

Self Esteem in Alcoholism

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Abstract

Self-esteem is the reflection of the understanding of oneself and sense of personal value. Perceptions toward oneself are developed through the process of acting, and then thinking about actions as well as how others perceive actions. Self-esteem refers to our feelings about ourselves or the value we have for ourselves. The effects of alcoholism can also be far-reaching and lead to problems with mental health. One of the effects frequently seen amongst alcoholics is the development of low self-esteem, which refers to an individual's overall subjective feelings of personal value and self-worth. It can have an effect on many areas of life, including substance use and recovery.

Key words: Alcoholism, Self Esteem

Introduction

Alcohol and self-esteem mutually impact one another. Alcohol use can temporarily raise or lower self-esteem, but it typically creates lower self-esteem in the long-term. Low or high self-esteem can be a contributing factor to alcohol abuse and dependence, but an appropriate level of self-esteem is a powerful tool in the battle against alcoholism. Alcohol and self-esteem has a mutually destructive relationship. As a chemical depressant, alcohol can negatively impact one's mental state, especially if they suffer from an external disorder or factors that affect their self-esteem.

Alcoholism, or the dependence on and compulsive consumption of alcohol, is a serious disease that can have serious consequences. but oftentimes it can also lead to legal problems and criminal charges, such as driving under the influence. Furthermore, it can cause serious physical and mental health issues.

Alcoholism and Low Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is defined as the way we view ourselves. Individuals with high self-esteem tend to view themselves in a positive light and have high confidence levels. In contrast, individuals with low self-esteem tend to have negative images of themselves and lack the ability to believe in their own self-worth and abilities.

Low self-esteem is often seen in individuals who have problems with alcohol. Although self-esteem tends to increase in the beginning stages of alcoholism, it eventually tends to decrease as alcoholics become more and more isolated and lose connections with people who used to be important in their lives. This decrease in self-esteem can lead alcoholics to accept that they will never escape addiction, thereby preventing them from seeking help. Some symptoms of low self-esteem include the following:

- Believing that others view in a negative light
- Feeling unable to succeed at anything
- Having negative thoughts about oneself
- Thinking that others are out to get
- Entering into or staying in bad relationships

Low self-esteem has been linked to the onset of drug use, and research has also shown a connection between low self-esteem and behavioral addictions including internet addiction, eating problems, and compulsive buying. While alcohol, drugs, or compulsive behaviors can initially mask insecurities and even make people feel more confident, these feelings are short-lived. Over time, grappling with the effect of addiction can harm a person's self-esteem and make recovery more difficult. Whether you're contemplating doing something about your addiction, or you're already on the road to recovery, these five exercises can help rebuild your self-esteem and improve your well-being and outlook on life.

Signs of Alcoholism

Some of the signs of alcoholism include the following:

- Inability to stay in control of drinking alcohol
- Inability to refrain from drinking alcohol
- Suffering from shaking, sweating, and mood swings when you stop drinking alcohol
- Alcohol use interferes with the ability to maintain a job or relationship
- Withdrawal from hobbies and responsibilities so you can drink

- Drinking alcohol secretly
- Having the urge to drink alcohol as soon as you wake up
- Not remembering what happened while on a drinking binge

The Relationship between Alcohol and Self-Esteem

Alcoholism Triggered by Unhealthy Self-Esteem

Alcohol abuse goes hand-in-hand with a harmful self-esteem. Self-esteem that is too low or high can be a trigger for someone to start drinking. Though they are for opposite reasons, both lead to a potential for dependency.

Filling the Void of Low Self-Esteem with Alcohol

People who battle low self-esteem hold themselves with little regard. They don't believe that their thoughts or opinions hold as much value as others' and that they won't have the same level of success as those close to them. Low self-esteem can be an issue in its own right, or it can be the result of a number of different personality disorders, such as Borderline Personality Disorder.

Reinforcing Fragile High Self-Esteem with Alcohol

People with fragile high self-esteem can often be identified by them hinging their self-worth on their performance in regular tasks. Failure can be a trigger for them to start using or become aggressive at others, trying to tear them down to feel better about Treatment for Alcohol and Self-Esteem Issues

Promoting Self Esteem in Alcoholism

Write Your Own Affirmation

An affirmation is a simple, positive statement to say to oneself. While affirmations may not seem genuine at first, reciting them eventually does change the way one feel about oneself. Write an affirmation that reflects how one want to feel about oneself, One study found that in individuals with low self-esteem, self-affirmations helped improve their attitudes toward health risk advice. This might be particularly helpful for people who are working to recover from a substance or alcohol use disorder. Affirmations may help people feel more receptive and motivated to participate in treatment and recovery.

Forgive Yourself for Past Mistakes

People who have struggled with an addiction are often plagued by self-blame, which worsens low self-esteem. Addiction can really affect judgment and impulse control, . never let past wrongs define your present. Research also supports the importance of self-forgiveness. Studies suggest that people who forgive themselves for past mistakes experience less anxiety and depression.⁴

Accept Compliments

Research has shown that people who have low self-esteem have a difficult time accepting and benefiting from compliments from other people. This is challenging not only for a person's self-esteem but also makes it harder for people who care about that individual to express their positive feelings for that person. People with low self-esteem often miss opportunities to build their self-esteem simply by acknowledging the kind words of others. Some things you can do instead the next time someone gives you a compliment include:

- Resist the urge to dismiss it.
- Assume that they are sincere.
- Say thank you and enjoy the compliment.
- Note how the compliment reflects your strengths.

Do Something Kind Every Day

Research also suggests that engaging in prosocial behavior, or actions designed to benefit others, can also play a role in improving self-esteem. One study found that prosocial behavior was actually a predictor for self-esteem, especially in women. Women who reported engaging in more prosocial actions also had higher levels of self-reported self-esteem. One way of increasing the appreciation that others express is to do kind things for them.

Start Making Changes

Self-determination can also play a role in improving self-esteem. Self-determined behaviors are those that people perform of their own volition as a result of conscious, intentional, self-motivated choices. Self-determination is also an important part of recovery from substance and alcohol use.. Making self-determined steps in the right direction—even small ones—can play a role in boosting your self-esteem. Everyone has things they would like to change in their own lives, or in the lives of those around them, but for people with addictions, change happens in stages. If a major change seems like too much, break it down into smaller acts, and choose to do one a day or one a week, whichever you feel you'll follow through on. With each small change, inwardly celebrate your success in moving toward your goal.

Conclusion

Addiction can make it hard to feel good about self and abilities, especially focusing on past mistakes. Self-esteem can be an important part of the recovery process, so finding ways to build belief in oneself can make it easier to appreciate strengths and take note of all progress. Self-help strategies can be a good way to start improving self-esteem

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