

<https://blog.en.erste-am.com/alcohol-addiction/>

## “Alcohol addiction is a chronic illness”

Armand Feka



The association [Dialog](#) (Dialogue) offers psychosocial and medical advice, help, and treatment for drug users and their families.

### Director Helmut Schmidt explains the range of offers available to successfully help drug addicts:

In Austria, people with an alcohol dependency problem and their families can get a broad range of help and treatment. What's available and how specific it is depends on the province and region.

[alcohol addiction](#)*Helmut Schmidt, Dialog, © Fotostudio Petra Halwachs*

An addiction or alcohol dependency is a chronic illness that can manifest itself in numerous layers of problems. Intervention regimes have to take these into account by approaching the situation from a medical, psychological, and social angle. We at *Dialog* in Vienna offer such a comprehensive approach.

Our association, an outpatient provider with almost 40 years of experience in addiction aid, has been engaged as provider in a specific project geared towards people with alcohol addiction since April 2016.

In all three clinics of Dialog, alcohol-dependent people get comprehensive, multi-professional (medical and psychosocial) and individually tailored help. So far, more than 600 individuals have been treated or are still in treatment. The goal is to make people who suffer from alcoholism objectively and subjectively healthier and to integrate them into society. For us at Dialog, this also includes (re)integration into the job market, which is achieved by a complementary range of measures we offer.

### What sort of help do you provide?

The range of help we offer as Dialog has been part of the programme “Alkohol. Leben können” (Living with alcohol), which was created in October 2014. It is a project focused on the integrated care of people who suffer from alcoholism at the best point of service. The programme carriers and funding bodies are Pensionsversicherungsanstalt (PVA) (Social Security Administration), Wiener Gebietskrankenkasse (WGKK) (Vienna Regional Health Insurance Fund), and Sucht- und Drogenkoordination der Stadt Wien (SDW) (The Vienna Coordination Bureau for Addiction and Drugs). All special insurance carriers are already members of this alliance.

### What needs do people suffering from alcoholism have?

In Vienna, more than 35,000 people are regarded as alcohol-dependent. However, the line between a chronic illness and problematic consumption is a blurred one.

Alcohol-dependent people have different needs from each other, all of which we try to address as best we can. That's why both outpatient and inpatient care are possible, with a ratio of 2/3 to 1/3. Said care is provided by 5 carriers (Verein Dialog, Verein p.a.s.s., Verein Grüner Kreis, Anton Proksch Institut, Schweizer Haus Hadersdorf). Management is handled by the regional competence centre, with additional functions added on for interface management with the healthcare and social system (e.g. GPs, hospitals, municipal authorities).

### How many people do you reach with these measures?

From mid-2016 to the end of 2018 alone, some 3,200 patients will have received help. At the moment, this programme still focuses on Vienna, but soon plans for a roll-out into the provinces and an increase in the number of participants will be put into action. This expansion is crucial to reach a higher number of chronically ill addicts.

Read more articles from this issue of our ESG letter [here](#).

“ESG stands for Environmental, Social and Governance” – These are the three broad categories according to which companies are examined in sustainable investment.

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