

# SUBSTANCE USE IN INDIAN-OCCUPIED KASHMIR

For Substance Abuse Prevention Month, we invited Kashmiris to share their stories in the hope that it may provide support to others who may be struggling.

## IMPACT OF SUBSTANCE USE/MISUSE

- “ It alienates you from your own self
- “ An old friend of mine is battling with heroin and it's going worse day by day
- “ There was a time when I was a heavy opioid abuser and the only thing I wished for myself was death

## ROLE OF THE OCCUPATION & STATE FORCES

**Q: What were the factors, circumstances or stressors that contributed most to substance use?**

- “ Not allowed to go out due to curfews, strikes, etc.
- “ He couldn't go to school and was extremely frustrated because of it

**Q: How did the Indian occupational forces, state agencies or J&K police play a role (if at all) in your story?**

- “ They use oppressive techniques to suppress the voice of all who want freedom from the occupational forces by using brutal force and dirty techniques of torture
- “ His dealer for marijuana is a police constable
- “ I have seen officers see people smoking hash and asking for some maal (*drugs*)
- “ Indian government plays a vital role in the substance use epidemic as we can clearly see what they did in Punjab and they are applying the same principle in kashmir
- “ he told me that they have shaken hands with police and now the police is helping them in selling drugs and also providing them drugs to sell

## WORDS OF SUPPORT

- “ Don't let it overpower you. The day it wins over you is the day it starts to rule your life
- “ Stay strong, believe in yourself, life is much more than what we think
- “ there is no shame in coming out. You need help and should take it
- “ Inform your parents on the first such use. They would understand and you can be saved no matter how much you would be looked down upon.
- “ Do not think you can help yourself without support system. Naa. Sooner you come to accept help better it's for you.
- “ I would love to know if there is any way I can help my people
- “ Life is a mystery a magic and let the magician guide you

Thank you to all the Kashmiris who have shared their stories. If you are in Kashmir, and struggling with substance use/misuse, consider treatment at a hospital-based center. If you know of any other resources that may help, please let us know.