

# Prevention Professionals of Northern Middlesex



May 14, 2021

May is Mental Health Awareness month! We will look at and answer some critical questions each week. What is the connection between mental health and substance use disorders, what are classified as mental health disorders, and what resources are available for these challenges to name just a few!

## The Connection Between Substance Use Disorders and Mental Health!

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/common-comorbidities-substance-use-disorders/part-1-connection-between-substance-use-disorders-mental-illness>

Many individuals who develop substance use disorders (SUD) are also diagnosed with mental disorders, and vice versa. Multiple national population surveys have found that about half of those who experience a mental illness during their lives will also experience a substance use disorder and vice versa.

## Co-occurring Substance Use Disorders and Physical Comorbidities!

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/common-comorbidities-substance-use-disorders/part-2-co-occurring-substance-use-disorder-physical-comorbidities>

People with substance use disorders also often experience comorbid chronic physical health conditions, including chronic pain, cancer, and heart disease. The use of various substances—including alcohol, heroin, prescription stimulants, methamphetamine, and cocaine—is independently associated with increased risk for cardiovascular and heart disease.

## WHO ARE WE?

### SAPC

SAPC is a coalition of eight communities working together to help reduce substance abuse with specific intentions for youth below the age of 18.

Communities include:

Billerica—Mike Higgins  
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# Why is There Comorbidity Between Substance Use Disorders and Mental Illnesses?

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/common-comorbidities-substance-use-disorders/why-there-comorbidity-between-substance-use-disorders-mental-illnesses>

The high prevalence of comorbidity between substance use disorders and other mental illnesses does not necessarily mean that one caused the other, even if one appeared first. Establishing causality or directionality is difficult for several reasons. For example, behavioral or emotional problems may not be severe enough for a diagnosis (called subclinical symptoms), but subclinical mental health issues may prompt drug use. Also, people's recollections of when drug use or addiction started may be imperfect, making it difficult to determine whether the substance use or mental health issues came first.

## Substance Use and Mental Health!

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/substance-use-and-mental-health/>

A substance use disorder (SUD) is a mental disorder that affects a person's brain and behavior, leading to a person's inability to control their use of substances such as legal or illegal drugs, alcohol, or medications. Symptoms can range from moderate to severe, with addiction being the most severe form of SUDs.

## Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) Training!

[https://www.nami.org/Advocacy/Crisis-Intervention/Crisis-Intervention-Team-\(CIT\)-Programs](https://www.nami.org/Advocacy/Crisis-Intervention/Crisis-Intervention-Team-(CIT)-Programs)

The lack of mental health crisis services across the U.S. has resulted in law enforcement officers serving as first responders to most crises. A Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program is an innovative, community-based approach to improve the outcomes of these encounters.

Massachusetts fact sheet: <https://www.nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-Media/StateFactSheets/MassachusettsStateFactSheet.pdf>

National Fact Sheet: <https://www.nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-Media/StateFactSheets/AllStatesStateFactSheet.pdf>

## Is There a Link Between Marijuana Use and Psychiatric Disorders?

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/there-link-between-marijuana-use-psychiatric-disorders>

Several studies have linked marijuana use to increased risk for psychiatric disorders, including psychosis (schizophrenia), depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders, but whether and to what extent it actually causes these conditions is not always easy to determine

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