

Hartman's

In-Service Education SourceBook Series



# Substance Abuse & Misuse in the Older Adult

Sharon Edwards, RN, MSN, CS



# **Substance Abuse & Misuse**

## **In the Older Adult**

**Sharon Edwards, RN, MSN, CS  
Clinical Nurse Specialist  
Kingsport, Tennessee**

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**Barbara Acello, MSEd, RN  
Executive Director  
Innovations in Health Care  
Denton, Texas**

**Darlene Waggoner, RN  
In-Service Coordinator  
Lancaster Manor  
Lincoln, Nebraska**

#### **NOTICE TO THE READER**

Though the guidelines contained in this text are based on consultations with health care professionals, they should not be considered absolute recommendations. The instructor and readers should follow local, state, and federal guidelines concerning health care practices. These guidelines change and it is the reader's responsibility to be aware of these changes and of the policies and procedures of her or his health care facility/agency.

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#### **CREDITS**

Contributor: Sharon Edwards, RN, MSN, CS

Development Editor: Celia McIntire

Composition & Design: John W. Davis

Illustration: Thaddeus Castillo

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## Table of Contents

<b>FYI</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Lesson Plans</b>	<b>9-37</b>
	Introduction and Assessment ■ Differentiate between substance abuse and substance misuse ■ List reasons for substance abuse/misuse ■ Identify signs and symptoms of substance abuse/misuse ■ Describe types of substance abuse/misuse with over-the-counter medications ■ Identify interactions between alcohol and medications ■ Describe possible interactions between different types of prescribed medications ■ Describe how nicotine and caffeine affect medications ■ Describe psychological factors that influence substance abuse/misuse ■ Describe psychosocial factors that influence substance abuse/misuse ■ List health problems that may lead to substance abuse/misuse ■ Identify the method of treatment for substance abuse ■ Describe the corrective action for substance abuse/misuse ■ Closing and Assessment
<b>References</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Handouts (H) and Transparencies (T)</b>	<b>39-83</b>
	Assessment A (H) ■ Assessment A Answer Key (H) ■ Note-taking Worksheet (H) ■ Substance Abuse (T) ■ Substance Misuse (T) ■ Questions About Substance Abuse and Misuse (H) ■ Reasons for Substance Abuse/Misuse (T) ■ Signs and Symptoms of Substance Abuse (T) ■ Signs and Symptoms of Substance Misuse (T) ■ Word Search (H) ■ Word Search Answer Key (H) ■ Medication/Pill Schedule (H) ■ Types of Over-The-Counter Medications Frequently Abused/Misused (H/T) ■ Alcohol and Its Effects (H) ■ Effects of Alcohol on the Body (T) ■ Sources of Alcohol (T) ■ Interactions Between Alcohol & Medications (T) ■ Medication Factors: What You Should Know (H/T) ■ Commonly Prescribed Medications (H) ■ Effects of Nicotine and Caffeine (H) ■ Effects of Nicotine (T) ■ Effects of Caffeine (T) ■ Substances That Contain Caffeine (T) ■ Some Medications Containing Caffeine (T) ■ Psychological Factors (H/T) ■ Psychosocial Factors (H/T) ■ Ten Major Causes of Death (T) ■ Health Difficulties (H/T) ■ Steps of Substance Abuse Treatment (T) ■ Corrective Action for Substance Misuse (T) ■ Factors Influencing Education (H/T) ■ Assessment B (H) ■ Assessment B Answer Key (H)
<b>In-Service Evaluation Form</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Certificate of Completion</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Record Keeping Form</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>For More Information</b>	<b>87</b>



**A**s health care becomes more refined and technologies advance, individuals are beginning to live longer than ever before. One consequence of longer lifespans is an increase in the potential for substance abuse/misuse among older adults. In addition, the creation of many new drugs and a number of over-the-counter medications adds to this potential. Older adults' health status, economics, and ability to metabolize medications and food all influence their usage of medications. These factors complicate the issue of health care and create situations that must be carefully evaluated by the health care staff.

This project focuses on older adults for two reasons. First, older adults comprise the largest segment of healthcare consumers today. Second, many caregivers mistakenly believe older adults are much less likely to abuse substances. Most aspects of this SourceBook apply to people across the lifespan. Though we have attempted to focus on the unique problems of older adults, remind participants that substance abuse and misuse are not a normal process of aging!

This lesson plan is organized by learning objectives. Each objective is followed by several learning activities. Along with the lesson plan, we provide teaching tools, including transparency masters, handouts, and assessments. These teaching tools are referenced in the lesson plan. You may choose to use some or all of these tools in your presentation.

To use transparency masters, convert them to acetates for use with an overhead projector. If overhead projection is not convenient in your presentation area, copy the information from the transparency masters onto a chalk board or flip chart.

To use handouts, photocopy the number needed for your group. Consider using different colors of paper to organize the different handouts or to make some stand out. Limited permission is granted to photocopy the handouts for use at the site originally purchasing this in-service. Photocopying other parts of this in-service, including the lesson plan, is expressly prohibited.

Depending on the amount of time allotted for your in-service, you may wish to divide the program into three parts. If so, consider Objectives 1-3, 4-7, and 8-12. Though the program includes transparencies and handouts, learning of the objectives will be greatly enhanced through discussion. Sharing of personal experiences may encourage the class participants to individualize their learning. Discussion questions are often included in the lesson plans. This program may be used in home care or long term care (LTC) facilities, with some adaptations. The scope of information is designed for these possible situations. When LTC appears in the text, it indicates that a particular example or idea is specifically relevant to long term care.

**Happy Teaching!**



# **Substance Abuse and Misuse in the Older Adult**

## **Learning Objectives**

Upon completion of this in-service, you will accomplish the following objectives:

1. Differentiate between substance abuse and substance misuse.
2. List reasons for substance abuse/misuse.
3. Identify signs and symptoms of substance abuse/misuse.
4. Describe types of substance abuse/misuse with over-the-counter medications.
5. Identify interactions between alcohol and medications.
6. Describe possible interactions between different types of prescribed medications.
7. Describe how nicotine and caffeine affect medications
8. Describe psychological factors that influence substance abuse/misuse.
9. Describe psychosocial factors that influence substance abuse/misuse.
10. List health problems that may lead to substance abuse/misuse.
11. Identify the method of treatment for substance abuse.
12. Describe the corrective action for substance misuse.



# Introduction and Assessment

**Estimated Time:** 15 minutes

**Tools:**  
Handout Intro-1 Assessment A (pg.39)  
Handout Intro-2 Assessment A Answer Key (pg.41)  
Handout Intro-3 Note-taking Worksheet (pg.42)

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**Distribute  
Handout Intro-1  
Assessment A**

This in-service will encourage the participants to explore their attitudes concerning older adults and substance abuse and misuse.

Allow the participants to complete the test. When they are finished, review the answers. Encourage the group to discuss their answers and the reasons for their perceptions.

## Questions that may be helpful:

- Do any of you know older adults who live nearby or live with you or your family?
- Have any of you had experiences with an older adult who exhibits substance abuse? How did this affect you?
- Do any of your relatives who are older have more than one physician?
- Do they take multiple medications?

**Substance abuse is a complicated issue for the older adult, because of:**

- the incidence of health problems
- a greater number of prescribed drugs
- a lowered tolerance for medications

**Distribute  
Handout Intro-3  
Note-taking Worksheet**

Tell participants to take notes during lectures and discussions to help them organize and remember the information that is presented and discussed.

# Differentiate between substance abuse and substance misuse

**Estimated Time:** 10 minutes

**Tools:**  
Transparency 1-1 Substance Abuse (pg.44)  
Transparency 1-2 Substance Misuse (pg.45)  
Handout 1-1 Questions About Substance Abuse and Misuse (pg.46)

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**Learning Activity:** **Lecture and Discussion**

Ask participants about their understanding of substance abuse and substance misuse. Encourage as many ideas as possible.

**Display  
Transparency 1-1  
Substance Abuse**

**Substance abuse** occurs when the individual inappropriately takes substances (medications, alcohol, etc.) in such a manner that his or her lifestyle and/or relationship(s) are disrupted to some degree.

Go over the definition of substance abuse and note that this will be explored in more depth throughout the in-service. Be sure to emphasize that physical and/or psychological dependence are present in abuse.

**Display  
Transparency 1-2  
Substance Misuse**

**Substance misuse** is when the individual takes medication or substances in a manner other than that which was prescribed or recommended.

Note that there are important differences between abuse and misuse which will be discussed in more detail later (Learning Objective 3).

**Distribute  
Handout 1-1  
Questions About Substance  
Abuse and Misuse**

This handout goes over material covered in Learning Objectives 1, 2, and 3. Participants may want to refer to this information during future lectures and discussions.