Do Drugs Exacerbate Mental Illness

By The Professionals At Robert Alexander Center

For many years, there has been a lot of discussion around the link between mental illness and drug use. The debate has ranged from the types of drugs, are any drugs safe to take, and if the benefits of drug use outweigh the downsides. There is a lot of discussion on the matter. But the big question on many people's minds is, do drugs give you a mental illness, or if you have a mental illness, do they make it worse?

What is A Mental Illness?

The definition of a mental illness is a health condition that affects your thinking, your behavior, or your emotions. There are many different disorders that fall under the mental illness category. These can include, but are not limited to –

- **Mood disorders such as bipolar or depression**
- **Personality disorders**
- **Anxiety disorders**
- **Eating disorders**
- **Substance abuse disorders**
- **Psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia**
- **Trauma-related disorders such as Post Traumatic Stress disorder**
- **Dementia**

As you can see, there is a wide variety of mental illnesses that exist. Each one has its own range of treatments. The one thing that ties them all together is that they all can affect your day to day life. If you are dealing with drug addiction, you might find that you are struggling with some mental health problems too.

Why is it Important to Seek Help?

When it comes to mental health, you are battling against your own mind. There are days that everything goes well and you might wonder what the issue is, but then come the days where it all crashes down around you. If you find that you cannot cope with these days, you might find yourself reaching for some medication to help dull the effects. If your medication is not prescribed and is illegal, you might need to consider how you are handling things. Taking drugs that have not been prescribed to you for your emotions and mental health is never a good idea as you might develop a drug addiction. The different substances that are associated with drug abuse are –

- **Alcohol**
- **Cigarettes**
- **Pain killers**
- **Marijuana**
- **Sleeping medications**
- **Crack**
- **Heroin**
- **Cocaine**
- **Meth**
- **Ecstasy**

If you do have a mental illness it is important to get help before it gets out of control. Every mental illness has a way of being managed and dealt with. Some people believe that they can control it themselves but it is always better to get help from a medical professional who knows how to treat mental illnesses efficiently.

Mental Health and Drugs

There have been countless studies and a wide variety of evidence that ll show that drugs can create and exacerbate mental illness in a person. There has been a lot of evidence to suggest that people who have a mental illness are more likely to develop a drug addiction and abuse various substances. The addictions that people suffer from can vary from mild nicotine addiction to severe narcotics abuse. It is important to remember that stress is not a mental illness as everyone has to deal with a certain level of stress throughout their day. However, extended periods of stress might cause a person to become unwell physically and mentally.

If you do not have a mental illness, over time you might develop one if you are abusing substances. It will happen quicker if you are using mind-altering substances. There is still a lot of debate around what comes first or if one is necessary for the other. What is clear is there is a link between drugs and mental health with many possible solutions. So, it is possible to develop a drug problem because of a mental illness or to get a mental illness due to repeated drug exposure.

Getting Treatment

If you have a mental health issue and a drug abuse problem, it is important to get both of them dealt with. If you attempt to treat one and not the other, you will run the risk of relapse and continuing the cycle. When it comes to getting treatment, there are a variety of options that are available to you that can support and help you on your road to recovery. Do not be afraid to reach out to the centers in your area to discuss their options. You might be surprised by the comprehensive range of options to help you kick your addiction and your mental health back into gear. It is important to know the options that are available for you to help you move forward.

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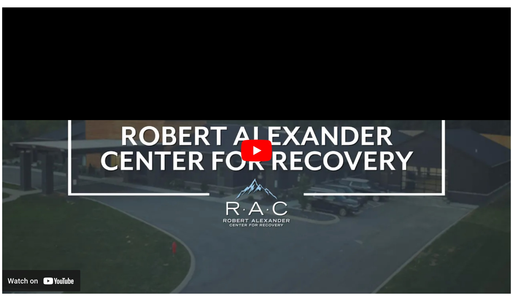
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