

## **Substance Use: A Different Perspective Focusing on Alcohol**

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- 1. A very brief history of alcohol:**
  - a. Been around as long as there have been fruit/sugars to ferment
  - b. Evidence humans have brewed alcohol for about 10,000 years
  - c. Cultural uses evolved
  - d. Alcohol in the early US
- 2. Evolving view of misuse and solutions:**
  - a. Benjamin Rush and alcohol misuse as a disease – late 1700s
  - b. Founding of AA in 1935
  - c. Jellinek – 1960
- 3. Alcohol in the US currently:**
  - a. Approximately 25% of patients seen by primary care physicians have an alcohol or drug problem (Knutson and Haine, 2003)
  - b. Between 20% and 50% of all hospital admissions are related to the effects of alcohol abuse/addiction (Greenfield and Hennessy, 2004, McKay, Korands, and Axen, 2004)
  - c. Most common cause of psychosis in young adults is alcohol/drug abuse (Cohen, 1995)
  - d. Suicide is 30 times as common among alcohol dependent people as it is in the general population (Mosier, 1999) and 20% to 35% of completed suicides are carried out by alcohol dependent people (Lester, 2000 and Preuss et al., 2003) and is the cause of death in about 5% of alcohol dependent people.
  - e. Alcohol is involved in about 56% of assaults (Dychouse and Sommers, 1998). Many other criminal justice connections. Role of responsibility.
  - f. Estimated about 34% of the US population drinks about 62% of the alcohol.
- 4. Human brains are constructed to try to make sense of things.** Two ways of doing this are looking for patterns and labeling. We look for evidence to prove what we already believe and ignore or rationalize any disproof. Mental mapping.
  - a. Jellinek
  - b. Addiction, Abuse, Dependency
  - c. Models – Medical, Cultural, Social, Religious, Personality, Final Common Pathway (substance abuse is a common endpoint of a unique pattern of growth), Relationship model (fits with systems theory)
  - d. The Continuum of Use and when does a bad habit become a disease (total abstinence – rare/social use – heavy social use/early problem use – heavy problem use/early addiction – clear addiction)
- 5. Dependency as a disease:**
  - a. Primary, chronic disease with genetic psychosocial and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestation. Progressive and fatal. It is characterized by impaired control over drinking, preoccupation

with alcohol, and use of alcohol despite adverse consequences and distortions in thinking. It includes craving/compulsion, loss of control and consequences. Upcoming changes in the DSM-V.

- b. Not a single psychiatric diagnosis, including schizophrenia and manic-depression, have been proven to have a genetic or biochemical origin. (Briggen, 1998) There is no brain chemical imbalance.

#### **6. Cost/Benefit of Labeling.**

- a. Stigma
- b. The power of a name and does resistance exist

#### **7. How do people change:**

- a. The Transtheoretical Model. Most people who change behavior do so on their own. Pre-contemplation-contemplation-preparation-action-maintenance.
- b. Common factors, dodo birds, and the test of evidence based practice
- c. The evolution of ideas. There is almost never an “aha” or Eureka moment that is an isolated event.
- d. The adjacent possible – **Stuart Kauffman**: the limits of the creative potential of change. It takes time to put ideas together,
- e. Work with the person in front of you. When trying to change a paradigm, make a new paradigm so that the old one is obsolete.

#### **Suggested Reading:**

- Concepts of Chemical Dependency, 8th Edition, by Harold E. Doweiko
- Escape from Babel: Toward a Unifying Language for Psychotherapy Practice, by Barry L. Duncan, Mark A. Hubble, and Scott Miller
- A Tear at the Edge of Creation, by Marcelo Gleiser
- Where Good Ideas Come From, The Natural History of Innovation, by Steven Johnson
- Models of Madness, edited by John Read, Loren R. Mosher, and Richard P. Bentall
- Group Genius: The Creative Power of Collaboration, by Keith Sawyer
- The Evolution of Everything: How Selection Shapes Culture, Commerce, and Nature, by Mark Sumner
- Crazy Like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche, by Ethan Watters
- Anatomy of an Epidemic: Magic Bullets, Psychiatric Drugs, and the Astonishing Rise of Mental Illness in America, by Robert Whitaker