



## Anxious or Overwhelmed? How You Feel Matters.

### Robin Williams' Death Illuminates Undertow of Co-Occurring Disorders

While the specific circumstances surrounding Robin Williams' untimely death may never come to light, increasing awareness regarding the interrelationship between mental health and substance abuse issues may offer a glimmer of hope to millions of people who unknowingly suffer with co-occurring disorders. According to the World Health Association, an estimated 350 million people across the globe suffer with depression. Furthermore, since one in three depressed people also suffer from some form of substance abuse or dependence\* - more than 120 million people in the world have struggles similar to Williams'.

Historically, substance abuse and mental health issues have been conceptualized and treated separately, initiating a misleading assumption that the issues are isolated. Later, it was believed one issue caused the other. **Presently, a mental health condition, such as major depressive disorder or anxiety, in conjunction with a substance use disorder is called a co-occurring disorder or dual diagnosis.** Hence, today's integrated treatment premise is that each issue and the interplay of issues are taken into consideration.

"While it's not uncommon for feelings like fear, anxiety and loneliness to precede relapse, the feelings associated with relapse itself, like guilt, powerless and shame, only intensify one's depressive state. The interaction between such experiences causes an individual to feel hopeless and defeated," explains Dr. Greg Tierney, a licensed clinical psychologist and Program Director at Gateway Alcohol & Drug Treatment Center in Aurora, Ill.

For more go online at [RecoverGateway.org/Robin-Williams](http://RecoverGateway.org/Robin-Williams)

Does someone you care about have a problem with drugs or alcohol? Gateway can help. Call today to learn about our free and confidential consultation.

**120 million**  
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substance abuse issues

**24-Hour Helpline**  
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# A Doctor's Note: How Self-Medicating Spirals into Dependency

By Dr. John Larson

Corporate Medical Director, Gateway Treatment Centers

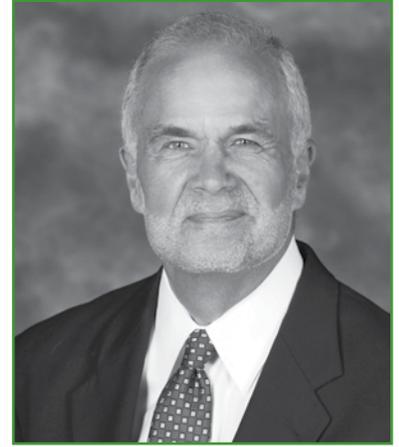
For many, addiction unwittingly begins with self-medicating, which is when a person uses substances, like alcohol, marijuana, cocaine or prescription medication in an attempt to appease symptoms related to physical pain, social anxiety or depression.

Take social anxiety—in modest doses alcohol may initially produce a sense of relief because of the effect it has on brain chemistry. However, since alcohol metabolizes in the body very quickly, it soon loses its effect. Once tolerance develops drugs or alcohol will become less and less effective.

And here's what a person needs to understand: With regular, continued use of alcohol or drugs of abuse, the chemistry of the brain gradually changes, which exacerbates symptoms of anxiety even if an individual is not in a stressful social situation. When an individual tries to cut back on alcohol, the rebound of the original symptoms only intensifies the discomfort experienced during withdrawal, making it very difficult to stop using.

Unfortunately, many are under the mistaken impression that addiction issues will disappear if the underlying problem is treated. This is seldom the case.

The good news is that through integrated substance treatment a person can learn that his or her underlying mental health concerns and substance abuse issues are interrelated in addition to adopting healthy coping skills for lasting recovery. To learn more about treatment options, call Gateway today at 877-505-HOPE (4673).



**Dr. John Larson**  
Corporate Medical Director  
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## Is Low Self-Esteem Undermining Your Relationships?

Low self-esteem, a perception that one is inadequate, unlovable, unworthy and/or incompetent, often stems from exposure to dysfunctional behavior as a child. If children bear the brunt of anger, abandonment, abuse, neglect or continual negative criticism, it can lead to feelings of low self-worth.

With little to live up to, people with chronic self-esteem issues may take on behaviors that reinforce their feelings of inadequacy, including drug use. When people use drugs or alcohol as an artificial boost to self-esteem, they're attempting to function in situations where they lack confidence.

### Signals of Low Self-Esteem:

- Overly critical of self and others and believes others view them in the same negative ways that they view themselves.
- Makes a big deal about comments or behavior of others they view as inappropriate or offensive.
- Only thinks about what goes on around them in terms of their own needs and wants.
- Excessively submissive to authority figures.

With professional help, people who suffer with low self-esteem and substance abuse issues can enhance relationships by improving their coping and communication skills. Rather than reacting to preconceived notions, each person has the ability to learn how to resolve their disagreements with others in a healthy, productive manner.

*"Treatment is about rebuilding self-esteem. Thanks to Gateway, I finally saw the beauty inside me. They helped me work through issues that were too heavy for me to tackle on my own—some issues were deeply buried since childhood."*

- Christine, Gateway Client

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Gateway Alcohol & Drug Treatment is a non-profit organization with treatment centers located throughout Illinois. We are dedicated to making a real difference in the lives of the people we treat. We are recognized as an in-network provider for most health insurance plans and accept fee for service. We also provide treatment to individuals who may be eligible for services funded in whole, or in part, by the Illinois Department of Human Services.

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