

Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD)

When Disregard for Consequences Feeds the Cycle of Relapse



What is Antisocial Personality Disorder?

Antisocial Personality Disorder is a mental health condition marked by a persistent pattern of disregard for the rights and feelings of others. People with ASPD often act impulsively, lie easily, and struggle to feel genuine remorse, making it difficult for them to maintain stable relationships, accept responsibility, or own up to the consequences of their behavior.

What Does it Look Like?

- > **Chronic Deception**
Lies without hesitation, even when caught, leaving you questioning everything.
- > **Disregard for Rules and Consequences**
Laws, boundaries, and agreements apply only to others. Legal troubles become a pattern.
- > **Impulsive, Reckless Behavior**
Acts on urges to use substances or spend money without considering the consequences.
- > **Absence of Remorse**
When confronted, they minimize, deflect, or show no concern for how their actions affect others.

How Does ASPD Contribute to Relapse?

For someone with ASPD, the same traits that drive reckless decisions also make it extraordinarily difficult to sustain sobriety long-term.

- 1) **Impulsivity Overrides Long-Term Thinking**
The ability to weigh consequences and delay gratification is impaired, making substances an easy short-term solution.
- 2) **Treatment Requires Honest Self-Reflection**
Meaningful change demands admitting fault and accepting feedback. ASPD makes both feel threatening or irrelevant.
- 3) **Without Treating ASPD, the Pattern Continues**
They leave treatment with the same disregard for structure, inability to follow through, and vulnerability to relapse.

Prevalence:

3-4% of U.S. adults¹

Co-Occurrence:

~90% develop a substance use disorder in their lifetime²

Relapse Risk:

7-8x more likely to have alcohol dependence than average³

Sources: ¹ Grant et al., *Prevalence, Correlates, and Disability of Personality Disorders in the United States: Results from the NESARC (2004)*, *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*. ² The Recovery Village; American Addiction Centers. ³ Trull et al., *NESARC data on ASPD and substance dependence*. PMC

Long-Term Treatment for ASPD and Addiction

Individuals with ASPD often resist the self-examination and accountability that recovery requires. Someone who dismisses consequences, manipulates treatment providers, or views program rules as optional cannot develop lasting sobriety in a 30-day program. They need extended time and structure.

Our **long-term, progress-based model** requires demonstrated behavioral change, not just stated intentions. Clients advance through the program when they consistently follow through on commitments, take genuine responsibility for their actions, and show sustained changes in how they relate to others.



“Clients with ASPD are skilled at reading what people want to hear, and they’re very convincing. Real transformation requires enough time for families to see whether the words actually match the behavior.”

 **Brook McKenzie, LCDC**
CEO, Burning Tree Ranch



Dual Diagnosis Treatment for ASPD

When ASPD and addiction occur together, treating only the substance use leads to relapse. The impulsivity and disregard for consequences that drive substance use remain fully intact, and the person returns to the same patterns.

- **Treating Both Conditions Together**
Without addressing the underlying disorder, treatment becomes a cycle of short-term compliance followed by return to old behavior.
- **Building Accountability**
Following through on commitments requires practice. It takes time to develop the internal motivation that ASPD impairs.
- **Providing Enough Time**
Decades of ingrained patterns cannot be restructured in a few weeks.

Dual Diagnosis:

The presence of **both a substance use disorder and a mental health condition** occurring together. Effective treatment for dual-diagnosis addictions must address both aspects simultaneously.



Have Other Treatment Programs Missed the Deeper Issues?

Burning Tree Ranch is the Nation’s only authentic long-term treatment program for chronic relapse. Call us at (866) 287-2877 or visit us online at www.BurningTree.com.

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