative impact on your life, especially when it may feel like an innocent pastime. Asking for input from trustworthy friends and family can be a powerful tool. Other options include understanding the reasons for heavy or ongoing consumption of alcohol. Ask the following questions:

- Have you tried to stop drinking but were unable?
- Is work suffering as a result of your drinking?
- How much money is spent on alcohol each week?
- Is alcohol impacting your ability to sleep, eat, or function?
- Do you have strong cravings or urges to drink even when you don't want to?
- Do you continue to drink even when it's causing negative feelings or harm to your loved ones?

In general, if performance at work changes or your family is encountering difficulties that can be linked back to alcohol, whether financial,

physical, or emotional, it's time to seek help. To change alcohol and divorce statistics, it's critical that spouse's seek recovery sooner.

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It's critical that alcohol abuse is addressed sooner than later. While it can be a difficult step to take, it's one in which your marriage may hang in the balance.

LOCAL INFORMATION:

Are You Looking for Service Work?

The Central Service Office Helpline Committee has Volunteer Shifts Open

Friday 9a-1p and Thursday 1p-5p, may work at CSO or from home

After Hours Helpline Chairperson: Requires 1 year sobriety, a home group, and regular meeting attendance.

Please contact Virginia B @210-821-6325, grpserv2019@att.net

Memorial Service for James (Jim) McCoy

Please join us in a memorial service to remember Jim McCoy on July 29th at 2pm, 1142 Eikel Street New Braunfels

If you have any memories or pictures you would like to share, please email them to: weloveyoujim23@gmail.com

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July 2023

to aagrapevine.org/carry-the-message or
www.youtube.com/c/aagrapevine

PICPC Assembly

Public Information Cooperation with Professional Communities, August 4-5, 2023 at the McKenna Center in New Braunfels. Doors will open at 11. Professional Luncheon \$25, Conference registration is \$10. For registration and more information go to www.area68district2.org.

Zoom Meetings

New Braunfels Group Zoom meeting is at noon every day except Saturday.
ID: 86494683219
Passcode: 24Eikel (case sensitive)

Online 12 Step Meetings

Go to <https://12steppers.org/online-virtual-12-step-meetings-for-each-12-step-program/> for a list of meetings.

Hee-Haw Concept Meeting

Third Monday of each month @ 6:00 PM
Into Action Group
1302 South Main, Lockhart, TX 78644

Beginners Speaker Meeting

Mondays @7pm, 1142 East Eikel

Grapevine and La Vina

2023 *Carry the Message Project*: Give a gift subscription to an alcoholic who needs it. Great for sponsees, newcomers, prisons or detoxes. Go

District 2 Committee Meeting

2nd Sunday of Every Month @ 2pm
1142 Eikel Street, New Braunfels

Hybrid Meeting Starting 9/11/22
Zoom ID: 884 2390 7474
PW: 477848

Birthday Night...

...is the first Saturday of every month for the previous month. Please put your name on the whiteboard if you have a birthday this month so you can be recognized.

**THE 164 MEETING OF
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
MEETS EVERY FRIDAY
NIGHT AT 7:30PM**

**WIMBERLEY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
956 FM 2325**

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