

3 Myths about ADHD & Addiction

- 1. Myth: “Stimulant medication treatment of ADHD in childhood can lead to addiction later in life”**
 - Truth: Childhood stimulant use does NOT lead to Addiction
 - Pharmacologic treatment of ADHD does not appear to increase the risk for development of SUD in ADHD patients. - Wilens, T. E. and H. P. Upadhyaya (2007)
 - ...no compelling evidence that stimulant treatment of children with ADHD disorder leads to an increased risk for substance experimentation, use, dependence, or abuse by adulthood. - Barkley, R. A., et al. (2003)
 - Truth: Stimulant use can REDUCE the risks for Addiction
 - *i.e. Medications may offer a protective effect*
 - Pharmacotherapy was associated with an 85% reduction in risk for SUD in ADHD youth. -Biederman, J., et al. (1999)
- 2. Myth: “Long-term use of stimulant medication will lead to addiction”**
 - Truth: Long-term stimulant use does NOT lead to Addiction
 - *ADHD medication is not associated with increased rate of substance abuse.*
 - The rate ... was 31% lower among those prescribed ADHD medication... Also, the longer the duration of medication, the lower the rate of substance abuse.” - Chang, Z., et al. (2014)
- 3. Myth: “People with ADHD will abuse their stimulant medication”**
 - Truth: Stimulant medication rarely abused by ADHD’ers
 - Neurotypical Brain ≠ ADHD Brain
 - *i.e. ADHD’ers more likely to go into “Starbucks Syndrome” or “Zombie Mode” rather than “get high”*
 - Psychostimulants ... when used appropriately in individuals with ADHD do not appear to be frequently abused by patients ... - Kollins, S. H. (2008)
 - *Note: Short-acting psychostimulant formulations may have higher potential for abuse, misuse, and diversion...* - Kollins, S. H. (2008)



3 Myths about Addiction Treatment for people with ADHD

- 1. Myth: “We don’t need to screen for ADHD”** (i.e. Lack of screening during intake)

 - **Truth: Addiction Treatment Programs MUST Screen for ADHD**
 - Given the generally high prevalence of adult ADHD*, all treatment seeking SUD patients should be screened and, after a confirmed diagnosis, treated for ADHD... - van de Glind, G., et al. (2014)
 - * 25 - 40 % of people with Substance Abuse problems are estimated to also have ADHD
- 2. Myth: “People with ADHD must discontinue their stimulant medication while in treatment for addiction in order to get sober”**

 - **Truth: Addiction treatment SHOULD include CONCURRENT ADHD treatment**
 - People with both ADHD and addiction problems need to have these two issues treated concurrently
 - Treatment for adults with ADHD and substance abuse should include a combination of addiction treatment/psychotherapy and <ADHD> pharmacotherapy. -Wilens, T. E. (2004)
 - Simultaneous and integrated treatment of ADHD and SUD, using a combination of pharmaco- and psychotherapy, is recommended. -Crunelle, C. L., et al. (2018)
- 3. Myth: “People with ADHD and history of substance abuse will be unable to safely use their stimulant medications after they become sober”**

 - **Truth: Long-term use of ADHD Rx supports long-term Addiction Recovery**
 - Methylphenidate treatment reduces ... the risk for relapse to substance use in criminal offenders with ADHD and substance dependence. -Konstenius, M., et al. (2014)

