

# *The ME WE Family Education & Support Program*

## Newsletter Volume 7

Making a difference,



now that you know.

### *More people in the U.S. die of alcohol-related causes than from opioids and other drugs. Psychologists are working to change that*

Cultural beliefs paint alcohol use disorder as black and white, a mindset that often means too few people get help for problematic drinking

Alongside the opioid overdose crisis, another hidden epidemic is quietly raging. Every year in the United States, more people die of alcohol-related causes than from opioids and other drugs. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, rates of excessive alcohol use were high and getting higher. The stress and isolation of the pandemic appear to have worsened harmful drinking, at least for some groups. Alcohol-related deaths increased more than 25% from 2019 to 2020. Among adults under 65, more people died from alcohol-related causes in 2020 than from Covid-19 (White, A. M., et al., JAMA, Vol. 327, No. 17, 2022).

On top of those many deaths, countless other people are impacted by alcohol's ripple effects: car crashes, increases in violence and assault, riskier sexual behaviors, jobs lost, families fractured, and children's lives made unstable by a parent's dependence on a drug that is not just legal but celebrated.

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### *What to Expect at an A.A. Meeting*

There are a variety of formats for A.A. meetings and each meeting takes on the feel of their local area. At most meetings you will hear members talk about what drinking did to them and to those around them. Most also share what actions they took to stop drinking and how they are living their lives today. The purpose of all meetings is for A.A. members to "share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism."

#### Meeting Types

Meetings are typically listed as "open" or "closed" meetings.

Open meetings are available to anyone interested in Alcoholics Anonymous's program of recovery from alcoholism. Nonalcoholics may attend open meetings as observers.

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### **....That APRIL is Alcohol Awareness Month!**



**DID YOU KNOW?**

Alcohol Awareness Month **first started in 1987**, and was founded by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) as an extension to the temperance movement of the 1800s. **Marty Mann** founded the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD). She was one of the early members of Alcoholics Anonymous and the **first woman** to have successfully gone through a 12-step group.

## *5 Powerful Happiness Habits You Can Start Today* **Simple, proven ways to be consistently happier, now and in the future.**

In the past few years, we've seen an explosion of books and courses about happiness. Brain science has progressed more in the past decade than the previous 100 years, allowing us to better understand the biological bases of human emotion. Research in positive psychology has made great strides in clarifying the things that make us happy. Through social media, we have more access to this information than ever before.

And yet, we don't seem to be any happier than we were a generation ago. In fact, statistics show that more of us are suffering from clinical depression and anxiety—and that teens are becoming stressed and depressed at younger ages.

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## *Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) Short Report | Alcohol-related ED visits*

The Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) is a public health surveillance system that monitors emerging trends and characteristics of substance-related emergency department (ED) visits. This report focuses on estimates of alcohol-related ED visits from January 2021 through September 2023.

### **National Summary**

There were an estimated **8,566,725** ED visits related to alcohol. Alcohol was the most prevalent substance involved in substance-related ED visits, with twice the number of visits compared to opioids or cannabis.

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## *“Graduation” thoughts from a Wednesday group member....*

About 12 weeks ago Karen let me know about this group and we both decided to try it. I had been telling her I thought we needed to try to find a group because we were struggling with how we should deal with our adult children who were married to each other and were addicted to drugs and alcohol. Their marriage and lives were falling apart.

When I called Jim for permission to join, he was very kind and compassionate and I felt extremely blessed to have access through Zoom. It was very special that Karen and I could attend the same group even though we live in different states. I have learned so much these past 12 weeks, although I know I have only absorbed a small portion of what has been taught. I now understand it's a disease NOT a deliberate choice. I feel more confident when I talk to my son. He has a genius IQ; I don't. I am now able to state scientific facts when he tries to convince me that he's not an addict and that he doesn't need help. I have learned how to talk to him without fighting with him. I have been extremely blessed every time any of you have shared your experiences or given advice and encouragement. Just seeing each of you show up each week really encourages me not to give up.

This group has truly been a gift of God to me. - - Pam S

*"Making a difference, now that you know"*

*Take a walk down memory lane with the attached editorial I happened to come across. It was printed in the Plain Dealer on Saturday, August 13, 1988. Some things just don't change.*

### *Just Say "Know"*

The very first word I learned to say was "Mom." It's not hard to understand why. My mother was always around. She was the source of all the things that made me feel good. The second word I learned was "no." It seemed that my earliest explorations of the world were met with the "no" from my mother. Since she was the source off all the things that made me feel good, I tended to listen - - except for the three times I put my hand on the hot oven door, the two times I ate the dog's food and the 25 times I fell down the basement steps.

While growing up, I learned that "no" was usually said by someone older, about some situation they wanted me to avoid so that I not get hurt, die or stain the carpet. It was real simple then.

The "no" of today seems a lot more complicated. At least the one related to drug use.

Today young people are expected to "say no" to something that at least in the initial contact makes them feel good. And the message is coming from adults who are less than consistent in following their own advice. Billions of dollars are invested annually in the advertising of drugs, the message being that the drug will fix whatever is wrong. Sleeplessness, constipation, headache or that self-reward for a hard day's work can all be fixed by a drug.

Maybe we adults should take a little personal inventory. Maybe we should rewrite the "Just Say No" to read "Just Say Know," the know referring to knowledge about ourselves, each other and the kind of society we have allowed to flourish. I believe that with the right kind of knowledge the "no" will come. And those who look closely will see the "no" in the knowing.

## *No level of alcohol consumption is safe for our health*

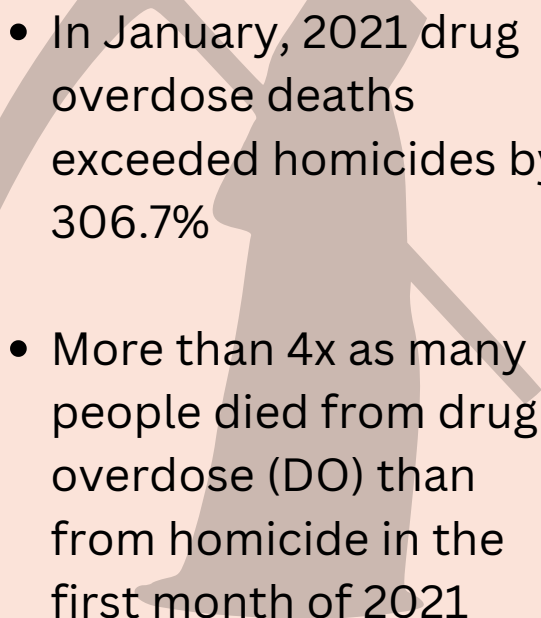
The risks and harms associated with drinking alcohol have been systematically evaluated over the years and are well documented. The World Health Organization has now published a statement in *The Lancet Public Health*: when it comes to alcohol consumption, there is no safe amount that does not affect health.

It is the alcohol that causes harm, not the beverage

Alcohol is a toxic, psychoactive, and dependence-producing substance and has been classified as a Group 1 carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer decades ago – this is the highest risk group, which also includes asbestos, radiation and tobacco. Alcohol causes at least seven types of cancer, including the most common cancer types, such as bowel cancer and female breast cancer. Ethanol (alcohol) causes cancer through biological mechanisms as the compound breaks down in the body, which means that any beverage containing alcohol, regardless of its price and quality, poses a risk of developing cancer.

The risk of developing cancer increases substantially the more alcohol is consumed. However, latest available data indicate that half of all alcohol-attributable cancers in the WHO European Region are caused by “light” and “moderate” alcohol consumption – less than 1.5 litres of wine or less than 3.5 litres of beer or less than 450 millilitres of spirits per week. This drinking pattern is responsible for the majority of alcohol-attributable breast cancers in women, with the highest burden observed in countries of the European Union (EU). In the EU, cancer is the leading cause of death – with a steadily increasing incidence rate – and the majority of all alcohol-attributable deaths are due to different types of cancers.

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- In January, 2021 drug overdose deaths exceeded homicides by 306.7%
  - More than 4x as many people died from drug overdose (DO) than from homicide in the first month of 2021

*If we are facing  
in the right  
direction, all we  
have to do is keep  
on walking.*

*---Buddhist proverb*

## *My Loved One Isn't Staying Sober. Now What?*

### **4 Ways to Recognize the Hard Truths of Relapse and Find Hope in Recovery**

They promised. They swore that the last time they drank alcohol or used drugs was the last time.

But it wasn't. Now you're likely left wondering, "How could this have happened?" When someone you love relapses, it can feel devastating. Maybe they have maintained sobriety for a few days. Or maybe it's been weeks, month, even years—regardless, it's understandable if you're feeling sad, angry, defeated or hopeless.

It's important to know that there's more to your loved one's relapse than a simple yes or no decision to drink or use substances. Addiction, clinically known as substance use disorder, is a confusing and often misunderstood disease. It wreaks havoc on relationships, careers, and mental and physical wellness. And in the case of a relapse, it can happen when you're least expecting it.

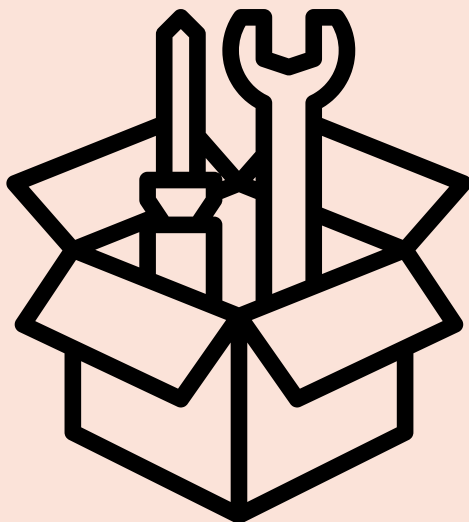
Whether this is your loved one's first relapse or you've been in this situation before, please know that there is still hope. Here's what you can do to better understand and help your loved one.

#### 1. Recognize addiction as a chronic disease.

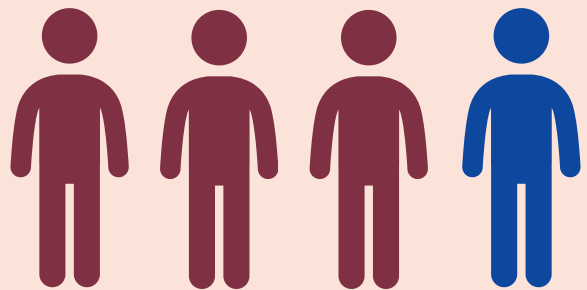
Millions of American families are impacted by addiction. Still it's wildly stigmatized, which leads to feelings of embarrassment and shame for those with the disease and their loved ones. If someone in your life is struggling with addiction, that shame can be decreased through the power of understanding.

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## **Resources**



- ME WE Family Groups [MORE INFO](#)
- Nar-Anon Family Groups [MORE INFO](#)
- Al-Anon Family Groups [MORE INFO](#)
- United Way First Call for Help [MORE INFO](#)



**More than 1 in 4 of our youth  
Use e cigarettes  
Daily**

for more statistics click [HERE](#)