

How a casual drink becomes a real problem. How a minor injury from a workout leads to addiction so gripping that it causes you to lose everything. How your teenager takes something she perceives to be a “natural herb” and is rushed to the E.R. moments later.

# THE MANY FACES OF

“I was losing a lot of weight and feeling very depressed. Since I was going through a divorce at the time, everyone around me assumed that’s what the issue was,” said Bethany, 34 years old of Colleyville. Bethany worked in a professional career which gave her the opportunity to have access to pain medication. “I worked under the influence for at least a year. I put others at risk. I used my professional position to obtain pills. In the end, this part of my addiction is what brought me to my knees because a coworker figured out what I was doing. This same coworker, or now as I call him, my guardian angel, went to my family,” she said.

“I used Heroin for a year right under my parent’s nose. Although I had severe weight loss, was extremely moody, and had become disengaged in sports and other activities, they had no idea what was happening,” said Mark, 17 years old of Grapevine. He first tried Marijuana at age 15 and it lead to other, harder drugs, which is common among drug users. “I had a lot of freedom and my parents gave me plenty of spending money. This combination, at a time when I was a bored teenager was not a good mix.”

Lori of Southlake is a full-time mom in her thirties. “I did not have problems with alcohol abuse until after college. Everyone around me was “slowing down” from their partying days and I wasn’t ready for the party to stop. A little later in my life I noticed a pattern of excessive drinking after I had endured miscarriage as a way to numb the pain. My family and husband expressed their concern over my drinking, but I was still in complete denial.” In 2011, Lori got a DWI and said this was her eye-opening event.

Addiction comes in many faces. K2 is a synthetic Marijuana. Also known as Spice, K2 sound like a cool, hip, and frankly innocent things to consume. Alcohol seems rather benign on the surface as well. Many of us have a few casual drinks each week or a glass of wine every night. It must be perfectly fine because even the medical community has been known to recommend a glass a day for a healthy heart. How can a prescription be a bad thing? After all, the doctor says you need it. But when does a little start to get excessive? At what point does your social drink become your crutch for dealing with the stress in your life? When you should wean yourself off the Hydrocodone, you find that you need it more now than you did right after your surgery.

## HITTING TOO CLOSE TO HOME

Jennifer Sartin, MS, Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor (*LCDC*) of Keller knows firsthand the struggles of addiction and the importance of finding and maintaining a successful recovery. She has been in recovery herself for over a decade. She doesn’t just talk the talk, she has walked the walk. Her clients express that her ability to truly understand their pain and struggles is what resonated with them to contact her. Sartin often works just as closely with the family as she does with the client. She believes in the importance of educating the family to better understand addiction and its challenges—therefore, conveying the importance of their involvement and support for the recovering person.

In January of 2013 our community was shocked when two students from Southlake Carroll High School were discovered dead. Authorities reportedly found drug paraphernalia on the scene.

Sartin remembers all too well a story from not long ago. In May, over 100 people were treated between Dallas and Austin within a 48-hour time frame for overdoses of what doctors suspect was K2. When a bad batch is manufactured and sold throughout a region, hundreds of people may consume it over a short period of time. In this case, it caused numerous trips to emergency rooms spanning from Austin to Dallas.

Lieutenant Neal Maranto of North Richland Hills Police Department has been involved in drug cases for more than 17 years. He said that for most of us, it is completely foreign to go into a ‘head shop’ and ask for something good. “Watch the clerk disappear behind the counter and come back with a K2-like substance. These teens ask zero questions about the substance and then they put it into their bodies.” Lieutenant Maranto teaches the Standardized Field Sobriety course at Tarrant County College. He obtained most of his knowledge from investigations and interviews conducted after drug busts.

GreaterGood SL

by Shannon Stewart Salinsky

# ADDICTION

## SPICE/K2 EXPLAINED

The Office of National Drug Control Policy states that Spice/K2 is a wide variety of herbal mixtures that produce experiences similar to Marijuana (*cannabis*) and that are marketed as ‘safe,’ legal alternatives to that drug. Experts say it’s similar to Marijuana, but its effects are actually much stronger. Sold under many names, including K2, fake weed, Yucatan Fire, Skunk, Moon Rocks, and others—and labeled ‘not for human consumption’—these products contain dried, shredded plant material and chemical additives that are responsible for psychoactive (*mind-altering*) effects. “It is a never-ending pattern in which the drug manufacturers quickly alter the chemical makeup of the banned drug—in essence producing a drug that appears new—therefore, it creates a situation that is extremely challenging for law enforcement to regulate,” Sartin said. She strongly believes the term synthetic Marijuana is very misleading as this drug is far more dangerous than Marijuana. “The fact that it has been obtained legally at head shops can also portray it to be much less harmful than it really is.”

The effects of K2/Spice include severe agitation and anxiety, nausea, vomiting, tachycardia (fast, racing heartbeat), elevated blood pressure, tremors and seizures, hallucinations, dilated pupils, and suicidal and other harmful thoughts and/or actions.

## TEENS AND MARIJUANA

Teenagers’ views of Marijuana, the most commonly used illicit drug in the U.S., seem to be changing, likely as a result of the legalization of recreational use in Oregon and Colorado. As of June 2014, 23 states have legalized cannabis for medical use with three states pending legislation.

“The majority of teens that I have worked with recently not only discount the negative effects of Marijuana, but many consider it healthy or medicinal,” said Sartin. “We know from well-documented studies that Marijuana is particularly harmful to the still-developing brains of young people. Studies report that Marijuana use is connected to changes in teenage brain development, which can result in cognitive impairment, memory problems, and IQ loss. The potency of Marijuana has increased dramatically over the years with significantly higher levels of Tetrahydrocannabinol (*THC*) than ever before.”

## TEENS AND PRESCRIPTIONS

According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse (*NIDA*), every day in the United States, an average of 2,000 teenagers use prescription drugs without a doctor’s order for the first time. Among teenagers 12 to 17 years old, 14.8% of high school seniors reported nonmedical use of prescription medications last year. According to the 2012 Monitoring the Future survey, prescription and over-the-counter drugs are among the most

commonly abused drugs by 12th graders, after alcohol, Marijuana, Spice/K2, and tobacco. Youth who abuse prescription medications are also more likely to report use of other drugs. “Another misconception of teens is that prescription drugs are safer to abuse than other drugs,” Sartin said. Teenagers tend to think ‘If they are prescribed by a doctor, they can’t be that bad.’ “The most commonly abused prescription drugs are pain medications (*Hydrocodone*, *OxyContin*, *Codeine*), sleeping pills (*Valium*, *Restoril*, *Ambien*), anti-anxiety medications (*Xanax*, *Ativan*), and stimulants which are used to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or ADHD (*Adderall*,  *Vyvanse*, *Ritalin*).

The majority of teens and young adults obtain prescription drugs they abuse from friends and relatives, sometimes without their knowledge. And according to the 2012 Monitoring the Future survey, about 50 percent of high school seniors said that opioid drugs other than Heroin (*e.g.*, *Hydrocodone*) would be fairly or very easy to get. Sartin said that is also common to obtain prescription drugs over the internet without a prescription. “This is another reason to monitor your children’s internet activities,” she said.

Lieutenant Maranto said that parents should be aware of changes in friends or habits, unusual spending, or theft from other family members as signs that their loved may be involved in drugs.

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**“The average person has no idea to what extremes a person will go to obtain their drug of choice,” he said.**

#### ALCOHOL ADDICTION

According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse, alcoholism or alcohol dependence is a diagnosable disease characterized by a strong craving for alcohol, and/or continued use despite harm or personal injury. Alcohol abuse, which can lead to dependence, is a pattern of drinking that results in harm to one's health, interpersonal relationships or ability to work. Sartin said that often the high school students report ‘hanging out’ at a friend's house with the parents present and fully aware of the underage drinking—with the attitude of ‘as long as it's happening under my roof’ at least I know they are safe.’

“The truth is that young people who begin drinking before age 15 have a much higher risk of developing alcoholism than those who wait until age 21,” she said. “Teens who grow up with parents who are supportive, involve themselves, and talk to them are much less likely to abuse alcohol than their peers.”

#### WOMEN AND ALCOHOLISM

The nation was stunned when ABC's 20/20 anchor Elizabeth Vargas recently acknowl-

edged she was an alcoholic and said hiding her problem had been “exhausting.” Vargas told Good Morning America co-anchor George Stephanopoulos in a recent interview, “I am an alcoholic.” She went on to report to Stephanopoulos that it took her a long time to admit it herself and to her family.

Appearing a lot in parenting magazines and on mommy blogs of late is the proclamation that “Mommy needs her nightly glass (*or two, or three*) of grape juice.” That's what we call it in front of the children—it's only when they ask for a sip and we shout, “No! It's not that kind of juice!” do our children begin to understand that our grape juice is different from theirs. And as moms, we work very hard every day either as a mom in the home, a work-from-home, or a career mom outside the home. We've become to feel as if we deserve that glass of wine. And frankly, maybe we do.

“Heavy drinking can take years to progress to alcoholism,” Sartin said. “It is sometimes triggered by an event or trauma. Women can be especially sensitive to the stigma of being alcoholic, therefore they are much more hesitant to admit they have a drinking problem and subsequently ask for help.”

We have to ask ourselves when is it too much? Am I becoming dependent on it? Am I substituting talking to my spouse or my best friend about something stressful in my life and choosing to drown it in my “mommy juice” instead?

#### SIGNS OF ADDICTION

The signs of addiction might be subtle at first. Using alcohol to relieve stress is probably one of the easiest signs to miss, and, to deny. Many of us do it in some form or fashion. Neglecting responsibility is easier to see in others than it is to see in ourselves. Those who have begun to perform poorly at work, school or in other areas of their lives may have an addiction issue. Another signal might be someone flirting with dangerous situations such as driving after a night of heavy drinking or driving with children in the car after several drinks.

Defensive behavior (*when questioned about a possible addiction*), mood swings, and becoming easily agitated are all indications of a possible addiction. Relationships may become strained with someone who is addicted. Physical symptoms range from sudden weight gain or loss, changes in sleeping patterns, a sudden usage of eye drops, changes in appetite, or a sudden avoidance in prolonged eye contact.

#### GETTING HELP

Asking for help is sometimes tough because admitting it to yourself may be the hardest part. You're a professional, a volunteer at church, a popular teenager who's a straight-A student and president of the Student Council, so how can you have a problem? Addiction has a grip so tight almost nothing else matters except the next high.

Consulting with an addiction professional is always a great place to start. They can help

determine the appropriate level of care whether it be inpatient, outpatient, individual counseling, or Twelve Step programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). The family is strongly encouraged to participate in the recovery program. Family participation often helps because unhealthy patterns must be broken. Many times the families may not realize that they too have become part of the cycle; often times it is passed down from generations before. The most classic example of this type of dysfunction in a family is someone who enables the one who is addicted. “Clients whose families are involved in their treatment tend to have better outcomes. Often the families get just as sick as the person addicted and also require intensive counseling,” commented Sartin.

“I came home from work one day to my entire family sitting in my living room,” Bethany said. “Thankfully my coworker told my family with his suspicions and they confronted me. I broke down into tears because it felt so good to have everything out in the open. But even then, I was in denial. I told them I could work through it with outpatient therapy, but they adamantly insisted that I go to an inpatient program.” In the end, Bethany said that inpatient therapy was the only way for her to get the help she needed. She said she felt physically ill when she was not on the pain medication which caused her to take more.

**“I realized later that my entire life was a lie. I was fooling everyone, but most of all myself. Everyone thought I had it all together, but I was in severe emotional pain,” Bethany said.**

Mark got his wake up call when he was arrested by federal agents and sent to juvenile detention. “It was there that I hit rock bottom. Juvenile detention is not a place you want to be.” He said that after having time to think about things, he soon realized that his friends were not “friends” at all and that he truly wanted to get his life on back on track. “Parents should absolutely check up on their children, do a random spot search of their vehicle, their room and even on their cell phone. Giving your teenagers tons of freedom and a lot of spending money may not be the best thing to do.”

Lori said that in the beginning, she didn't realize that recovery is not really about abstaining from alcohol. “It's about changing the way that

you think about life and how you process life events. The changes that you make are small and slow and, at first, and may not be clear. However, as you progress through the recovery process, you start to notice how you see situations differently than you did before and that is when you know you are making progress and making changes for the better,” she said.

So, will I have my usual glass of red wine with dinner Friday night? Absolutely. Will I go for a second glass? Likely. But one thing I won't do is think addiction can't happen to me. I'll keep myself and those I love in check. When my toddler becomes older, I will learn who her friends are and where they hang out. I will be engaged and involve myself. From time to time I'll check out her bedroom, her car and her cell phone for anything suspicious, not because I don't trust her, but because I love her.

#### RESOURCES

Jennifer Sartin, MS, LCDC, is an addiction counselor located in Keller, Texas.  
Phone: (817) 381-8227  
AlcoholandAddictionSupport.com

Enterhealth is a drug and alcohol treatment center. Their medically driven alcohol addiction and drug rehabilitation treatment offers personalized residential and outpatient programs in Van Alstyne, Texas, uniquely suited to where you are in your recovery journey.  
Phone: (800) 388-4601  
Enterhealth.com

Right Step is an affordable drug and alcohol rehabilitation treatment center offering intervention, detox, inpatient residential, day treatment, intensive outpatient treatment, and sober living, along with aftercare services and the ongoing support of alumni groups.  
2219 West Eulless Blvd. Eulless 76040  
Phone: (877) 959-4278  
Rightstep.com

Recovery Resource Council is a private nonprofit organization. It was founded in 1957, under the name Fort Worth Council on Alcoholism, to address the need for substance abuse education and referral for treatment in North Texas. It is located at 2700 Airport Freeway Fort Worth, Texas 76111.  
Phone: (817) 332-6329  
RecoveryCouncil.org

Grapevine Valley of Hope is a nonprofit drug and alcohol rehab facility offering inpatient and outpatient services at an affordable price. Valley of Hope is located at: 2300 William D. Tate Ave. Grapevine 76051  
Phone: (817) 424-1305  
ValleyHope.org

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## Nonprofit resources in our community that can help reduce drug and alcohol abuse and its stigma by providing guidance, education and services.

Addiction does not discriminate—rich, poor, urban, rural, young, old, male, female—anyone can become addicted. Educate yourself, not just on the signs, but also the resources. You never know when you may be the one to lend a hand or offer a resource to an addict in dire need of help.

**RECOVERY RESOURCE COUNCIL**  
Recovery Resource Council in Fort Worth is a private nonprofit organization. Community volunteers started the organization in 1957 and after many years of growth and strategic development, RRC now has over 40 employees, a budget of \$3.5 million and a variety of funding sources. RRC serves as the link connecting individuals who lack insurance or other means to obtain referral for drug/alcohol treatment services.

Evyn Ellis, Prevention Services Coordinator said that RRC offers a wide variety of services—everything in the spectrum of substance abuse, prevention education, prevention and treatment services. “We serve about 35,000 children annually. We have a special grant that serves our veterans and an outpatient program. We truly are the front door to treatment for uninsured and underinsured people in Tarrant County,” she said. Programs:

- Enduring Women and Enduring Families Veteran Services – Free and confidential counseling services
- Information and Referral –A community hotline assisting substance abusers and their families, professionals and the general public in obtaining help and support for their needs.
- Back to Basics – A review of the Twelve Steps in one day. This workshop is also open for Al-Anons (*family members*) and for people with other addictive/compulsive disorders.
- Assessment Services – A wide range of assessment services are available to individuals who are employer mandated, court ordered or for personal interest. Licensed Professional Counselors or Substance Abuse Professionals (*SAP*) provide services.
- Counseling and Outpatient Programs – Licensed Professional Counselors provided services to meet the mental health needs of adults, adolescents and families.

# ADDICTION resources

- Department of Transportation Assessment – Services offered for anyone who tested positive when given a urinalysis.
- Drug and Alcohol Education - A variety of classes offered for individual who have been arrested for alcohol and/or drug charges as well as general awareness of substance abuse. Classes enable an individual to get his/her license back after being suspended by the DPS. The classes are also open to anyone who would like to be educated on alcohol and drugs and their consequences.
- Project New Start – A permanent supportive housing program for chronically homeless men and women with disabilities. Monthly home visits are conducted to offer support.

*Every donation helps achieve the mission of reducing alcohol and drug abuse in the community and allows RRC to provide much needed services to those who need it. To make a donation, visit RecoveryCouncil.org*

**GRAPEVINE VALLEY HOPE**  
Grapevine Valley Hope provides the help and hope of living a life free from addiction to alcohol or drugs through quality, affordable treatment services in a caring atmosphere. Helping over 200,000 individuals and family members since 1967, its sole mission is to help alcoholics, addicts and their families. Grapevine Valley Hope wants the opportunity to offer and provide treatment to all individuals who want help, regardless of financial status or insurance.

Offering a range of treatment services tailored to meet the needs of chemically dependent people, Grapevine Valley Hope offers individualized treatment options ranging from a traditional 30-day residential program to a continuum-of-care model with variable lengths of stay. This model allows people the freedom to move from more to less structured treatment in residential and outpatient settings, harmonizing with each person’s clinical needs and preferences.

Professional staff members direct individualized treatment plans grounded in 12-step philosophy with a strong emphasis on family participation, nondenominational spirituality, and continuing care placement. Grapevine Valley Hope accepts most insurance and some of the programs offered are:

- Medically monitored detox
  - Six-week intensive outpatient program
  - Residential and partial day treatment
  - Relapse prevention/continuing care
  - Evaluations/assessments
  - Family treatment
- Many individuals and families can’t afford the cost of treatment needed to support recovery. “Last year, as a direct result of donations, we helped 317 patients with grants for treatment across a seven state network. We helped another 200 patients with basic personal necessities and many received down-payments for sober living upon discharge from treatment. Donations help support our mission and really make a difference,” said Megan O’Connor, Valley Hope Foundation Director.

VHA President/CEO Dr. Ken Gregoire shared that his fondest wish is “that we continue to give ample treatment to the alcohol and substance addicted.” Dr. Gregoire is a Licensed Psychologist in the state of Kansas and a graduate of the Clinical Psychology program at the University of Nebraska and has worked for the Valley Hope Association, a multi-state organization that has provided chemical dependency services since 1967—for 36 years. “My hope is that chemical dependency is a covered benefit, so people can get treatment, because the need is great. Dependency is not waning and there is excellent treatment available. It’s a chronic disease.”

If you or someone you know needs help, please contact a Grapevine Valley Hope Admissions Counselor at (817) 424-1305. Valley Hope is located at 2300 William D. Tate Avenue in Grapevine, Texas 76051. For information on how to help, visit Valleyhope.org/donate or send a gift to Valley Hope Foundation, P.O. Box 59, Norton, Kansas, 67654. Valley Hope Association is a registered 501c(3) nonprofit organization.

**WHY GIVE?** Chemical dependency is a deadly and pervasive illness. Nearly everyone in our country is touched in one way or another by chemical dependency. Treatment resources are many times inadequate to meet the needs properly. Many chemically dependent patients can’t afford the cost of treatment needed to support a full recovery.

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