

Dual Diagnosis Agenda

Learning Objectives, Agenda & Capability Framework Alignment

A 3 hour online course exploring dual diagnosis and the psychiatric implications of substance use — examining terminology, brain chemistry, trauma, classification frameworks and evidence-based interventions

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Company: TD Consultancy

Delivery: Online — 3 hours

Edition: 2026

Aims & Objectives of the Course

- Examine terminology around dual diagnosis and how different terms alter their meaning depending on work role and service context
- List ways in which patterns of substance use can impact on a client's mental health
- Describe how drugs and alcohol may negatively affect mood, emotional states and psychiatric wellbeing
- Understand the role of brain chemistry, chronic stress and trauma in the development of co-occurring disorders
- Understand classification systems and frameworks used in dual diagnosis practice
- Review and develop working protocols, information sharing and referral pathways between mental health and drug and alcohol services

Session Agenda

Dual Diagnosis & Psychiatric Implications of Substance Use

10:00am Start — Welcome & Course Overview

10:10am The UK picture — prevalence of dual diagnosis and co-occurring disorders

10:30am What is dual diagnosis? — terminology, definitions and how it can develop

10:55am Classification systems & frameworks — ICD-11, DSM-5 and diagnostic tools

11:15am Break (15 minutes)

11:30am Brain chemistry — how substances affect neurotransmitters and mental health

11:55am Chronic stress, trauma and drug and alcohol use — understanding the links

12:20pm Interventions & treatment tools — what works for dual diagnosis clients

12:40pm Working protocols & referral pathways — information sharing across services

1:00pm Close & Q&A

Capability Framework Alignment

This course aligns with the Capability Framework for the Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Workforce (NHS England/OHID, 2024), which underpins the 10-Year Strategic Plan for the Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Workforce 2024–2034.

Capability Domain (NHS England / OHID, 2024)	Framework Section
Knowledge of the nature and prevalence of co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders (dual diagnosis) in the UK, including their interaction and mutual reinforcement	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Application of Knowledge</i>
Knowledge of how substances affect brain chemistry, neurological function and mental health, including the relationship between drug and alcohol use and conditions such as depression, anxiety and psychosis	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Application of Knowledge</i>
Knowledge of the role of chronic stress, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma in the development and maintenance of co-occurring disorders	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Application of Knowledge</i>
Ability to deliver and support evidence-based interventions for clients with co-occurring disorders, including trauma-informed and psychosocial approaches	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Harm Reduction, Treatment and Recovery</i>
Ability to develop and implement effective working protocols, information sharing agreements and referral pathways between drug and alcohol and mental health services	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Engagement, Assessment and Care Planning</i>
Recovery-oriented approach — working with individuals to build personal, social and community recovery capital alongside mental health and substance use support	<i>Underpinning Principle: All Roles</i>
Challenging stigma — being alert to the compounded stigma faced by people with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders	<i>Underpinning Principle: All Roles</i>

Underpinning Principles Embedded in This Course

Trauma-informed care • Recovery-oriented approach • Evidence-based practice • Person-centred working • Forming a working alliance • Therapeutic optimism • Challenging stigma • Co-occurring needs and multidisciplinary working

Note: National Occupational Standards (DANOS/NOS) are retained within the National Occupational Standards library but are no longer the primary workforce development reference for the drug and alcohol treatment and recovery sector. This course uses the NHS England / OHID Capability Framework (2024) as its primary alignment standard.