Substance Abuse Disorders

Psychology 311
Abnormal Psychology

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Overview

• Many substances
• Only some cause problems
• Why use?
  • Makes you feel good
  • Escape
  • Performance enhancement
  • Medical treatment
  • Socialization
  • Others

Psychoactive Drugs

• Influences many things within an individual
  • Emotions
  • Thought
  • Behavior
  • Physiology

Problem

• Also influences society as well
  • Crime
  • Domestic violence
  • HIV/AIDS/STDs/Hepatitis
  • Educational quality
• Costs society billions in related costs
  • Insurance
  • Judicial/Corrections
  • Medical costs covered by taxpayers

Examples

• Smoking
  • Nicotine
  • Alcohol
  • DUI
  • Domestic Violence
  • Rape
  • Other Violence

Progression of use

• Friends usually start your use
• Begin recreationally
• Build tolerance
  • Need more and more of the drug to get the same effect
• Develop a substance abuse problem
  • Causes problems to self, family or society
• Moves into substance dependence
  • Must have the drug to function
  • Withdrawal
  • Etc.
DSM IV

- Different levels
  - Substance Intoxication
  - Substance Abuse
  - Substance Dependence

Substance Intoxication

- Development of REVERSIBLE substance-specific symptoms due to the recent ingestion or exposure to a substance.
- Clinically maladaptive behavior or psychological changes due to the effect of the substance on the CNS
- Symptoms are not due to another medical or psychological disorder

Substance Abuse

- 1 or more symptoms with past 12 months
  - Recurrent substance use resulting in a failure to fulfill important obligations (Missing work)
  - Recurrent substance use in situation in which it is physically hazardous do to so (DWI)
  - Recurrent substance-related legal problems (arrests)
  - Continued substance use despite having persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused or exacerbated by the effects of a substance (fights)

Substance Dependence

- Three or more symptoms in the past 12 months
  - Tolerance
  - Withdrawal
  - Ingestion of greater amounts
  - Persistent desire to cut down or control the substance
  - Lots of time spent to get the substance, use it, or recover from it
  - Elimination or reduction of social, work, or recreational activities due to use
  - Continued use despite knowledge of physical or psychological problems due to use.

Two Key Symptoms for Abuse or Dependence

- Substance tolerance
  - Need more and more of the drug to get the same effect
- Substance withdrawal
  - You experience symptoms opposite of the drugs effect when drugs are not in your body
    - Stimulants - you experience lethargy
    - Depressants – you experience stimulation

Issue

- Withdrawal
- Is a major reason for continued use
  - Negative reinforcement
    - Escape from negative symptoms
    - Avoid unpleasant symptoms
  - Result – use continues
Example: Methamphetamine

- Using – makes you feel more alert, stimulated, etc
- Withdrawal
  - Feel lethargic, depressed, down
  - Just cannot seem to get going
  - Feel weird
- Result
  - Use again, makes you feel “normal”

Tolerance

- Is extremely important
  - Makes you need more of the same drug to make you feel good
  - Example – Alcohol
    - Early users – 1-2 beers feeling really high
    - Middle users – need 5-6 beers
    - Later users – can drink 12 or more beers
- Problem
  - Health related effects
  - Reaction time problems
  - Withdrawal occurs when drug is not in the system