



UNDERSTANDING DRUG & ALCOHOL ADDICTION

Advice & Help for Families

In The Name Of Allah,

The Entirely Merciful, The Especially Merciful

The aim of this article is to help Muslims who have a loved one with drug or alcohol addiction in their family to better understand addiction and the role the family plays in recovery of their loved and themselves.

Sadly, today the Muslim community has its share of drug and alcohol problems. Some of our youths have been caught up in the awful grip of drug and or alcohol addiction and associated crime.

How Families Are Affected

The life of the family of a person with intoxicant addiction can become an existence of misery, anxiety, frustration, confusion, and desperation. Normal life is devastated. But there is a way to regain sanity and normality back into life. The keys to finding the answers are 1) turning to **ALLAH** (swt) for guidance and help, 2) knowledge about drugs, addiction, and the role the family plays in recovery and 3) getting professional help.

Alhamdulillah, (Praise Allah) Muslims should always have hope that Allah (swt) will help them out of our difficulties and not despair.

Qur'an Surah (Chapter) al-Talaq 65: 2+3

"...and whoever fears Allah, He will make for him a way out"

"...and whoever relies upon Allah, then indeed He is sufficient for him"

Allah (swt) often mentions the importance of seeking knowledge, for example:



Qur'an Surah az-Zumar 39: 9

"... Say, are those who know equal to those who do not know?"

The following chapters will, insha Allah (if Allah wills), provide some information that will give a clearer understanding about drugs, addiction and related issues which will help the family to cope with their addicted loved one and improve their situation.

What Does Islam Say About Intoxicants?

The warning against using intoxicants was revealed by Allah (swt) gradually to get the people familiar with the idea, until the total prohibition was declared.

Allah (swt) says:-

Qur'an Surah al-Baqarah 2: 219

"They ask you (O Muhammad) about wine and gambling. Say 'in them is great sin and (yet, some) benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit'...Thus Allah makes clear to you the verses (of revelation) that you might give thought"*

*"wine" – in Arabic "khamr":- includes all intoxicants.

Qur'an Surah an-Nisa 4: 43

"O you who have believed, do not approach prayer while you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying"

This verse was revealed before the total prohibition of intoxicants.

Qur'an Surah al-Ma'idah 5: 90

"O, you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling (sacrificing on) stone alters (to other than Allah), and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful. Satan wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants and gambling and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. So will you not then abstain?"*

* the prohibition understood from the word 'avoid' is stronger than if Allah (swt) had merely said 'abstain'. 'Avoid' means to distance oneself from anything remotely related to these practices.



The use of medications prescribed by doctors or available over the counter, must not be abused and used with intention of becoming intoxicated.

What Are Drugs?

Drugs can be divided into three categories:

1. Prescribed Drugs (Medications)
2. Alcohol
3. Marijuana, Heroin, Cocaine, Ecstasy etc.

Generally speaking, drugs and alcohol are used to satisfy the need to feel relief.

Addictive drugs cause either a reduction of pain or a heightening of mood, altering the mind's perception of reality. A person who has been abusing drugs for a long period of time may become emotionally desensitized and appear unfeeling and can even cause mental illness.

Drugs have different forms, so depending on the drug, the amount taken, and frequency used, the human body is affected in different ways. They have different short- and long-term effects. People with addiction develop tolerance to and dependency on drugs and suffer different effects of withdrawal according to the type of drug/s they use.

Drug addiction reduces a person's ability to live a normal life. Dependence can lead to a variety of health, financial, legal, employment and relationship problems.

What Is Addiction?

The brain and other systems in the body have functions and tasks to perform. Specific substances control these functions. These substances either activate or block these functions. The substances that activate the functions are called activators or stimulants while the substances that block these functions are called blockers or depressants. Each function in the body has an ON switch and an



OFF switch, these switches are called receptors. So, for a drug to have an effect on the body, it must work on these switches (receptors) throughout the body including the central nervous system by binding to them.

The drugs replace important natural substances (activators or blockers) produced in the body and brain for its natural function. When the drug supply to the body continues, the body reduces the production of its own natural substances to provide a healthy balance for functions required, this is the point when physical addiction starts.

Tolerance, Dependence and Withdrawal

The person becomes psychologically (habitually) and physically addicted to the drugs or alcohol because they develop a tolerance to and dependence on them.

Tolerance means that a person builds up the ability to tolerate more and more of the drug. They take higher amounts of the drug to achieve the same effects they used to have with lower amounts.

Dependence on a drug means that it takes up a lot of the person's thoughts, emotions, and activities. The person constantly seeks the relief that drugs give him/her and seeks to avoid the mental and physical horrors of withdrawal.

Addiction takes hold of the person's life. Daily life is obsession with the getting and using of drugs. The initial problem he/she was trying to avoid has perhaps now faded from memory. The more they use drugs the guiltier they feel and the more depressed they become. A person addicted to intoxicants will sacrifice his/her personal integrity, relationships with family and friends, studies, employment, savings, anything to get more drugs.

The Cycle Of Quitting, Withdrawal, Craving And Relapse

The body of a person with addiction becomes unable to make its own natural substances (activators and blockers) so when they try to quit, the brain sends demands for more to maintain



normal functions. The person then suffers withdrawal and cravings that are so powerful he/she will find any excuse to use drugs again, which causes relapse.

Addiction is often called an “illness” or a “disease”. The Islamic view of these terms does not mean that they are not responsible and accountable for their own choices and actions. They have choices; get help to recover or continue their miserable existence and face the consequences in this life and the next.

Dangers Involved With Drug Abuse

Major dangers include:

1) Toxic reaction or overdose with potentially lethal consequence. This occurs because the drug (heroin for example) is often mixed to different degrees with other substances (lactose, powdered milk, etc). A person may use the same quantity but because of higher purity (ie; stronger) unintentional overdose may result.

2) The use of dirty needles by intravenous users causes increased risks of infection of hepatitis B and C, infection of the heart lining (bacterial endocarditis), and infection with the AIDS virus (human immunodeficiency virus or HIV), and are causes of death in intravenous drug users and their sexual partners.

Why Does A Person Become An Addicted to intoxicants?

People do not intend to become addicted. Drug and alcohol use can start because of a variety of reasons such as socializing, peer group pressure, curiosity, medical or other reasons.

Everyone experiences problems in their lives. People with low iman (faith with submission) and tawakol (reliance) in Allah (swt) find they cannot cope with their problems and turn to drugs and or alcohol to escape their problems. Of course, their problems remain and when the person becomes



sober they once again find they can't cope so repeat the drug use to gain relief. So begins the process of habitual use that leads to addiction.

As Muslims we have the comfort of knowing that Allah (swt) purifies and strengthens us through trials and afflictions. These trials can come as a result of our own wrongdoing and or come our way to test and strengthen our faith and purify us from our sins. We also have the comfort of knowing that we can rely on Allah (swt) to help us through our problems.

Allah (swt) says:

Qur'an Surah al "Ankabut 29:2-3

"Do the people think that they will be left to say "We believe" and they will not be tried? But We have certainly tried those before them, and Allah will surely make evident those who are truthful, and He will surely make evident the liars."

Qur'an Surah al-Baqaroh 2:286

"Allah does not charge a soul except (with that within) it's capacity. It will have (the consequence of) what (good) it has gained, and it will bear (the consequence of) what (evil) it has earned...."

Qur'an Surah al-Mu'minun 23:62

"And We tax not any person except according to his capacity, and with Us is a record which speaks the truth, and they will not be wronged."

Qur'an Surah al-Mulk 67:2

"Who (Allah) has created death and life, that He may test you which of you is best in deed, and He is the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving."

S'ad (raa) [radiallahu anhu – may Allah be pleased with him] reported that the Prophet Muhammad (saaw) [sollAllahu alayhi wassallam – Prayers of Allah and peace be upon him] said:



“The most in their suffering among the people are the prophets, then the best, then the (next) best. One is afflicted in accordance with his deen (faith). If his deen is firm, his affliction is hard, and if his deen is weak, his affliction is light. Indeed, one would be so much subjected with adversity until he walks among the people without any sins.”

Recorded by Ahmed, at-Tirmithee and others, authenticated by al-Albaanee (Saheeh ul-Jaami’ no. 993)

Aisha (raa) narrated that once some pain afflicted the Prophet (saaw), causing him to suffer and turn about in his bed. He (saaw) said to her:

“An ailment is intensified for the righteous. Whenever a believer is afflicted by a hardship, whether it is a thorn or more, a sin is taken off from him because of it, and he is elevated by one rank (in jannah).”

Recorded by Ahmed. Authenticated by al Haakim, ath-Thahabee and al-Albaanee.

Abu Hurairah (raa) reported that the Prophet (saaw) said:

“Whenever a Muslim is afflicted by harm from sickness or other matters, Allah will drop his sins because of that, like a tree drops it’s leaves.”

Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others.

Why Can’t They Just Stop?

People with intoxicant addiction cannot stop using for a combination of reasons:

- They have low iman (faith with submission) or tawakol (reliance) on Allah (swt).
- Mental and physical cravings for the drug.
- The habitual addiction (the lifestyle).
- The original problem may not be resolved.
- Fear of the horrors of withdrawal.



Behaviour And Character Of A Person Addicted To Intoxicants

The personality of a person with drug or alcohol addiction includes behaviour and characteristics such as:

- Mood swings.
- Unreliability.
- Unable to finish projects.
- Unexpressed resentment and secret hatreds.
- Dishonesty; - lying to family, friends and others.
- Withdraws from those who love him/her and isolates self.
- Intentionally causes arguments with loved ones to justify using drugs.
- Uses intimidation, threats, violence.
- May appear chronically depressed.
- Pawning or selling anything of value and getting into increased debt.
- May begin criminal activities to raise money for drugs.

The Relationship With The Family

Most people naturally think that the solution to the problem is to get the addicted person to just stop using, then life will return to normal, and all the problems will go away. Unfortunately, it's not that simple.

Firstly, you cannot "just stop" an addiction. There are spiritual, psychological and physical problems involved that must be dealt with and these things need professional help and take time.

The person with addiction can have an enormous amount of control over the family. He/she can escape the responsibility of facing up to doing something about his/her addiction in different ways.

For example: -

- They refuse to discuss the problem, withdraws from their loved ones and isolates him/herself.
- They beg for forgiveness and promise that it won't happen again.



- They deliberately cause arguments to make the family angry with him/her, then uses this conflict to justify his/her using intoxicants.

The addicted person keeps his/her drug habit supplied on a daily basis by methods which can involve lying, manipulation, promises, threats, intimidation, emotional blackmail, stealing, borrowing money, pawning things of value etc.

This continual cycle of behaviour causes the family to become more and more anxious over their loved one's addiction. Eventually the family members become obsessed with their loved ones' problems and the problems he/she causes the family.

Family Actions and Reactions

The person with addiction has the ability to manipulate the family into behaviour that actually "enables" him/her to continue using drugs. The family needs to understand how their behaviour affects the situation and how to modify it. When the family improves their own understanding, attitudes, actions and reactions this will not only help them to recover but also improve their loved one's chance of recovery, insha Allah.

The family members find themselves behaving in ways that they wouldn't normally. Some of these behaviours are:

- Lying, making up excuses for / pretending / covering up for their loved one's behaviour in front of others.
- Becoming antisocial so that they do not have to answer questions about their loved one.
- Always being cautious during conversation with people, unable to relax and talk freely.
- Trying to out manipulate their loved one.
- Their thoughts are always about their loved one, how to make them stop, what will happen next, the financial problems etc.
- Unable to concentrate on tasks at hand.
- Neglecting the needs and welfare of the other members of the family and themselves.



- Becoming unwell; - suffering anxiety, depression, nervous tension, headaches, ill health.
- Finding themselves nagging, arguing, lecturing and recalling past mistakes.
- Paying their addicted loved one's debts to keep them out of trouble and to cover up for them.
- Hiding money and valuables.
- Searching the addicted loved one's room and belongings for drugs and associated tools.
- Borrowing money for their addicted loved one.
- Going to charity organizations for help to buy food and or pay bills.

Their lives become unmanageable and miserable. Some families feel so ashamed of the problem that they cannot bring themselves to seek help. Sometimes, their loved one ends up in jail, which may mean partial relief for the family but not complete. The family suffers anxiety over their addicted loved one's incarceration and what is going to happen when he/she is released. A woman whose husband has an addiction to intoxicants may be in the situation where he is not providing for her and the children properly. She should not wait until there is no food in the house, the electricity, gas and telephone are being cut off, and eviction notices are being sent to the house because the rent has not been paid. She must take serious action. Allah (swt) has decreed rights of support and protection for women and children, she should demand those rights and do what is necessary to get them.

How Does the Family Stop “Enabling” And Start Their Own Recovery?

It is imperative for the recovery of the family and hopefully their loved one, that the family learns to modify their own behaviour.

Some examples are:

- Do not try to “control” their loved one. He/she is responsible for his/her own choices and actions.
- Don't nag, lecture, and remind of past mistakes.
- Do not be drawn into arguments. You don't need the stress and they will use the arguing to justify his/her using.



- Do not assist by bailing out him/her of debt, lending or giving them money, lending or giving them items to pawn etc.
- Let them face the consequences of their own actions.
- Calmly but firmly explain that their addiction is their own problem and if they choose to disobey Allah (swt) by using drugs then they can do it without your help.
- Let them know that if and when they choose to take steps to get help to quit, then you will be there to help and support them.
- So much of your time and energy has gone into your addicted loved one, now instead, spend some time and energy on looking after yourself and your family. Do some activities that will make you and them happy.
- Don't tolerate the addict using drugs in the family home.
- Strictly guard your prayers, read Qur'an often, for this is a healing and mercy.
- Release your addicted loved one into the care of Allah, you have no power over his/ her addiction.
- Have hope but remember to accept what Allah has destined in His wisdom.
- Keep company with other Muslims who are practicing their deen (Islamic way of life) correctly.
- Attend Islamic classes regularly and learn about your deen. It will, insha Allah, increase your love for Allah (swt) and instill faith, reliance on Allah and piety (God consciousness) in your heart which will help you to cope with any problem in life, (insha Allah).
- Attend meetings with people who have similar problems. Often sharing your experiences is helpful in the process of recovery.
- Get professional help for yourself.

As well as this, the family members should do some sincere soul searching. Have they done their best to nurture their relationship with their loved one prior to the addiction? Did they have good communication? Did they practice Islam? The family members may need professional therapy and counselling.



Reliance on Allah (swt)

The individual family members must turn to Allah (swt), making sincere tauwbah (repentance) for their own sins and shortcomings, remember Allah's favours and mercy with gratitude and humbleness, put their trust in and reliance on Allah (swt) as He has the power to do anything.

Qur'an Surah ash-Shoora 42: 25

"and it is He who accepts repentance from His servants and pardons misdeeds, and He knows what you do."

Qur'an Surah Hud 11; 123

"And to Allah belongs the unseen of the heavens and the earth and to Him return all affairs (for decision), so worship Him and put your trust in Him. And your Lord is not unaware of what you do."

Qur'an Surah al-Imran 3: 150

"Nay, Allah is your Protector, and He is the Best of Helpers"

Every person is accountable and responsible for his or her own choices and actions.

Every person is accountable and responsible for his or her own choices and actions, and Allah (swt) will not help a person unless they open their heart to Him and ask His help sincerely.

Qur'an Surah al-Anfal 8: 53

"That is because Allah would not change the favour which He had bestowed upon a people until they change what is within themselves. And indeed, Allah is Hearing and Knowing."

Qur'an Surah Al-An`am 6:17

"And if Allah touches you with harm, none can remove it but He, and if He touches you with good, then He is able to do all things."



Alhamdulillah, Allah (swt) hears the du'a (supplication) of His servants. So make du'a to Allah (swt) in hope but always accept with patience what befalls, because you can't change the past and Allah is with those who are patient.

Qur'an Surah Ash-Sharh 94:8

"And to your Lord turn your invocations"

Qur'an Surah Al-Anfaal 8:46

"And obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not dispute, lest you lose courage and your strength depart, and be patient. Surely, Allah is with those who are patient."

Supplications

Qur'an Surah Ash-Sharh 94:8

"And to your Lord turn your invocations"

Supplication for seeking refuge with Allah from anxiety and sorrow etc.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحُزْنِ ،
وَالْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ وَالْبُخْلِ وَالْجُبْنِ
وَضَلْعِ الدِّينِ وَغَلْبَةِ الرِّجَالِ .

Allahumma innee a`oothubika minalhammi walhuzni,
wal`ajzi walkasali walbukhli waljubni,
wa doliddaini wa ghalabatirrojaal.

*"O Allaah, I take refuge in You from anxiety and sorrow,
weakness and laziness, miserliness and cowardice,
the burden of debts and from being over-powered by men."*



Supplication when stricken with a mishap or overtaken by an event.

قَدَّرَ اللهُ وَمَا شَاءَ فَعَلَ.

حَسْبِيَ اللهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ.

Qoddarollahu wamaa shaa'a fa`ala

Hasbiyallaahu wa ni`mal wakeel

"Allah has decreed and what He wills, He does"

"Sufficient is Allah for me and how fine a trustee (He is)."

Supplication for one afflicted by a calamity

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

اللَّهُمَّ أَجْرِنِي فِي مُصِيبَتِي وَأَخْلِفْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا.

Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raaj`oon

Allahumma ajurnee fee museebatee wakhluf lee khoiyron minhaa.

"To Allah we belong and unto Him is our return.

O Allah, recompense me for my affliction and

replace it for me with something better."

WHERE TO GET HELP

The National Zakat Foundation – "New Beginnings" Program

<https://www.nzf.org.au/program/new-beginnings>

Call: 1300 663 729



The Rehabilitation Project

Phone: 0426 957 386

Email: support@therehabilitationproject.org

The Rehabilitation Project is a community-based drug and alcohol addiction-support and recovery service targeted at, but not limited to, the Muslim community, aligning culturally sensitive and appropriate values to the psychosocial model using person-centred and strength-based approaches.

The Rehabilitation Project is committed to providing a platform for people experiencing addiction, wanting or in recovery, to come together to connect, share their experience and find support.

AusRelief

Address: 101 Rookwood Road. Yagoona NSW

Phone: 1300 864 357

AusRelief gives clients suffering from drug, alcohol, and other addictions with a tailored program, that will meet their cultural and religious needs.

AusRelief's local initiatives include a grocery drive in partnership with Woolworths and Coles where essential food packs are assembled and distributed to families in need and at most risk in our communities. They also run the first of its kind 180Relief Rehabilitation program. 180Relief is focused on providing a holistic approach for individuals and families. Unique to 180Relief services is the around-the-clock case management service for both the individuals suffering from addiction as well as their families.

Psych Central

PsychCentral is a professional psychological and allied health service tailored to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. They conduct assessments,



treatment plans and interventions for individuals, couples, and families in a variety of clinical, forensic, school, disability (NDIS provider), and work-related settings.

Bankstown (Head Office)

Level 8, 66-72 Rickard Rd,
Bankstown Civic Tower
Bankstown 2200
Telephone: (02) 9793 7762

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

1300 652 820 or 0488 811 247

<https://www.na.org.au/multi/>

ADIS - Alcohol And Drug Information Service

NSW 24 hours – 1800 250 015
QLD 24 hours – 1800 177 833
SA 8:30am and 10:00pm 1300 13 1340

LIFE LINE – Drug And Alcohol Councelling

24 hours - 13 11 14

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

Al-anon Family Groups is an anonymous self-help for the family and friends whose lives are affected by alcohol abuse in a loved one.

ALL STATES HELP LINE: 1300 252 666 (cost of local call)

Email: alanonnorthernsw@bigpond.com

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National Zakat
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A U S T R A L I A

COMMUNITY WELFARE PROGRAM

New Beginnings

**Helping Muslims fight unhealthy addictions
and redirect their lives**

CEIDA - Centre for Education & Information on Drugs and Alcohol – Printed Resources

Nar Anon Family Groups – “A Guide For The Family of the Addict and Drug Abuser”

**May Allah grant His ummah forgiveness and mercy,
guidance and strength to pass the tests in our lives,
and grant us success in this life and the next.**

Ameen