



Addiction is particularly destructive for skilled and licensed professionals due to the demands and expectations in their work.

This guide will provide timely information for professionals struggling with drug and alcohol addiction.



Professionals and Addiction Treatment

Introduction

Drugs and alcohol are not confined to social, economic, or educational barriers, and skilled professionals face unique, sometimes overwhelming pressure.

JourneyPure Center for Professional Excellence provides comprehensive addiction and mental health treatment for skilled professionals, including health care professionals (physicians, dentists, pharmacists, anesthesiologists), attorneys and lawyers, and business executives.

We recognize that, because of their unique training and high level of education, skilled professionals have a tendency to develop styles of coping that differ from others with addiction and mental health issues, and that this requires more nuanced intervention and treatment methods.

Health Care Professionals

An estimated 10 to 12 percent of health care professionals in the U.S. abuse drugs and alcohol, which is about the same rate as the general public. While alcohol is the drug of choice among those in the medical and dental professions, accounting for 37 percent use rate among those who abuse substances, prescription drugs have a 31 percent use rate. Opiates, mostly hydrocodone and oxycodone, are the main prescription drugs abused.



Professionals tend to develop common styles of coping, which require specialized intervention and treatment methods.

A groundbreaking 1999 study published in the Journal of Addictive Diseases compared drug use by health care professions, finding that:

- Emergency room doctors used the most illicit drugs.
- Psychiatrists used the most benzodiazepines.
- Anesthesiologists showed high rates of opioid abuse.

A 2012 study of U.S. surgeons published in the Journal of the American Medicine Association found that 15.4 percent of surgeons lived with alcoholism. Female surgeons were more likely than their male counterparts to exhibit symptoms of alcoholism, by a rate of 25.6 percent versus 13.9 percent.

Attorneys and Lawyers

From the very start of their careers, lawyers face considerable stress, thanks to large amounts of school debt and a shrinking market for entry-level jobs in law. This likely accounts for nearly 29 percent of lawyers reporting problematic drinking behavior throughout their first ten years of practicing law. This number drops somewhat for lawyers in their second decade, to 21 percent.

Lawyers working in firms have been found to abuse alcohol at the highest rates, while junior associates show the highest rate of problematic drinking behavior, according to statistics from a 2014 joint study conducted by the American Bar Association and the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation.

Meanwhile, 28 percent of lawyers live with depression and 19 percent exhibit anxiety symptoms, both of which have been found to be contributing factors to problematic drinking.

Young lawyers have also been known to abuse Adderall, the brand name of the drug amphetamine-dextroamphetamine that increases focus and attention spans. However, Adderall is addictive and possible lethal, with side effects like:

- Convulsions
- Irregular heartbeat
- Increased blood pressure
- Sexual dysfunction
- Depression
- Headaches
- Anxiety
- Suicidal thoughts

Business Leaders

The prevalence of substance abuse among high-level business professionals has been hard to measure, due to this population's ability to function while living with their addiction, as well as their reluctance to admit to having a problem.

That said, a 2007 study by scientists at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Nearly 20 percent of alcoholics match the executive-level businessperson type: middle-aged, well-educated, with stable jobs and families.

Meanwhile, the ongoing opioid epidemic in the U.S., caused in large part by doctors' overprescribing OxyContin to manage postoperative pain, has included a significant increase of opioid abuse among the well-to-do, including business executives.

Risk Factors of Addiction

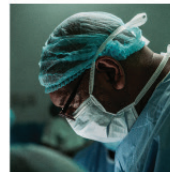
The risk factors of substance abuse involve a range of biological, psychological, economic, and sociocultural issues. While these factors interact differently in different people—resulting in different symptoms and experiences—researchers have found broad similarities when it comes to many of the biggest risks for developing a substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health disorder.

Suicide

While there are many variables when it comes to determining a person's risk of suicide by their line of work, there has long been a correlation between those in the medical and dental professions and a proclivity toward suicide.

According to data compiled by the National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH) in 2015, medical doctors topped the list of professions with the highest suicide rates, followed by dentists. Those who work in financial services ranked fifth, while lawyers ranked eighth. Pharmacists rounded out the top ten.

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Meanwhile, recent studies demonstrate a link between substance use disorder and suicide among the general population. From 1999 to 2016, the suicide rate in the U.S. has increased by 30 percent. And there appears to be a gender divide in the prevalence of suicide, as men commit suicide at a rate of more than three times that of women.

Family Problems

Like many mental health disorders, substance use disorders tend to wreak havoc on the family unit. Left untreated, an addiction can progress so far that it damages all family relationships. This can lead to a sense of isolation and resentment on the part of the addict and a sense of confusion and hopelessness among his or her loved ones.

The family members of professionals can experience their own mental health issues as a result of their loved ones' involvement in substance abuse. For example, the spouse or partner of a CEO who struggles with addiction or mental health issues might suffer severe anxiety due to the fear of what could happen to

his or her spouse or partner. It is therefore imperative to our clients' recovery that his or her loved ones get actively involved in the recovery process.

Long-term Health Problems

It should come as no surprise that alcohol and substance abuse can have a variety of long-term health effects, depending on which drug or drugs are involved, how they are taken, the amounts taken, the person's overall physical and mental health, and other factors.

While short-term effects range from changes in heart rate and blood pressure, stroke, psychosis, and overdose, long-term effects can include heart or lung disease, cancer, mental illness, kidney damage, liver damage, and other conditions.

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How JourneyPure Can Help

When addiction begins to affect the drive, passion, and well-being of men and women in professional roles, these industry leaders can benefit from a program designed specifically for them.

JourneyPure At The River—our flagship residential and PHP facility in Murfreesboro, Tenn.—maintains the Center for Professional Excellence (CPE), which houses 10 male and eight female beds. We design the CPE site and its treatment programs specifically for healthcare, legal, and other licensed and skilled professionals.

Meanwhile, JourneyPure Emerald Coast, located in Panama City Beach, Fla., offers the Nurses Program, designed specifically for RNs, LPNs, APNs, physical therapists, and other healthcare-related occupations. With care, compassion, expert understanding, and total confidentiality, our multidisciplinary teams work with our Nurses Program clients to evaluate the addiction and any co-occurring mental health issues and determine that most effective course of action.

Our professionals programs emphasize the need for family and couples therapy, where the partners of the client are involved from day one of treatment. Not only does family and couples therapy strengthen the bonds of understanding between family members, it helps to educate the all family members, which in turn helps the addicted individual realize he or she is not alone in working through his or her recovery.

All clients of our programs are assigned a recovery coach who maps out an individual recovery and wellness plan, accessed and monitored daily through our free JourneyPure Coaching app. Offered for the life of the contract, this app is an invaluable tool for continuing care.