

This is National Addictions Awareness Week

Did you know that people with a mental illness are twice as likely to have a substance use disorder compared to the general population?

- Substance use can mimic or hide the symptoms of mental health problems
- Sometimes people turn to substance use to forget about the symptoms of mental health problems
- Some substances can make mental health medications less effective
- Using substances can make people forget to take their medications
- When a person relapses (either their substance use or mental health), it can trigger the symptoms of the other (CMHA 2023)

A **concurrent disorder** is a general term that refers to a wide range of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. For example, this could be someone living with schizophrenia and struggling with cannabis use or an individual who lives with chronic depression and also engages in problematic alcohol use. (CMHA, 2023)

At least 20% of people with a mental illness have a co-occurring substance use disorder.⁷ For people with schizophrenia, the number may be as high as 50%.

Individuals with concurrent disorders **often experience poorer physical health and greater psychological distress** than do people with a single disorder. They may also receive less-than-optimal health care. (Stats Canada, 2017)

*We see what we want to see...
See that it is more than just an addiction!*

To get help for you or someone you care about, call 1-866-531-2600 or go to ConnexOntario.ca. Many services ARE free and help IS available.

Brought to you by the Simcoe Muskoka Addictions Awareness Week Committee:

Canadian Mental Health Association, Simcoe County Branch

Georgian College

Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care

Wendat Community Programs

Barrie Housing

