

Substance-Induced Depressive Disorder

When the Substance Itself Creates the Depression That Drives More Use



What is Substance-Induced Depressive Disorder?

Substance-Induced Depressive Disorder is a condition where alcohol, drugs, or medications directly cause depression during use or withdrawal. The depressive symptoms are a physiological consequence of the substance itself, creating a cycle where the thing they use to cope is also producing the despair.

What Does it Look Like?

- **Deepening Depression During Use**
Their mood worsens the more they use, but they blame everything else.
- **Withdrawal-Driven Despair**
Every attempt to stop brings hopelessness that pulls them back to using.
- **Emotional Flatness**
They lose interest in people, activities, and life with no visible cause.
- **Confusion About the Source**
They're convinced they use because they're depressed, not the reverse.

How Does it Contribute to Relapse?

When the substance itself is producing the depression, abstinence deepens the despair driving the use.

- 1) **The Substance Creates the Problem It Appears to Solve**
Brief relief masks the depression that the substance itself is producing.
- 2) **Short-Term Programs Can't Break the Cycle**
Brain chemistry needs months to stabilize, not weeks.
- 3) **Misdiagnosis Leads to Wrong Treatment**
Without identifying the depression as substance-induced, treatment targets the wrong condition.

Prevalence:

40-60% of those with alcohol use disorders experience substance-induced depression¹

Co-Occurrence:

~55% of opioid use disorder patients also affected by depressive disorder²

Relapse Risk:

4.7-6.5x higher risk of post-discharge substance use³

Sources: ¹ Revadigar & Gupta, *Substance-Induced Mood Disorders, StatPearls (2022)* ² Revadigar & Gupta, *Substance-Induced Mood Disorders, StatPearls (2022)* ³ Samet et al., *Addiction (2013)*

Long-Term Treatment for Substance-Induced Depressive Disorder

Substance-induced depression requires sustained abstinence before the brain can begin to heal. Short-term programs barely get past the acute withdrawal phase, leaving the person in the trench of substance-induced despair.

Our **long-term, progress-based model** provides the extended time the brain needs to recover while building the coping skills and emotional resilience that replace substance use. Clients advance when they demonstrate genuine stabilization in mood, behavior, and relationships.



“Chronic substance use physically alters the brain’s ability to regulate mood. We often need months of sustained abstinence, medical monitoring, and clinical support before the brain chemistry begins to normalize.”

 **Dr. Leslie Secrest, MD**
Medical Director, Burning Tree Ranch



Dual Diagnosis Treatment for Substance-Induced Depression

When substance use is directly producing the depression, you need sustained abstinence and ongoing clinical support. Otherwise, the cycle of depression and relapse continues.

- **Treating the Substance Use as the Root Cause**
Sustained abstinence allows the brain chemistry to recover.
- **Supporting Neurochemical Recovery Over Time**
Mood stabilization requires months of clinical monitoring.
- **Building Coping Skills Before Leaving Care**
New ways to manage despair must replace substance use.

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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