

What is Addiction

Addiction is a primary, chronic disease of brain reward, motivation, memory and related circuitry. Dysfunction in these circuits leads to characteristic biological, psychological, social and spiritual manifestations. This is reflected in an individual pathologically pursuing reward and/or relief by substance use and other behaviors.

Addiction is both psychological and behavioral. Addictions are characterized by craving, compulsion, and an inability to stop using the drug and lifestyle dysfunction due to drug use. Addictions to substances like alcohol, tobacco or drugs like opioids.

Behavioral addictions are those not involving a substance such as addiction to food, sex, the internet, cell phones and video games. There are also recognized impulse control addictions such as gambling.

Addiction Statistics

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 19.7 million American adults (aged 12 and older) battled a substance use disorder in 2017.

In 2017, 8.5 million American adults suffered from both a mental health disorder and a substance use disorder, or co-occurring disorders.

Every day, more than 130 people in the United States die after overdosing on opioids.

2.6 million people with addictions have a dependence on both alcohol and illicit drugs.

Rates of illicit drug use are highest among those aged 18 to 25.

Addiction among people 65 and up is often underestimated and under-diagnosed, which can prevent them from getting the help they need.

Over 90% of those with an addiction began drinking, smoking or using illicit drugs before the age of 18.

Children of addicted parents exhibit symptoms of depression and anxiety more than children from non-addicted families.

Drug abuse and addiction cost American society more than \$740 billion annually in lost workplace productivity, healthcare expenses, and crime-related costs.

Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work: you don't give up. ~ Anne Lamott

Treatment Options

- Addiction is a complex but treatable disease that affects brain function and behavior.
- No single treatment is right for everyone.
- People need to have quick access to treatment.
- Effective treatment addresses all of the patient's needs, not just his or her drug use.
- Staying in treatment long enough is critical.
- Counseling and other behavioral therapies are the most commonly used forms of treatment.
- Medications are often an important part of treatment, especially when combined with behavioral therapies.
- Treatment plans must be reviewed often and modified to fit the patient's changing needs.
- Treatment should address other possible mental disorders.
- Medically assisted detoxification is only the first stage of treatment.

Faith-based treatment can include aspects of:

- A belief in one's self
- Trust in life
- Confidence in a higher power
- Trusting in each moment
- Confidence in the ability to live substance-free
- Belief in religious ideals
- Believing in one's capacity to achieve change
- Believing in other's ability to help

How Faith Leaders and Congregations Can Help

Help break down the wall of silence that stands between the faith community and people with alcohol and drug abuse and dependence, preventing faith communities from availing themselves of opportunities to help.

Addiction is a disease and not a moral or spiritual failure. Treat it like one. You can't "fix it." Treat addiction like any other chronic debilitating illness.

Understand the importance of educating and informing your congregation about alcoholism, addiction and recovery.

Consider offering sermons, classes and prayers that deal with these issues.

Assess the situation, know the resources and make a good referral for both the alcoholic/addict and the family.

Provide meeting space for the variety of Twelve-Step programs.

Recognize that addiction is a family issue, a "family disease." Alcoholism and addiction take a tremendous toll on everyone involved. The spouse and all the children need attention and referral.

Offer a message of hope. There are literally millions of American families in recovery and living a positive recovery lifestyle. They are in your congregation. Encourage these people to share their stories.

Congregations can offer a safe, welcoming and accepting community with people who care and will listen without judgment.

RESOURCES ON ADDICTION

Addiction Center
<https://www.addictioncenter.com>

Center on Addiction
<https://www.centeronaddiction.org/>

National Institute on Drug Abuse
<https://www.drugabuse.gov/>

SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)
<https://www.samhsa.gov/>

Addiction

How Congregations Can Respond



Mental Health Ministries
www.MentalHealthMinistries.net