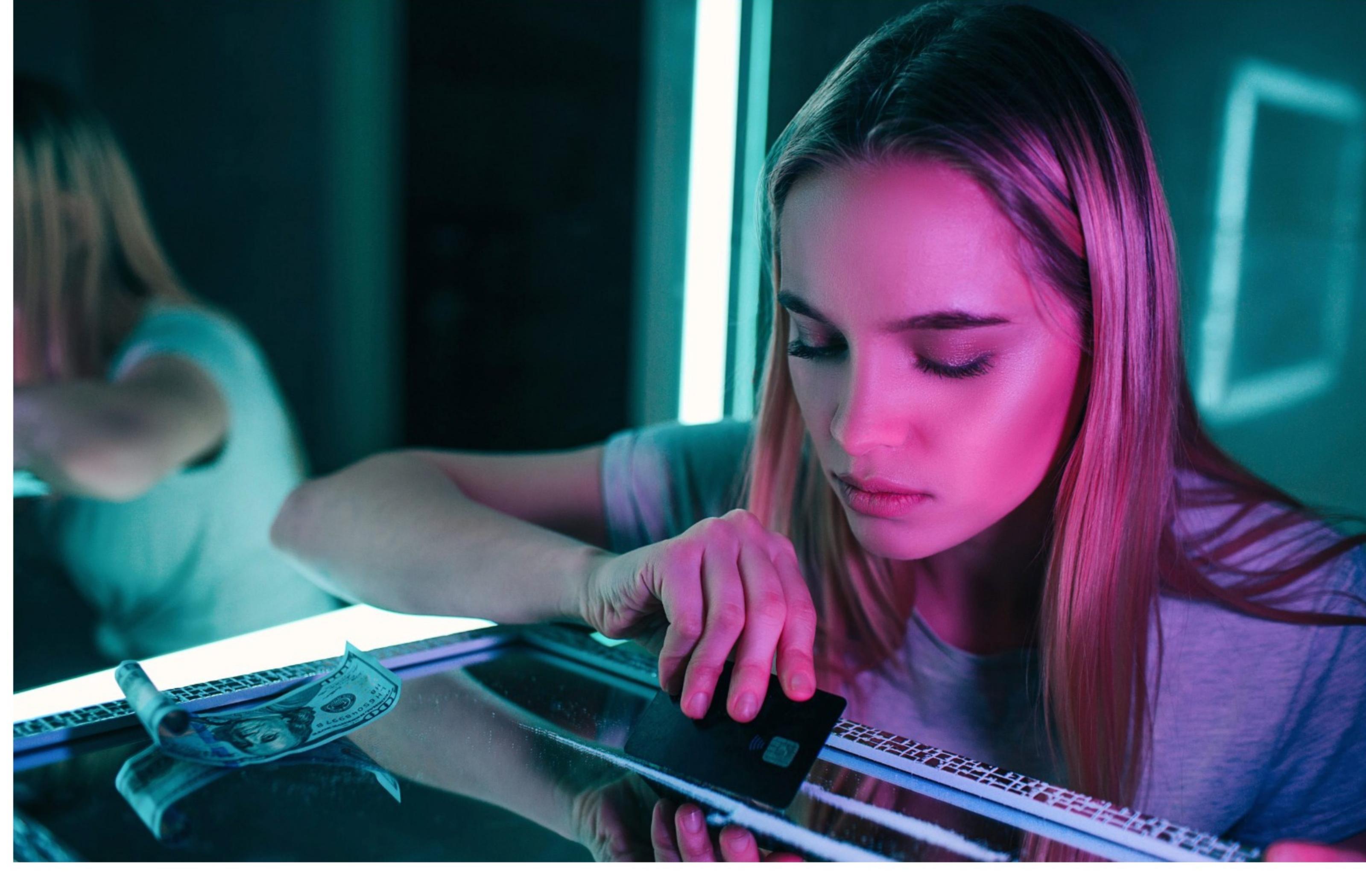


## How Does Stress Relate To Substance Abuse?

by Evolve Indy | Nov 23, 2021 | Blog | 0 comments



Unlike what some people believe, substance abuse isn't a sign of a moral failing or lack of willpower. In many cases, people aren't aware that they have a problem, especially when they're abusing a legal and socially acceptable substance like alcohol. Or, they may overuse prescription medications, but don't realize they are developing a tolerance. People may abuse substances for a variety of reasons. Sometimes, it's simply what they've grown up with because of family members, or they experimented at a young age and got used to it. Adults may abuse substances to cope with trauma or painful memories. However, substance abuse doesn't help in the long term and can make stress worse. So, how does stress relate to substance abuse?

### How Substance Abuse Affects Your Life

Substance abuse disorders and addictions affect every part of a sufferer's life. The substance, even if it's legal (alcohol, prescription drugs, or even caffeine), will harm their health. The more they use it, the more it damages their body.

Also, substance abuse often leads to financial difficulties. These substances aren't free, and an abuser will go through much more than most people. It's also more likely that someone who abuses substances gets in trouble with the law.

Even legal substances, such as alcohol, can affect your behavior in ways that may lead to legal problems, relationship conflicts, and even the loss of your job. Illegal substances will get you into legal trouble if you're simply caught possessing or using them, which again may impact your work prospects.

Simply put, your entire life will become more difficult and full of stress.

### Substance Abuse and Anxiety

According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, as many as 20% of people diagnosed with an anxiety disorder may also have a substance abuse disorder. At first glance, it may seem that anxiety causes an individual to abuse substances, which is where this link comes from. However, it isn't that simple.

When someone constantly misuses drugs or alcohol, their body will gradually develop a tolerance, meaning that they will have to increase the dosage for the same desired effects. But many of these substances have a physiological effect on your body as well, which can cause symptoms of stress. While alcohol may provide temporary relief from anxiety, it can increase overall anxiety once the initial effects fade. This is mainly because alcohol dehydrates the body, which causes tension in the body. This effect is pronounced if you live with an anxiety disorder.

Marijuana and stimulants also increase anxiety. Someone who relies on marijuana to deal with anxiety will feel worse when they're sober, leading to a stronger desire to use it even at inappropriate times. Stimulants are known for causing anxiety as they speed up the body's central nervous system.

Someone who abuses substances may experience severe anxiety whenever they are sober. This leads down a slippery slope toward addiction.

### How Does Stress Relate To Substance Abuse?

Without [treatment](#), it can be difficult to get over a substance abuse problem. Several different options may help, depending on your circumstances. [Partial hospitalization](#) provides intensive treatment without requiring an overnight stay, as does [intensive outpatient care](#). If you need a flexible schedule, then [outpatient care](#) might be appropriate.

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