

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

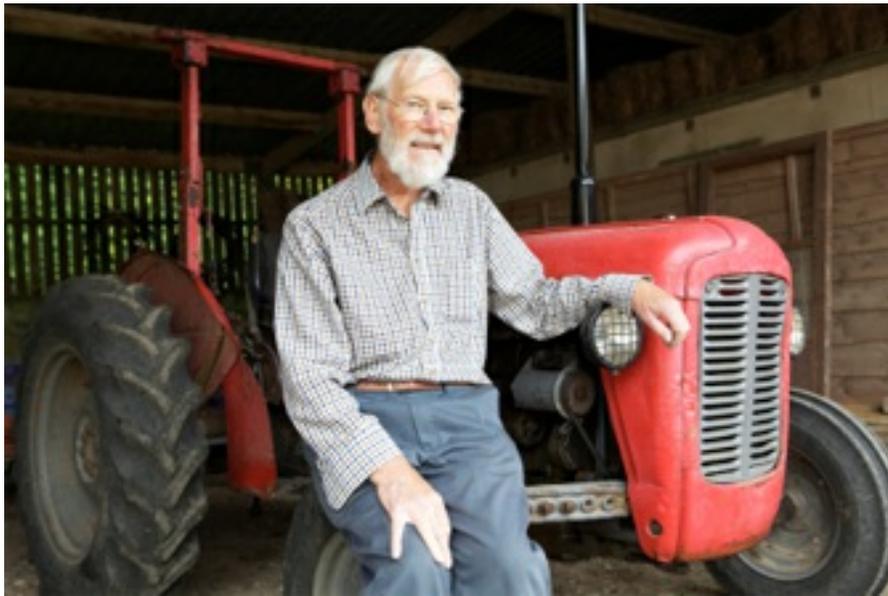
Alcohol addiction: "I'm amazed I didn't see it coming."



<https://www.drugabuse.gov>

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"Peter" is recovering from an alcohol addiction. The addiction grew slowly over many years. (This story is based on the experiences of real people whose names have been changed.)



I took over the farm from my parents twenty years ago, and I found so much to worry about. A drink or two before bed calmed my nerves. Later, I needed a shot of liquor in the morning to get myself going. Somehow, I didn't see anything strange in that. My drinking got worse after my wife died. I didn't know how to cope with missing her.

One day I had a driving accident—and I wasn't even on the road. I had woken up with my usual morning shot. Then I was drinking beer steadily up through lunch—actually, beer was my lunch. I guess I wasn't driving the tractor as straight as I thought I was. I drove it right into a deep ditch. I wasn't really hurt, and didn't take the accident very seriously. But my daughter knew what was wrong, even though I didn't see it.

She kept an eye on the empty cans and bottles in the trash, and figured out I was drinking a lot every day. She told me I had a problem and needed to stop. To make her happy, I let her take me to Alcoholics Anonymous meetings—AA. At first, I didn't think I belonged there. But after a while, I started to hear myself in the stories that people told. I decided to talk to my doctor about it.

It was hard for me to stop drinking. But in the beginning, my doctor gave me medicine that helped me not drink. He got me to talk to a counselor. This, along with the AA meetings and my daughter's support, has helped me to stay sober for more than two years. Looking back now, I'm amazed I didn't see it coming. I wish I knew then what I was getting myself into.

Learn more: Does your loved one have an alcohol problem? Find [drug treatment help](#).