



HELPING HANDS



Alcohol Use Disorder

Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) is a medical condition characterized by an impaired ability to stop or control alcohol use despite negative social, occupational, or health consequences.

According to the **Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5)**, AUD is diagnosed when a person meets at least two of eleven criteria within a 12-month period. These criteria include things like:



✔ **1. Strong cravings for alcohol**

- A persistent urge or compulsion to drink.

Source: *Mayo Clinic* – “Alcohol use disorder (AUD) involves a pattern of alcohol use that includes problems controlling your drinking...” ([Mayo Clinic, 2023](#))

✔ **2. Loss of control over drinking**

- Inability to limit drinking once started.

Source: *National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)* – “Not being able to stop drinking once you’ve started.” ([NIAAA, 2023](#))

✔ **3. Tolerance**

- Needing more alcohol to feel the same effects.

Source: *DSM-5 criteria via American Psychiatric Association* – “Markedly increased amounts to achieve intoxication or desired effect.” ([APA, 2013](#))

✔ **4. Withdrawal symptoms**

- Anxiety, shaking, sweating, nausea when not drinking.

Source: *SAMHSA* – “Symptoms can include sweating, rapid heartbeat, hand tremors, problems sleeping, nausea, or hallucinations.” ([SAMHSA, 2023](#))

✔ **5. Neglecting responsibilities**

- Failing at work, school, or home due to drinking.

Source: *CDC* – “Continuing to drink despite problems with health, relationships, or responsibilities.” ([CDC, 2022](#))

✔ **6. Spending lots of time drinking or recovering**

- Much of one’s time is consumed by alcohol use.

Source: *NIAAA* – “Spending a lot of time drinking or getting over its aftereffects.” ([NIAAA, 2023](#))



Alcohol Use Stigma

Fighting the stigma of Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) is crucial for encouraging people to seek help without fear or shame. Stigma leads to discrimination, isolation, and reluctance to access treatment ([SAMHSA, 2023](#)). AUD is a medical condition, not a moral failing, rooted in complex brain and environmental factors ([NIAAA, 2023](#)). Reducing stigma requires honest conversations about alcohol’s impact, empathy for those struggling, and education about evidence-based treatments. Language matters—using terms like “person with AUD” instead of “alcoholic” promotes dignity and respect ([APA, 2017](#)). Families, workplaces, and communities can support change by sharing resources, listening without judgment, and advocating for accessible care. By challenging stereotypes and treating AUD like other health conditions, we can create safer, more supportive environments where recovery is possible for everyone. Together, we can break down barriers and help more people find hope and healing.

Alcohol Use Disorder and How it Affects the Family

Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) can severely disrupt family life, causing emotional pain, conflict, and lasting harm. Partners often face trust issues, communication breakdowns, financial strain, and an increased risk of domestic violence (SAMHSA, 2023). Children growing up with a parent who has AUD may experience anxiety, depression, academic struggles, or social difficulties, and are at greater risk of developing substance use disorders themselves (NIAAA, 2023). Family members may feel guilt, fear, resentment, or helplessness as they witness the person’s behavior change and responsibilities go unmet (Mayo Clinic, 2023). AUD can also isolate families from social support, intensifying stress. Recovery efforts that involve the whole family—through therapy, education, and open communication—can help heal relationships, reduce stigma, and support lasting change. Recognizing AUD as a treatable condition is essential for rebuilding stability and improving well-being for everyone affected.

Treatment for AUD



Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) can be treated through various effective approaches tailored to individual needs. Behavioral therapies like Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) help people recognize triggers, develop coping skills, and change drinking behaviors (NIAAA, 2023). Medications approved by the FDA, such as naltrexone, acamprosate, and disulfiram, reduce cravings or discourage drinking (SAMHSA, 2023). Mutual-support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) offer peer connection and encouragement. Integrated treatment plans often combine therapy, medication, and support groups for best results. For severe cases, medically supervised detox may be needed to manage withdrawal safely (Mayo Clinic, 2023). Telehealth and outpatient programs increase access to care, while inpatient rehabilitation offers structured support for those with more complex needs. Recovery is highly personal—no single treatment fits everyone. By understanding and accessing these options, people with AUD can find pathways to lasting health and sobriety.

IAM Peer Employee Assistance Program



The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP peer coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations; they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP peer coordinators will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that addressed the difficulty you were experiencing.

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Treatment Modalities for Alcohol Use Dis- order

In-patient treatment for Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) provides round-the-clock medical care in a controlled environment, ideal for severe cases or complicated withdrawal.

Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOP) offer structured therapy and support several days a week, allowing patients to live at home while receiving comprehensive care.

Self-help groups like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) complement professional treatment by providing peer support, accountability, and shared experience. Combining these approaches can enhance recovery success by addressing medical, psychological, and social needs.