



Overview of Substance Abuse

Psychology 470

Introduction to Chemical Addictions

Steven E. Meier, Ph.D.

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Psychoactive Drugs

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

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Problem

- Substance Abuse also influences society as well
 - Crime
 - Domestic violence
 - HIV/AIDS/STDs/Hepatitis
 - Educational quality
- Costs society billions of dollars in related costs
 - Insurance
 - Judicial/Corrections
 - Medical costs covered by taxpayers

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Examples of Problems Legal Drugs Cause

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

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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.

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Why Use?

- Feels good
- Relieve tension and anxiety
- Reduce stress
- Peer pressure
- Relieve pain
 - physiological
 - Psychological
- Part of religious experiences

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Some Factors for Determining Drug Use

- Cultural factors
 - Societal
 - Sub Group factors
- Context
- Pharmacological

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DSM IV

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

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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

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Withdrawal

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

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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”

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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

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Dimensions of Drug Use and Abuse

- Is based on a continuum
- Dep. Rec. Users Exper. Non-Users
- Drugs may be legal or illicit

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Some Drugs Categories of Use and Abuse

- Can be legal and/or illegal
 - Stimulants
 - Hallucinogens
 - Depressants and Benzodiazepines
 - Opiates
 - Inhalants and solvents
 - Analgesics
 - Steroids

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Some Other Drug Terms

- Gateway drugs
- Over the Counter (OTC)
- Designer/Synthetic drugs

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Conclusions

- Lots of compounds
- Lots of issues
- Use is influenced by lots of variables.
- Potential for abuse is influenced by lots of variables.

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