

Definitions of Drinking Patterns

Standard Drink: one standard drink equals

- 12 ounces of beer or wine cooler
- 8-9 ounces of malt liquor
- 5 ounces of table wine
- 3-4 ounces of fortified wine
- 2-3 ounces of liqueur
- 1.5 ounces (one shot) of brandy
- 1.5 ounces (one shot) of 80-proof distilled spirits

Moderate alcohol use – up to two drinks per day for men and one drink per day for women and older adults

High-risk or hazardous drinking – more than four drinks per day for men (or more than fourteen per week), and more than three drinks per day for women (or more than seven per week).

Heavy drinking – five or more drinks in a day at least once per week for males, and four or more for females.

Binge drinking – five or more drinks on the same occasion.

Substance Abuse v. Substance Dependence

Substance abuse - A maladaptive pattern of use, leading to clinically significant impairment or distress as manifested by one or more behaviorally based criteria within a twelve-month period.

Substance Dependence - A maladaptive pattern of use, leading to clinically significant impairment or distress as manifested by three or more behaviorally based criteria within a twelve-month period.

Criteria include:

- Tolerance – either the need to dramatically increase use to achieve the desired effect, or a markedly diminished effect from the same level of continued use
- Withdrawal – manifested by either withdrawal syndrome or using to avoid withdrawal
- Substance s being used in larger amounts or over a longer period than intended
- A persistent desire or unsuccessful attempts to cut down or control substance use
- Considerable time spent in activities necessary to obtain the substance, use the substance, or recover from the effects of the substance
- Important social, occupational, or recreational activities given up or reduced due to substance use

- Substance use continuing despite knowledge of having a persistent or psychological problem caused or worsened by the substance (e.g., continued drinking despite awareness that alcohol use makes an ulcer worse)

Disease Concept of Addiction

Many aspects of substance dependence, or addiction, are similar to those of other recognized chronic illnesses, such as type 2 diabetes, and high blood pressure.

Key areas of similarity include:

- Identifiable signs and symptoms – DSM Criteria, based on research evidence, expert consensus, and laboratory findings
- Biological basis – including changes in brain functioning and brain structure that correspond with the progression from recreational use, to abuse, to dependence, to chronic addiction. Changes occur within the passage-ways of communication with neurotransmitters, re-ordering of basic biological needs, and physical shrinkage of the brain. Some of these changes never return back to normal, leaving the addict at risk to chronic relapse.
- Genetic Heritability – Children of alcoholics are four times as likely to become alcoholic themselves. Genes have been identified in addicts that contribute to the enzymes that metabolize alcohol, and influence the vulnerability to stress.
- Effective treatment – not “acute care”, but due to the chronic and relapsing nature of the disease of addiction, which is similar to other chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension, it should be treated with the same “managed care” approach.
- Role of personal responsibility – motivation and capacity for self-care and self-management following treatment are crucial to the long-term recover of the addict, and is often the determinant in preventing relapse.
- Other similarities include a pattern of onset that can be sudden or gradual, a prolonged course that varies from person to person in intensity and pattern, and the risk of profound pathology, disability, and premature death.

Recent Trends in Substance Abuse/Dependence

- Illicit drug use in the US has been increasing. In 2013, 24.6 million Americans age 12 and older had used an illicit drug in the past month.
- The average age of first alcohol use is 12, and the average age of first drug use is 13.
- 93% of all teenagers have some experience with alcohol by the end of their senior year of high school, and six percent drink daily.
- Two thirds of all American young people try illicit drugs before they finish high school.

- One out of sixteen seniors smokes marijuana daily, and 20% have done so for at least a month at some time in their lives.
- 88% of unchurched young people report drinking beer compared with 80% of churched young people. 47% of unchurched young people report trying marijuana, compared to 38% of churched. 28% of unchurched youth report trying amphetamines and barbiturates, as well as 22% of churched. As for cocaine, 14% of unchurched and 11% of churched youth.
- Marijuana use has increased since 2007, from 14.5 million users to 19.8 million users.
- Drug use is highest among people in their late teens and twenties, with 22.6 percent of 18- to 20-year-olds reporting illicit drug use in the past month.
- Drug use is increasing among people in their fifties and early sixties.
- Most people use drugs for the first time before the age of 18, with an average of 7800 new users per day.
- More than half of new illicit drug users begin with marijuana.
- There continues to be a treatment gap in the United States. In 2013 an estimated 22.7 million Americans needed treatment, but only about 2.5 million people received treatment at a specialty facility.

Warning Signs of Alcohol and Drug Abuse

1. School and/or work tardiness, truancy, declining grades and/or productivity
2. Less motivation, energy, self-discipline
3. Loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed
4. Forgetfulness, either short- or long-term
5. Short attention span, trouble concentrating
6. Aggressive anger, hostility, irritability
7. Sullen, uncaring attitudes or behavior
8. Family arguments, strife with family members
9. Disappearance of money, unaccounted for withdrawals or expenditures, disappearance of valuables
10. Changes in friends, evasiveness about new ones
11. Unhealthy appearance, bloodshot eyes
12. Changes in personal dress or grooming habits
13. Trouble with the law, or trouble with school authorities
14. Unusually large appetite, or changes in eating patterns
15. Use of Visine, room deodorizers, or incense
16. Rock group or drug-related graphics and slogans
17. Presence of pipes, small box containers, baggies, rolling papers, or other unusual items
18. Peculiar odors or butts, seeds, leaves in ashtrays or clothing pockets

The Impact of Drugs on Society

The trafficking and abuse of illicit drugs in the United States create an enormous drain on the economic, physical, social health, and family systems of American society.

- The estimated economic cost of illicit drug use to society for 2007 was more than \$193 billion.
- The annual cost of drug-related crime is \$61 billion.
- Drug abuse costs the nation more than \$120 billion per year in lost productivity, generally occurring through incapacitation due to residual effects of the drug, reduced motivation, or by confinement in treatment centers.
- Drug-related health costs are estimated to be more than \$11 billion annually. This includes both direct and indirect costs related to medical intervention, such as emergency room visits, in-patient drug treatment, and drug use prevention and research.
- The relational impact of illicit drugs cannot go overlooked. The damage that drugs and alcohol do to the family system can result from domestic violence, lack of parental involvement due to tending to drugs and alcohol, financial strain, trust issues, sexual promiscuity outside of marriage, and divorce.

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