

# ADDICTION AND THE FAMILY

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# ADDICTION

- Repetitive, Compulsive use of \* \_\_\_\_\_ despite adverse consequences....characterized by denial.
- \* alcohol, drugs, prescription meds, sex, gambling, food, nicotine, video games, shopping.....
- Cross addicted

NO CURE

# DISEASE OF ADDICTION

- Heart disease, Lung Disease, Diabetes, Cancer, and Addiction – common?
- Chronic, Progressive, Primary (no other root cause) disease, characterized by relapse.
- If left untreated or if mistreated – can and will result in death
- No parent wants to admit that their child has a potentially life-threatening illness.

# ADDICTION

- Extent of the Problem – Epidemic
- Affects directly or indirectly > 138 million Americans
  - 50% of people 12 and older have used illicit drugs at least once
  - Almost 100,000 overdose deaths in USA March 2020-March 2021

## Pennsylvania:

- 4,377 OD Deaths per year
- OD Death rate is 35.6 deaths per 100,000 → 71.98% higher than the national average
- 6.22% nationwide OD Deaths occur in PA

# ADDICTION - YOUTH COST

- 62% of teenagers in 12<sup>th</sup> grade have abused alcohol
- 50% of teenagers have misused a drug at least once
- 2.08 million 12- to 17-years-old report using drugs in last month
  - 788,000 met criteria for Illicit Drug Use Disorder
- 591,000 teenagers aged 12- to 17-years-old used an illicit drug other than marijuana last month
- 46.6% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders have tried illicit drugs
- 61.5% of teens have abused alcohol by 12<sup>th</sup> grade
- 25.6% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders have abuse alcohol at least once
- Overdose deaths due to opioids have increased 500% among 15- to 24-year-olds since 1999.

# GENETICS

- Addiction is an inherited disease – most of the time
  - 100 million people in the US have at least 1 alcoholic drink daily
    - 14-20 million have alcohol use disorder
  - 4 out of 5 people who have at least 1 drink per day do not develop an alcohol use disorder – WHY?
- Polygenic Inheritance
  - Alcoholism can skip a generation
  - Recent studies suggest that heroin addiction is even more mediated by genes than alcoholism

# ADDICTION AND TRAUMA

- Severe brain trauma at young age (older also) may disrupt the Limbic system
  - Head trauma
  - Meningitis
  - Hydrocephalus
- Neuropsychiatrist at Penn → “slam dunk” for addiction in brain trauma individuals

## ADDICTION - CAUSES

- Risk of drug use increases during times of transition – adolescence
- Risk taking during adolescence
- Early use – the earlier a person begins to use drugs the greater chance at addiction
- Method of administration – smoking or injecting – highly addictive potential



## SIGNS OF DRUG/ALCOHOL USE

- Personality change – may think it is “just being a teenager”
- Working but always needing more money until next paycheck
- Sneaking out at night
- Lack of care about appearance
- Losing weight – unhealthy looking
- Not where he/she says they are
- Calls from other parents asking if you have seen their child

## SIGNS OF DRUG/ALCOHOL USE

- Small items missing from home – DVD's/CD's, newly purchased clothes, other small things that may go unnoticed...
- Spoons missing from home
- Change in grades – may not be much depending on IQ
- Change in appetite
- Less time with family
- Anger when asked simple questions

## FAMILY ROLES

- <http://www.hopelinks.net/addiction/family/roles.html>
- <http://www.uphs.upenn.edu/addiction/berman/family>
- <https://drugabusestatistics.org/>

# FAMILY ROLES

- The Addict – center person – not most important in recovery
- The Hero – high achiever – makes family look good
- The Mascot (clown) – reduces tension through humor
- The Lost Child – hides out – invisible – no trouble
- The Scapegoat – diverts attention by causing trouble
- The Caretaker (Enabler) – saves addict from consequences
- The Placate(r) – keeps everyone happy – tries to keep family in balance
- The Controller – tries to control the addict and everyone else
  - Grounding, no money, can't play with certain kids...

# FAMILY ROLES

- **How does the family get trapped?**
  - Need to Love and Protect
    - Protect child from “ruining future”
    - Protect own parental reputation
    - Protect siblings from opinions of others
  - Minimize the Problem
  - Make Excuses for teenager
  - Need Family to Appear "Normal"
  - Rationalize that as long as followed all the rules of being a “good” parent can’t be addiction
    - Talked to teen about drugs since young

# CODEPENDENCY

- Roles played → codependency
- Family members become obsessed by addict just like the addict is obsessed with getting more drug
  - Just like if a family member has a major disease
- Family members make decisions for the other person (addict)
  - Ultimately become the role they are playing
  - Take that role out to community/school
- GOAL: make each person whole again
  - Must remove the individual roles the family members are playing

# CODEPENDENCY

- Addicts can play the rest of the family – ever hear of a stupid addict?  
They are all smart/manipulative
- Moms, Dads, and siblings respond differently
- Mom: may be the softie – protector – kiss it and make it better
- Dad: tough love – “beat it out of him” – “get out of my house!”
- Siblings: stuck between not being a “rat” and watching loved sibling die

# CODEPENDENCY

- Family must acknowledge that they cannot (and should not) be the CARETAKER for the addict.
- Wouldn't treat cancer, heart disease, diabetes, or lung disease – addiction is a disease!
- Family members can only help themselves – must stop role playing
- Will help addict – “raise the floor”



## IMPACT ON SCHOOL

- Creates adversarial relationship between family and school
  - Family tries to protect addict (and family image)
    - Parents and siblings
  - Disconnect from school activities for entire family
  - Teachers/administrators treat siblings as if they are addicts

# IMPACT ON COMMUNITY

- Legal problems
  - Family problems in the news – not whole story
- Disconnect from community activities
- Difficulty continuing in jobs – due to obsessing over addict
- Financial strain – treatment is very expensive
  - Siblings may have to give up activities to help pay for treatment
- Family loses friends and support system
  - Possibly loses members of family

## FINAL THOUGHTS

- The addict did not choose that life – who would?
- The family did not choose that life – they are desperate and frightened.
- Family members are trying to filter all of the advice they are getting – without any way to judge what is helpful and what is harmful.
- Family members are losing people they thought were friends.

**"Our spirit is where our hope is. When we help people access a source of hope, the possibility for change emerges."**

*Betty Ford Center*