On Campus Resources:
The Georgia Tech Counseling Center provides a range of alcohol and other drug (AOD) assessment services to help you identify if you, or someone you know, has a problem with alcohol or other drugs. In addition, the Counseling Center is committed to supporting students in all of their mental health needs, including substance abuse and dependence.

We offer:
- Individual counseling
- AOD group counseling
- Educational workshops
- Community referrals
- Crisis counseling
- Integrated AOD treatment team to coordinate care between providers

Campus Resources:
- GT Psychiatry: (404) 894-2585
- GT Health Promotion: (404) 894-8890
- Office of the Dean of Students: (404) 894-6367

Other Resources:
- http://www.drugabuse.gov
- http://www.atlantaaa.org (Alcoholics Anonymous)
- http://www.na.org (Narcotics Anonymous)
- http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov
- SAMHSA Treatment Finder (24/7): 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

The Georgia Tech Counseling Center is a unit of the Division of Student Affairs. The Center is dedicated to enhancing the academic experience and success of all students by providing a variety of counseling and psychological services to individuals and the campus community. We provide short-term counseling services to address a wide range of personal and career concerns. Our services are available at no charge to currently enrolled students.

For more information, contact us at:

**Georgia Tech Counseling Center**
353 Ferst Drive, Suite 238
Student Services-Flag Building
Atlanta, Georgia 30332
404-894-2575
Website: www.counseling.gatech.edu

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YouTube: GTCounseling

**Office Hours**
Monday - Friday
8 am - 5 pm

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WHAT QUALIFIES AS A DRUG ADDICTION?

Addiction is defined as a chronic, often relapsing, brain disease that is characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences to the addicted individual and to those around him or her.

Addiction is considered a brain disease because drugs cause long-lasting changes in the way the brain works and its structure. Brain imaging studies of people with a drug addiction show changes in the areas of the brain that are critical to judgment, decision-making, learning, memory, and self-control.

WHY DO PEOPLE BECOME ADDICTED?

Many people do not understand why or how other people become addicted to drugs. It is often mistakenly assumed that people with a drug addiction lack moral principles or willpower and that they could stop using drugs simply by choosing to change their behavior. Although the initial decision to take drugs is mostly voluntary, the brain changes that occur over time challenge an addicted person’s self control and hamper his or her ability to resist intense impulses to take drugs.

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR BRAIN WHEN YOU TAKE DRUGS?

Drugs contain chemicals that disrupt the way brain cells normally send, receive, and process information. They can:

1. Imitate the brain’s natural chemical messengers and “fool” the brain into sending abnormal messages.
2. Over-stimulate the “reward circuit” of the brain and “teach” people to repeat the rewarding behavior of abusing drugs.

Long-term abuse can also cause changes in other parts of the brain. Together, these changes can drive an abuser to seek out and consume drugs compulsively despite adverse consequences.

Factors that increase a person’s risk of addiction:
- Alcohol or drug abuse in parents / family members
- Criminal behavior in parents / family members
- Alcohol or drug abusing peers during adolescence
- Academic failure
- Poor social skills and/or social difficulties
- Early drug use

THE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF ADDICTION:

- Chronic use of some drugs of abuse can lead to paranoia, depression, aggression, and hallucinations.
- Drug abuse can lead to a variety of respiratory problems. Cigarettes, for example, have been shown to cause bronchitis, emphysema, and lung cancer. The use of some drugs can also cause breathing to slow or block air from entering the lungs.
- Some drugs can cause seizures, stroke, and widespread brain damage.
- Chronic use of some drugs, such as heroin, inhalants, and steroids, may lead to significant damage to the liver.
- Researchers have found a connection between the abuse of most drugs and adverse cardiovascular effects, ranging from abnormal heart rate to heart attacks.