

COVID 19 Quarantine Poses Serious Threat to Those Struggling with Alcohol Abuse

A Perfect Storm for Alcoholics



Longmont, Apr 8, 2020 (Issuewire.com) - The recent call to stay at home and isolate to halt the spread of Coronavirus hits alcoholics harder than most. “Social isolation, combined with generalized anxiety about the virus and the current situation, creates a perfect storm for those struggling with alcohol abuse,” says Greg Hoffman, founder of Go Sober, an alcohol treatment program in Colorado. Hoffman has received numerous calls from concerned family members asking for advice after finding their loved ones at home alone drunk, passed out or even catatonic.

Boredom, too much free time, loss of work, frustration and uncertainty over the current pandemic add fuel to the fire. Alcohol abusers tend to use alcohol as a coping mechanism. Moreover, people who abuse alcohol are at an increased risk of having other mental health conditions, including depression, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, trauma and stress-related disorders. Each of these factors exacerbates the situation and make isolation more dangerous.

Those who struggle with alcohol abuse do best when they can follow a daily routine that includes getting out and about, going to work and to the gym, and being among others. These interactions and tasks serve as lifelines in that they allow the alcoholic to stay busy and engaged, and not think quite so much about drinking.

Friends and family members don’t understand the tremendous hold alcohol has on people who abuse alcohol. Alcoholism is progressive and alcohol still has the highest economic cost to society exceeding all other addictive substances. It is the third leading preventable cause of death in the US. There is a lot of misinformation about alcohol abuse and sadly, many think that people with a problem could simply quit if they tried.

Medical research shows that years of alcohol abuse cause real changes in the brain’s ability to produce rewards like dopamine. Because alcohol produces so much dopamine, the brain protects itself by downregulating the dopamine response. This makes it harder to produce dopamine naturally so when the brain experiences deficits it cues the individual to replenish. This persistent cueing is difficult to ignore such that most people eventually return to drinking. This is clearly a medical condition that has nothing to do with will power.

Hoffman's Go Sober program uses medications to help restore the dopamine response. Once the medications go to work, it's easier to produce dopamine again naturally so the brain no longer pesters the individual to replenish. This stops thinking about drinking. Once the individual no longer thinks about alcohol, they're free to make changes that should serve them well over the long term. In addition to the medication protocol, the Go Sober program provides intensive counseling and coaching in health and wellness, stress management and lifestyle change.

As an essential medical service provider, Go Sober is keeping its offices in Longmont and Centennial open. Greg Hoffman advises people to contact him at Go Sober for more information about research-based treatment that is effective and efficient. Contact Greg at ghoffman@gosober.org or call 303 827-4837. The Go Sober website is www.Gosober.org Offices are in Longmont and Centennial.

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