EATING DISORDERS & SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Multiple studies have demonstrated that many people with eating disorders also struggle with substance abuse, with a particularly significant crossover for those struggling with bulimia or binge eating disorder. Those struggling with both substance abuse and an eating disorder should receive comprehensive treatment from specialists with expertise in both issues.

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND EATING DISORDERS**

The substances most frequently abused by individuals with eating disorders or with sub-clinical symptoms of these disorders include:

- caffeine
- tobacco
- alcohol
- heroin
- cocaine
- laxatives/emetics/diuretics
- appetite suppressants (amphetamines)

**SIGNIFICANT CO-OCCURRENCE OF EATING DISORDERS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

According to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, up to

- **50%** of individuals with eating disorders abused alcohol or illicit drugs, a rate
- **5X** higher than the general population.

According to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, up to

- **35%** of individuals who abused or were dependent on alcohol or drugs have also had eating disorders, a rate
- **11X** higher than the general population.

**PERCENTAGE OF THOSE WITH EATING DISORDERS WHO ABUSE SUBSTANCES**

- **27%** Anorexia Nervosa
- **23%** Binge Eating Disorder
- **37%** Bulimia Nervosa

Compared to bulimic women who are not also alcohol-dependent, bulimic women who were alcohol-dependent reported a higher rate of:

- Suicide attempts
- Anxiety
- Personality & Conduct Disorders
- Other drug dependence

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