

# You are Not Alone

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If you or a dentist colleague is experiencing problems related to alcohol and/or drug addiction, confidential help is just a phone call away. The ISDS Dentists Support Program is dedicated to ensuring that every Illinois dentist struggling with substance addiction has access to the appropriate level of assistance needed to start the journey of recovery.

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**Call ISDS Dentists  
Support Program  
toll-free at  
800/475-4737**

ILLINOIS STATE DENTAL SOCIETY  
**▲ FOUNDATION ▲**

*To Everything*  
There is a season

*A Time to*  
Understand

...to *Hope*

...to *Seek Help*

**The ISDS Dentists  
Support Program**

is dedicated to assisting  
dentists who seek to recover  
from alcoholism and  
other chemical addictions.





# **C**onfidential Assistance for Illinois Dentists

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**When a dentist needs assistance, the ISDS Dentists Support Program can provide confidential help.**

***Are you concerned about a dental colleague?  
The Dentists Support Program can help you help them.***

***Do you know a dentist who has practiced dentistry  
while impaired from alcohol or other drugs?***

**Dental staff, families, and fellow professionals are in a position to help.**

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toll-free at 800/475-4737**



# **T**here is Hope...

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*“This was a safe environment where I could begin my journey back into the sunshine, into the truth, and into honesty.”* -Volunteer dentist

The volunteers of the ISDS Dentists Support Program are dedicated to seeing that every dentist who needs and wants help receives it. Moreover, they are committed to ensuring the highest level of confidentiality. Even committee members are not made aware of a participating dentist's name.

When a call is made to the program, the facts and circumstances are carefully evaluated before any action is taken. Initial information is confirmed, and if it is determined that assistance is needed, the dentist is asked to visit an evaluation center for appropriate assessment services and probable treatment.

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## Where There is Help...

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**The purpose of the ISDS Dentists Support Program is to prevent a dentist's career and/or reputation from being destroyed by addiction and protect patients from any possible harm.**

The program provides confidential, education, insight, and access to professional assistance. When an individual contacts ISDS and indicates that the matter includes a possible substance abuse problem, the caller is transferred to a staff member who will attempt to get a first name and phone number where the caller may be reached. A dentist member of the Dentists Support Program will place a call to the individual, obtain some basic information, and refer the caller to a professional counseling and treatment center experienced with drug and alcohol abuse assistance. The system respects the confidentiality of the process. **Call ISDS Dentists Support Program toll free at 800/475-4737 and ask to speak to Lisa Fowler.**

If you feel that you or a fellow member of the dental profession is in need of assistance, please call for help. We will carefully and confidentially guide you or your colleague through the steps to wellness.

## The Dentists Support Program Can Provide Confidential Help

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*"Addiction is a Disease of Isolation. You can be surrounded by many people in your life and still feel so alone."*

- A now sober dentist

Like all members of the health care profession, dentists face significant challenges – stress, depression, balancing the demands of work and family. The pressures of life and work can sometimes lead to substance and alcohol abuse.

In fact, experts estimate that 10-15% of health care professionals, including dentists, struggle with alcohol and drug addiction. Medical professionals are at particular risk for chemical abuse/dependency for many reasons. Exposure and accessibility to mood-altering medications, pharmacological knowledge of the drugs, which fosters a false sense of control, and a tendency to self-treat or self-medicate are a few contributing factors.

Additionally, many dental professionals are aware of colleagues who suffer from substance abuse and need help. Family members and staff, in particular, are often the first to see the signs and be affected by the behaviors of a dentist in need of help. But pleas and threats seldom work, and, sadly, the person suffering from addiction is often the last to recognize his/her illness.

However, the message of hope and help is most often heard when it comes from a fellow dental professional who has experienced the same or similar problem.

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## Is It Time for You to Seek Help?

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Do you experience mood swings, become easily depressed, angry, or abusive?

Has anyone become disturbed because of your behavior while drinking or using drugs?

Have you ever tried to cut down on your drinking or drug use?

Has anyone become annoyed about your drinking/drug use?  
(Prescription or illicit)

Do you drink more than a moderate amount of alcohol?\*

Have you ever felt guilty about your drinking/drug use or related behaviors?

Are you experiencing financial or legal problems, malpractice suit, or divorce, because of your drinking or drug use?

Have you been arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs?

\*The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) defines moderate drinking as:

- Up to 2 drinks/day (a 'drink' being 12 oz of beer, 5 oz. wine, 1.5 oz. 80-proof distilled spirits) for men under 65
- Up to 1 drink/day for women and men over 65
- For some people—teens, pregnant women, and people with a history of addiction or alcoholism, there is no safe level of alcohol consumption.

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## Be Aware of the Signs of Alcohol and Substance Abuse

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**Oftentimes it is the families, colleagues and friends who first notice something is wrong.**

- Disruption of the appointment schedule.
  - Hostile, withdrawn, or unreasonable behavior toward patients and staff.
  - Excessive ordering of drug supplies by mail or from local pharmacies.
  - Patient complaints regarding dentist's behavior.
  - Unexplained absence from office or absence due to frequent illness.
  - Inappropriate orders, prescriptions, or treatments.
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- Deterioration in appearance and dress habits.
  - Wearing long sleeves in warm weather.
  - Frequent or unusual accidents.
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- Numerous job changes in recent years.
  - Frequent geographic relocations for unexplained reasons.
  - Complicated and elaborate medical history.
  - History of probation or suspension of practice and/or professional licenses.
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- Isolated/withdrawn from community, dental society, and social activities.
  - Embarrassing behaviors at private clubs, parties, or other events.
  - Unpredictable or compulsive behavior.
  - Arrests for driving under the influence, disorderly conduct, etc.

**If you suspect alcohol or drug abuse, call ISDS Dentists  
Support Program toll-free at 800/475-4737**