

Behind The Corner Office: High-Functioning Addiction Is Harder to Spot Than Ever, Sea Recovery Says

Addiction specialists explain why professional success can delay recognition of substance use disorders and prevent people from seeking treatment.

SOTOGRADE, ANDALUSIA, SPAIN, August 6, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The stereotype of addiction often centers on visible crises: missed work, damaged relationships, or financial instability. But addiction specialists say one of today's fastest-growing challenges looks very different. Many people with [substance use](#) disorders continue to excel professionally, making high-functioning addiction one of the hardest forms of dependency to recognize, and one of the easiest to ignore.

[Sea Recovery](#), a residential addiction treatment center in Sotogrande, Spain, says it increasingly works with professionals whose careers appear successful even as substance use quietly escalates behind the scenes.

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Sam Witkin

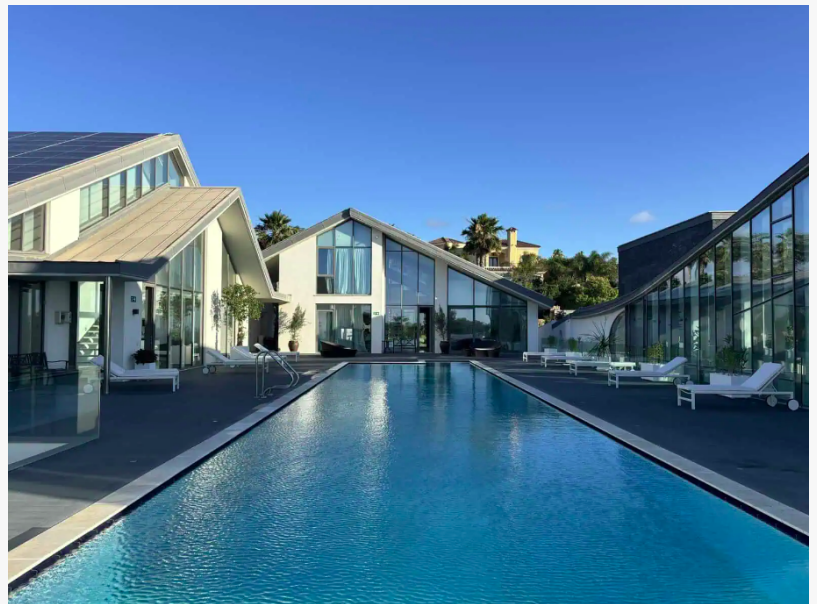


Image of the exterior of Sea Recovery Centre

According to the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, approximately 70 percent of people living with addiction are employed, challenging the misconception that substance use disorders primarily affect those outside the workforce. Research across high-pressure professions paints a similar picture. Studies cited by the American Bar Association have found that more than one in five practicing attorneys report drinking patterns consistent with problematic [alcohol](#) use, while research suggests that up to 15 percent of healthcare

professionals will misuse drugs or alcohol at some point during their careers.

"The people we see are often the last people colleagues or managers would suspect," said Sam Witkin, Admissions Director at Sea Recovery. "They're meeting deadlines, leading teams, and maintaining successful careers. That outward success can delay recognition—for the people around them and often for the individual themselves."

Experts say industries such as law, finance, healthcare, and technology may be particularly vulnerable because long hours, chronic stress, and workplace cultures that normalize alcohol at networking events or celebrations can blur the line between occasional use and dependence. When professional performance remains strong, warning signs are often dismissed until substance use begins affecting physical health, relationships, or legal and financial stability.

Sea Recovery says it has adapted its assessment process to better identify these functional presentations of addiction, where a person's external life remains largely intact despite significant underlying dependency. Clinicians note that individuals in this situation frequently minimize their substance use or delay seeking treatment because they fear admitting they have a problem could jeopardize their careers or professional reputation.

Mental health and occupational health researchers continue to emphasize the importance of confidential workplace support systems, noting that fear of stigma remains one of the biggest barriers preventing professionals from accessing treatment before a crisis occurs.

As awareness of high-functioning addiction grows, Sea Recovery believes employers, healthcare providers, and individuals all have a role in recognizing that professional success should never be mistaken for evidence that someone is not struggling with addiction.

About Sea Recovery

Sea Recovery is a residential addiction treatment center in Sotogrande, Spain, offering



Image of the interior of Sea Recovery Centre



Sea Recovery Logo

individualized, evidence-based care for adults recovering from substance use disorders. Operating for more than two years, the center has treated clients from around the world and was recognized as one of the Top 10 Addiction Treatment Services in Europe – 2025 by Medical Care Review Magazine for its commitment to clinical excellence and personalized care.

Visit our website: <https://searecoverycentre.com>

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