

Drugs, alcohol and depression

Most teens find themselves in situations where alcohol or drugs are being used. But teens who are dealing with depression need to use extra caution in making decisions about alcohol and drug use.

People who are depressed may say they feel better (more relaxed or improved mood) when under the influence of alcohol or drugs. There are a couple of problems with this:

- ⚡ they might start to believe that they can only be relaxed when using drugs or alcohol (*unrealistic thinking*)
- ⚡ being high or drunk makes it harder to learn and use new skills to deal with situations (*poor problem solving*).

This guide is all about developing realistic thinking and the ability to successfully solve problems.

Alcohol and drugs affect how people think, feel and behave. Depression also affects how people think, feel and behave, for the worse. So combining substance use and depression is a double whammy. It may lead to impulsive and poorly thought-out decisions. At the least, it may result in awkward or embarrassing situations that you have to deal with later, creating problems instead of solving them. At worst, it may result in serious outcomes where depressed teens do things to hurt themselves or those they care about.



~ Drugs, Alcohol and Depression ~

Alcohol and drugs can bring on depression or make it worse. Also, if a person is taking medication for depression, drugs and alcohol can stop the medication from working or cause a serious side effect.

Depending on how much is being used, and how much it interferes with your life, use of alcohol or drugs may become an addiction. At that point addiction is the biggest problem and it becomes harder to overcome depression.

If you are depressed and using alcohol or drugs then you need to think it through carefully. If you are seeing a counsellor, doctor or mental health professional, be honest and tell them. If you're not seeing a professional, consider talking with your parents or a trusted adult. If alcohol or drug use is interfering with your life, deal with it along with the depression.