



ELITE
PERSONAL TRAINING & FITNESS SOLUTIONS

HEALTH TOPIC OF THE WEEK

11/27 - What is Addiction?

What is addiction?

Addiction involves craving a behavior intensely. Loss of control leads to continued and progressively increasing engagement with the behavior despite adverse consequences.

The most common behaviors (also called use disorders) involve drugs, alcohol, gambling, sex and eating. The clinical diagnosis suggests the presence of at least two features:

1. The substance or activity is used in a manner that increases over time.
2. Attempts to cut down on use have been unsuccessful.

Addictive behaviors hijack pleasure and reward circuits in your brain. They hook you into wanting more and more. You feel extreme anxiety when the substance is missing. Drugs and alcohol can also create a physical dependency. Severe sickness and even death can occur from withdrawal that is too rapid.

How does addiction work?

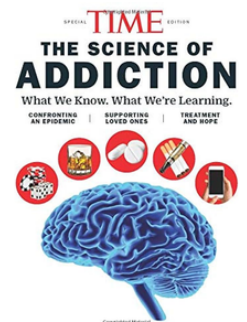
Addictive behaviors trigger an outsized response to the brain's pleasure sensing center with surges of dopamine. Substances such as alcohol, opioids and nicotine can provide more than ten times the reward our brains are built to sustain! This leads to increased use at the sacrifice of normal behaviors that help maintain a healthy family, professional and physical lifestyle.

Genetics plays a big role in addiction. If addiction runs in your family, you have a much higher chance of acquiring addictive behaviors, especially as they relate to drugs and alcohol.

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Elite Personal Training and Fitness Solutions does not provide medical treatment or intervention. We acknowledge scientific evidence that appropriately intensive exercise and sustainable nutritional intervention can have significant impact on chronic health disorders and obesity, dramatically improving symptoms when recommendations are followed. Please visit us at Eliteptf.com for more information and to schedule your evaluation.

Signs of addiction

Early signs of addiction include negative changes in appearance such as hygiene, dress, and weight (both gain and loss). Later stages show significant changes including extreme mood swings, decreased levels of reliability, and poor socialization. Relationship problems may develop with friends, family, coworkers and even the law. In late stages, addicts spend nearly all their time isolated pursuing their addiction.



How do I help myself or a loved one who suffers from addiction?

In order of importance, the most successful addiction treatment involves:

1. A period of immediate detoxification, provided by a medical facility if necessary.
2. A stay at a rehab facility, which offers an environment where abstinence can be achieved. Time is spent gaining a basic understanding of addiction and recovery. An important component here is socialization within the recovery community.
3. A twelve-step program such as AA, NA or Gamblers Anonymous.
4. The support of family and friends before, during, and after the recovery process has begun cannot be overstated.



Some statistics:

In the past year 46.3 million people aged 12 or older (or 16.5 percent of the population) met the applicable DSM-5 criteria for having a substance use disorder. This includes 29.5 million people classified as having an alcohol use disorder and 24 million people classified as having a drug use disorder.



Science

Long-term substance use causes brain changes that can lead to addiction by rerouting a person's reward system and priorities. This is especially true for young people. They face the greatest risk. Most kids grow dramatically during adolescence. Their young brains, particularly the prefrontal cortex that is used to make decisions, continue to grow and develop until their mid-20s.

Once young people are addicted, their brain changes so that drugs or alcohol become top priority. Like all addicts, they will pursue their addiction even though doing so can bring devastating consequences.



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Closing Comments:

If you think you have a problem, then you probably do. Substance abuse is a progressive disease. It only gets worse and never better unless it is arrested. Substance abuse is never cured. The recovering addict is provided a daily relieve contingent upon that person diligently following a recovery program.

Millions of people
have recovered.

RECOVER
TOGETHER

While the recovery and relapse statistics are bleak, the fact is that millions of people have recovered from their addictions and lead healthy productive lives, or as the book Alcoholics Anonymous puts it, "beyond their wildest dreams."

If you think you or a loved one has a problem, EPT can help. Vince Mendola, Founding Member of EPT, is in recovery, is a Certified Recovery Specialist and currently president of The Glenside Center AA clubhouse. He would be happy to discuss any questions you have.



This article was contributed by Vince Mendola, Founding Member and Practice Manager.

Resources

US Department of Health and Human Services (Jan. 13, 2023)

SAMHSA Announces National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) Results Detailing Mental Illness and Substance Use Levels in 2021 | HHS.gov

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) in the United States: Age Groups and Demographic Characteristics | National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) (nih.gov)

SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. 2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/reports/rpt39441/NSDUHDetailedTabs2021/NSDUHDetailedTabs2021/NSDUHDetTabsSect5pe2021.htm#tab5.6a>

Alcoholics Anonymous

The Big Book | Alcoholics Anonymous (aa.org)

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