



HIV and AIDS Sensitization and Education on Prevention of Alcohol and Drug at Kenya Science Campus.



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Exams at Kenys Science Campus





- * Dr. Muhia talked widely about Alcoholism and drug abuse; she stated... Alcoholism is the most severe form of problem drinking. Alcoholism involves all the symptoms of alcohol abuse, but it also involves another element: physical dependence on alcohol. If you rely on alcohol to function or feel physically compelled to drink, you're an alcoholic. It's not always easy to see when your drinking has crossed the line from moderate or social use to problem drinking. But if you consume alcohol to cope with difficulties or to avoid feeling bad, you're in potentially dangerous territory. Alcoholism and alcohol abuse can sneak up on you, so it's important to be aware of the warning signs and take steps to cut back if you recognize them. Understanding the problem is the first



- * step to overcoming it. Alcoholism and alcohol abuse are due to many interconnected factors, including genetics, how you were raised, your social environment, and your emotional health. Some racial groups, such as American Indians and Native Alaskans, are more at risk than others of developing alcohol addiction. People who have a family history of alcoholism or who associate closely with heavy drinkers are more likely to develop drinking problems.



- * Finally, those who suffer from a mental health problem such as anxiety, depression, or bipolar disorder are also particularly at risk, because alcohol may be used to self-medicate. Since drinking is so common in many cultures and the effects vary so widely from person to person, it's not always easy to figure out where the line is between social drinking and problem drinking. The bottom line is how alcohol affects you.



- * **. If your drinking is causing problems in your life, you have a drinking problem.** You may have a drinking problem if you...
- * Feel guilty or ashamed about your drinking.
- * Lie to others or hide your drinking habits.
- * Have friends or family members who are worried about your drinking.
- * Need to drink in order to relax or feel better.



- * “Black out” or forget what you did while you were drinking.
- * Regularly drink more than you intended to.



- * **Common signs and symptoms of alcohol abuse include:**
- * **Repeatedly neglecting your responsibilities at home, work, or school because of your drinking**
- * For example, performing poorly at work, flunking classes, neglecting your kids, or skipping out on commitments because you're hung over.
- * **Using alcohol in situations where it's physically dangerous**, such as drinking and operating machinery while intoxicated, or mixing alcohol with prescription medication against doctor's orders



- * **Experiencing repeated legal problems on account of your drinking.** For example, getting arrested for driving under the influence or for drunk and disorderly conduct.
- * **Continuing to drink even though your alcohol use is causing problems in your relationships.** Getting drunk with your buddies, for example, even though you know your wife will be very upset, or fighting with your family because they dislike how you act when you drink.



- * **Drinking as a way to relax or de-stress.** Many drinking problems start when people use alcohol to self-soothe and relieve stress. Getting drunk after every stressful day, for example, or reaching for a bottle every time you have an argument with your spouse or boss.

DRINKING PROBLEMS AND DENIAL

Denial is one of the biggest obstacles to getting help for alcohol abuse and alcoholism. The desire to drink is so strong that the mind finds many ways to rationalize drinking, even when the consequences are obvious



- * By keeping you from looking honestly at your behavior and its negative effects, denial also exacerbates alcohol-related problems with work, finances, and relationships. She expounded further about drugs too, and she quoted “People experiment with drugs for many different reasons. Many first try drugs out of curiosity, to have a good time, because friends are doing it, or in an effort to improve athletic performance or ease another problem, such as stress, anxiety, or depression. Use doesn’t automatically lead to abuse, and there is no specific level at which drug use moves from casual to problematic. It varies by individual.



- * Drug abuse and addiction is less about the amount of substance consumed or the frequency, and more to do with the **consequences** of drug use. No matter how often or how little you're consuming, if your drug use is causing problems in your life—at work, school, home, or in your relationships—you likely have a drug abuse or addiction problem. People who experiment with drugs continue to use them because the substance either makes them feel good, or stops them from feeling bad. In many cases, however, there is a fine line between regular use and drug abuse and addiction.



- * Very few addicts are able to recognize when they have crossed that line. While frequency or the amount of drugs consumed don't in themselves constitute drug abuse or addiction, they can often be indicators of drug-related problems.
- * **Problems can sometimes sneak up on you**, as your drug use gradually increases over time. Smoking a joint with friends at the weekend, or taking ecstasy at a rave, or cocaine at an occasional party, for example, can change to using drugs a couple of days a week, then every day. Gradually, getting and using the drug becomes more and more important to you.



- * **If the drug fulfills a valuable need,** you may find yourself increasingly relying on it. For example, you may take drugs to calm you if you feel anxious or stressed, energize you if you feel depressed, or make you more confident in social situations if you normally feel shy. Or you may have started using prescription drugs to cope with panic attacks or relieve chronic pain, for example. Until you find alternative, healthier methods for overcoming these problems, your drug use will likely continue.



- * **Similarly, if you use drugs to fill a void in your life,** you're more at risk of crossing the line from casual use to drug abuse and addiction. To maintain healthy balance in your life, you need to have other positive experiences, to feel good in your life aside from any drug use.
- * **As drug abuse takes hold,** you may miss or frequently be late for work or school, your job performance may progressively deteriorate, and you start to neglect social or family obligations. Your ability to stop using is eventually compromised. What began as a voluntary choice has turned into a physical and psychological



- * The good news is that with the right treatment and support, you can counteract the disruptive effects of drug use and regain control of your life. The first obstacle is to recognize and admit you have a problem, or listen to loved ones who are often better able to see the negative effects drug use is having on your life, she also noted down common signs and symptoms of drug abuse which are:
 - * **You've built up a drug tolerance.** You need to use more of the drug to experience the same effects you used to attain with smaller amounts.



- * **You take drugs to avoid or relieve withdrawal symptoms.** If you go too long without drugs, you experience symptoms such as nausea, restlessness, insomnia, depression, sweating, shaking, and anxiety.
- * **You've lost control over your drug use.** You often do drugs or use more than you planned, even though you told yourself you wouldn't. You may want to stop using, but you feel powerless.



- * **Your life revolves around drug use.** You spend a lot of time using and thinking about drugs, figuring out how to get them, and recovering from the drug's effects.
- * **You've abandoned activities you used to enjoy,** such as hobbies, sports, and socializing, because of your drug use.
- * **You continue to use drugs, despite knowing it's hurting you.** It's causing major problems in your life—blackouts, infections, mood swings, depression, paranoia—but you use.

