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Addiction

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Abstract

The term addiction does not only refer to dependence on substances such as heroin or cocaine. Some addictions also involve an inability to stop partaking in activities such as gambling, eating, or working. Addiction is an inability to stop using a substance or engaging in a behaviour even though it is causing psychological and physical harm. For a long time, addiction meant an uncontrollable habit of using alcohol or other drugs. More recently, the concept of addiction has expanded to include behaviors, such as gambling, as well as substances, and even ordinary and necessary activities, such as exercise and eating. Addiction is a chronic condition that can also result from taking medications. In fact, the misuse of opioids – particularly illicitly made fentanyl – caused nearly 50,000 deaths in the United States in 2019 alone.

Keywords: Addiction, dependence, inability, behaviour, physical harm, uncontrollable habit, chronic condition

Introduction

The American Society of Addiction Medicine defines addiction as “a treatable, chronic medical disease involving complex interactions among brain circuits, genetics, the environment, and an individual’s life experiences. People with addiction use substances or engage in behaviours that become compulsive and often continue despite harmful consequences.” Many people, but not all, start using a drug or first engage in an activity voluntarily. However, addiction can take over and reduce self-control.

The Most Common Characteristics of Addiction

1. The individual cannot stop taking the substance. ...
2. Health problems do not stop their addiction. ...
3. Giving up recreational and/or social activities. ...
4. Keeping a steady supply. ...
5. Saving stashes. ...
6. Risky behaviour. ...
7. Excessive consumption. ...
8. Dealing with issues.

Primary cause of addiction:

The most common roots of addiction are **chronic stress**, a history of trauma, mental illness and a family history of addiction. Understanding how these can lead to chronic substance abuse and addiction will help you reduce your risk of becoming addicted. The addicted is unable to control the need for consumption, and as a result, unable succeed in reducing or stopping consumption/the activity.

Below are The Four Stages of Addiction

- Stage 1: Experimentation. Very few people set out to become addicted. ...
- Stage 2: Regular Use & Abuse. ...
- Stage 3: Dependency & Tolerance. ...
- Stage 4: **Addiction**. ...
- Detox, Treatment & Recovery.

How does addiction affect the brain?

In a person who becomes addicted, brain receptors become overwhelmed. The brain responds by producing less dopamine or eliminating dopamine receptors—an adaptation similar to turning the volume down on a loudspeaker when noise becomes too loud. It impacts the brain on many levels. The chemical compounds in stimulants, nicotine, opioids, alcohol, and sedatives **enter the brain and bloodstream** upon use. Once a chemical enters the brain, it can cause people to lose control of their impulses or crave a harmful substance. These changes in your brain can make quitting difficult, but it is important to remember that addictions are treatable. With the right plan and resources, recovery is possible. The good news is that you can quit, although it's a complicated process.

How do a person stop himself / herself from getting addicted?

5 action steps for quitting an addiction

1. Set a quit date. ...
2. Change his / her environment. ...
3. Distract him / herself. ...
4. Review his / her past attempts at quitting. ...
5. Create a support network. ...

How long does it take a person to overcome their addiction?

According to psychologists, while it may take approximately 21 days of conscious and consistent effort to create a new habit, it takes far longer to break an existing habit.

Can addiction be treated successfully?

Yes, addiction is a treatable disorder. Research on the science of addiction and the treatment of substance use disorders has led to the development of research-based methods that help people to stop using drugs and resume productive lives, also known as being in recovery.

Recovery

In most areas of life, "being in recovery" means a person is making progress even though s/he isn't "cured." Sometimes it is used as a synonym for "being in remission" — indicating relapse is a clear possibility (as with being in recovery from cancer), while other times it means "on the path to a definite cure". People who are trying to live in sobriety will hear that at some point in recovery, they will "hit the wall". When people first begin working out, they will notice a big difference in their bodies. This is because the body is experiencing something new and is reacting to it accordingly. There are six main stages of change in addiction recovery: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance and termination. Although people can move through these stages in order, it's also common for people to go between stages, forward and backward, or be in more than one stage at a time. What happens during the recovery period? The body is allowed to adapt to the stress associated with exercise, replenishes muscle glycogen (energy stores) and provides time for the body tissue to repair.

Conclusion:

addiction can affect so many aspects of a person's life, treatment should address the needs of the whole person to be successful. Counselors may select from a menu of services that meet the specific medical, mental, social, occupational, family, and legal needs of their patients to help in their recovery.

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