

My wife left taking the children. I am on corrective action at my job. My friends won't return my calls; even Blue (family dog) growls at me. Sure, I yell and swear sometimes after I had a few drinks. Yeah, there have been times I've come to work hung-over. So what if I made a few sexual comments at the party last week. I was only fooling around. Can't they take a joke? Everybody saying I got a "problem." They're wrong. I don't have a problem.

~ Anonymous

Many individuals experience stress in their work environments, interpersonal relationships and struggles at daily living. These quite normal stress reactions can range from mild to severe and may be either short-lived or persist for a very long time.

In some cases, alcohol and drugs are not only used to decrease stress and anxiety, but it has also been used to manage severe symptoms arising from traumatic experiences. You might find yourself drinking or using drugs for a variety of reasons when under stress or other trauma, including to:

- ~ Help your sleep
- ~ Decrease sadness
- ~ Relax
- ~ Help yourself be around others
- ~ Decrease emotional pain
- ~ Increase pleasure
- ~ Drown your worries
- ~ Keep upsetting memories from coming to mind
- ~ Escape present difficulties
- ~ "Shake off" stress
- ~ Calm anxiety

I just wanted the pain gone !

I started therapy with Dr. Micheal Kane who has been extremely helpful in supporting the changes I've had to make. I had a lot of anger, which I needed to learn to manage. I have found a new relationship that is very nourishing. I had to sell my house and move into an apartment. In the process, I had a heart problem that required a stent and cardio rehab. I'm much better now; physically better, mentally much better.

Life is Good!

~ Barry (51)
Landscape Architect

Some useful websites if you are looking for more information about alcohol and drug use or about how to get help.

- ~ Alcohol and Drug Abuse Information and Resources:
www.alcoholandabuse.com
- ~ National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism:FAQ
www.niaa.nih.gov/faq.htm
- ~ Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator:
<http://findtreatment.samba.gov/>
- ~ Alcoholics Anonymous Homepage:
www.alcoholics-anonymous.orgstanford.edu/school/psychiatry/coe/



Self-Relational Psychotherapy

www.lovingtheself.com -----

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*There is one certainty in life: we will all die one day.
It is how we lived. We determine the quality of our lives.
To live is to walk the journey called **Life with minimum regret.***

~ Dr. Micheal Kane

When Enough is Enough:

The Use of Alcohol & Drugs to Reduce Stress.



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Using Alcohol and Drugs to Reduce Stress

Understandably, alcohol and drugs may seem to make things better. They may help you sleep, forget problems or feel more relaxed. However, these are short-term benefits that often lead to “dead ends.” In the long run, using alcohol and drugs to cope with stress will cause a whole new set of very serious problems, as well as worsening the original problems that led you to drink or use drugs. Alcohol and drug abuse can cause problems with your family life, health, mental well-being, relationships, finances, employment, spirituality, self-esteem and sense of self worth.

Consider the impact of alcohol and drug use on partner/spouse and family relationships. Being under the influence of alcohol and drugs decreases intimacy and creates the inability to communicate well. Family members can feel rejected by someone who is always under the influence. In addition, witnessing someone’s behavior while under the influence can be emotionally and psychologically distressing.

Children and adolescents may not understand the aggressive behavior, the shutting down or the hiding out that can occur along with substance use and unregulated use of alcohol. The fallout from an accident or an arrest can bring a long lasting impact on your loved ones. Alcohol and drug problems are dangerous for loved ones because they are often linked with family violence and driving while under the influence.

When is Use of Alcohol or Drugs a Problem?

It is often hard to decide whether alcohol or drug use is becoming a problem. It can happen gradually and sometimes can be hard to notice by the person who is using.

Here are things that people sometimes say to themselves to convince themselves they “do not” have a problem:

- “I just drink beer (wine)”
- “I don’t use hard drugs”
- “I am not an alcoholic”
- “I gave it up for 3 weeks last year”
- “I don’t drink every day”
- “I have never missed a day of work”
- “I don’t need help. I can handle it myself”

DO YOU RECOGNIZE ANY OF THESE?

Becoming Dependent on Drugs & Alcohol.

Alcohol or drug use can be considered a problem when it causes difficulties, even in minor ways. Here are some questions that you can ask yourself to see if you have or are developing a problem:

- Have friends or family commented on how much or often you drink or use drugs?
- Have you found yourself feeling guilty about your drinking or drug use?
- Have you found yourself drinking (using drugs) more over time?
- Have you tried to cut down your alcohol (drug) use?
- Does your drinking (using drugs) ever affect your ability to fulfill personal obligations such as parenting or work?
- Do you drink (use drugs) in situations that are physically dangerous such as driving or operating machinery while under the influence?
- Have you found that you need more alcohol (drugs) to get the same effect?

Without “judging yourself,” if you find that you are answering “yes” to one or more of these questions, maybe it is time to reevaluate your use, cut back and seek help from friends, family or a professional.

What to Do if Alcohol or Drugs are Causing Problems

If you think that alcohol or drug use has become (or is becoming) a problem for you, a friend or a loved one, there are several things you can do:

- Recognize that you are not alone and that others are available to lend support.
- Find help. Getting help is the most useful tool in decreasing or stopping problem drinking or drug use. Seek assistance even if you have doubts about being able to quit or if you are feeling guilt about the problem.
- Call your healthcare provider, contact a physician, counselor or therapist. Contact your local Alcoholics Anonymous for guidance in your recovery.

DOING THESE THINGS CAN HELP GUIDE YOU ON THE PATH TO THE LIFE YOU WANT.

Listed below are some useful websites if you are looking for more information about alcohol and drug use or about how to get help.

- ~ Alcohol and Drug Abuse Information and Resources: www.alcoholandabuse.com
- ~ National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism:FAQ www.niaa.nih.gov/faq.htm
- ~ Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator: <http://findtreatment.samba.gov/>
- ~ Alcoholics Anonymous Homepage:
www.alcoholics-aanonymou,orgstanford.edu/school/psychiatry/coe/

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Dr. Kane earned his doctorate in clinical psychology from Argosy University/Seattle Washington School of Professional Psychology in 2005. In addition, he received Masters degrees in social work from the University of Washington in 1983, clinical psychology from Argosy University/Seattle in 2002 and postgraduate studies in Traumatology from the Justice Institute of British Columbia, (Vancouver, BC) Canada. Dr. Kane is a certified trauma specialist through the Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists (ATSS) and holds two clinical Dipolmates, the Dipolmate in Clinical Social Work from the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and Board Certified Dipolmate from the American Board of Examiners in Clinical Social Work (ABE).

Dr. Kane has served on the clinical faculties of the University of Washington, School of Medicine’s Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences and the University of Washington’s School of Social Work. In addition, Dr. Kane has served as the Associate Director of Training & Development, Trauma Resources Coordinator and Mental Health Therapist of Hall Health Primary Care Center of the University of Washington and as an instructor and member of the advisory board of the UW School of Social Work’s Certificate Program “Psychological Trauma Effective Treatment and Practice”. Dr. Kane has served as a consultant on complex trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder to the Congressional Black Caucus Veterans Braintrust (US House of Representatives).

Dr. Kane has maintained a private practice since 1985 working with individuals, couples and families. His theoretical framework is self-relational psychotherapy (i.e. psychological self) which is integrative and reflecting themes based on psychodynamic, reality, and cognitive-behavioral approaches. Dr. Kane’s specialties include domestic violence, anger management, depression, anxiety, trauma, grief and loss, and ethnic minority mental health issues. He has experience in gay/bisexual concerns as well as biracial relationship issues. Dr. Kane’s research interests are focused on the integration of trauma and domestic violence and its implications within the psychological self.

Publications:

~ Our Blood Flows Red: Trauma & African-American Men in Military Service, Clinical Implications For Working with African-American Veterans with Complex Trauma. Saarbrucken, Germany: LAP Lambert Academic Publishing. Kane, M. (2010).

~ A Review Study of the Clinical Implications for Working with African-American Veterans. (Doctoral dissertation, Argosy University-Seattle, 2005). Dissertation Abstracts International, 25, 144, Kane, M. (2005)



For additional information regarding Dr. Kane’s background, please visit www.lovingthefself.com

*Heart,
Instinct,
Principles*