

Drugs and Friendships

In general, people come together because they have shared interests. Without thinking about it, most people enjoy being a part of a group of friends because it makes them feel good and it increases their self-esteem. Everybody likes to be liked and wanted. Before they started using alcohol and other drugs, many people had a circle of friends with whom they would hang out.

But when drugs become a part of your life, you usually have less time for old friends. Drug users spend increasingly large amounts of time and energy trying to obtain, use, and recover from the effects of drugs. If they associate with people, they are usually ones who share an interest in getting and using alcohol and other drugs, because those are the activities that are important to them.



EXERCISE 2

Please answer the following questions:

1. What important relationships did alcohol and other drugs take from you?

2. Before you began using alcohol and other drugs, did you have a group of friends that you enjoyed being with?

Yes No



When drugs become a part of your life, you usually have less time for old friends.

Job Loss

Having a job is important for several reasons. The most obvious reason is that work gives you money to pay rent, buy groceries, and purchase clothes and other things.

While making money may be the most obvious reason to work, there are other important benefits as well. For instance, being able to support themselves and their families allows people to feel a sense of pride, accomplishment, and self-respect.

It's true that most people do *not* constantly feel pride and accomplishment because of their work, but having a job is still an important sign of success in our society. Many people dislike their jobs, or simply dislike working in general. But when people who dislike their jobs lose them, they still feel shame, embarrassment, and frustration.

Even jobs that are not enjoyable can provide a sense of financial security and perhaps other benefits, such as health insurance.

In active addiction, the compulsion to use drugs is often stronger than the need to work. Getting high, going through withdrawal, having a hangover, or waiting to get drugs can all make it more likely for a person to miss work or have problems on the job. As a result, alcohol and other drug use often leads to a person getting fired from a job.

Getting fired and being unemployed cause people to feel depressed, lonely, anxious, and angry, which can all lead to more drug use. Spending money on cocaine and alcohol while not having an income increases the depression and self-pity. In order to get money for drugs, people may go further into debt or turn to crime, which can cause further problems.

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