

SUBSTANCE USE 101

Back to the Basics



1

ADDICTION IS A DISEASE THAT IS COMPLEX BUT TREATABLE

A disease is defined as an abnormal condition of an organism or part, especially a consequence of infection, defect, or environmental stress that impairs normal physiological functioning.



2

A SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER IS...

Using larger amounts or over a longer period of time than intended, persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control, craving or a strong desire or urge to use, recurrent use in physically hazardous situations, or a spending a great deal of time obtaining, using and recovering from.



3

MISUSE BECOMES A SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER...

...when usage is considered relief seeking and when it impacts social network/employment. A substance use disorder means use, use other than as directed, negative incidents related to intoxication/use (arrest), loss of control or tolerance, and continued use despite negative consequences.



4

COMMONLY MISUSED DRUGS

Both legal and illicit drugs have chemicals that can change how your mind and body work. Including alcohol, prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medicine, heroin, cocaine, marijuana, cigarettes and other tobacco products.



5

BRAIN FUNCTION

Long-term drug exposure impairs brain functioning in such ways as releasing 2 to 10 times more dopamine than natural rewards (eating, sex, and social awards), powerful reward strongly motivates people to take drugs again and again, the brain does adjust and produces less dopamine and reducing receptors that can receive signals and in turn the ability to experience ANY pleasure is reduced.



6

SIGNS AND THE SYMPTOMS

Vary depending on the substance being misused. In general, any individual with any substance use disorders demonstrates behaviors that are a departure from their previous behaviors, decrease in physical / oral health, lack of interest in things they used to love, change in friends, change in sleep habits, decrease in cognitive functioning and isolation.



Southeast (HHS Region 4)

ATTC

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