

UPDATE YOUR IMAGE OF A PERSON WITH A SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER.



Women are at higher risk.

Certain types of drugs



Women are prescribed benzodiazepines (like Xanax and Valium) twice as often as men and are more likely to become dependent.

The use of opioid pain relievers is higher among women.



Women are more likely to be daily marijuana smokers.

Certain types of health problems



Risky substance use among women is more likely to cause a variety of health problems, like cancer and cardiac complications.



The progression from use to risky use to addiction happens more quickly for women.

Women have more trouble getting help.

Treatment barriers

Women are less likely to enter addiction treatment.



Women are more likely to have difficulty attending regular treatment sessions because of family responsibilities.



Women are more likely to report feeling shame or embarrassment because they are in addiction treatment.

Social response

Women are subject to particularly harsh criticism for their addiction.



Called "bad mothers"

Criminalized

Condemned by the media

Wouldn't it be remarkable if this kind of attention were directed toward helping women recover?

References

The ASAM Essentials of Addiction Medicine (2015)

Gender and Use of Substance Abuse Treatment Services (2006)

Substance Abuse in Women (2011)

Prescription Opioid Analgesic Use Among Adults: 1999–2012 (2015)

Substance Use and Women's Health (2010)