

Chapter 2

The Nature of the Beast

Why do people use?

- People are driven to find ways to alter their perspective of reality—not only humans but some other mammals as well.
 - Cope with emotional or physical pain
 - Explore alternate realities
 - Experience a substance-induced euphoria

Why do people use?

- The decision to initiate substance influenced by:
 - Blindness to the compound's effects: People often report feeling better when they are abusing a substance
 - The pharmacological reward potential
 - Increase the individual's sense of pleasure
 - Decreases discomfort
 - Rapid onset of action and greater sense of pleasure have highest reward consequences (O'Brien, 2011)

Why do people use?

- The decision to initiate substance influenced by:
 - Social learning
 - Cultural/social influences
 - Legal sanctions

The continuum of chemical use

- Substance use is a normal learned behavior that falls on a continuum from abstinence through limited use to excessive use to dependence
 - Level 0: total abstinence
 - Level 1: rare/social use
 - Level 2: heavy social use/early problem drug use
 - Level 3: heavy problem use/early addiction
 - Level 4: middle to late stage addiction

Drug abuse cycles

- Abuse of substances may pass through phases similar to epidemics of infectious disease:
 - Incubation
 - Expansion
 - Plateau
 - Decline

What does addicted mean?

- Wide discrepancy between laymen vs. health care professionals use of term, addiction (Szalavitz, 2010)
- Medical professions use standardized criteria such as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition (DSM-V) (American psychiatric association, 2013)

DSM-V

- DSM-V criteria can be grouped into 4 general categories:
 - Impaired control of substance use
 - Multiple attempts to quit or reduce substance use
 - Most of individual's activities center around substance
 - Pharmacological effects of drug, including “craving” when substance is not being used

ICD-10

- The International Statistical Classification of Disease and Related Health Problems, 10th edition (World health Organization, 1990) has more comprehensive diagnostic system

Terms to know

- Social use
- Substance abuse
- Dependence
- Drug of choice

Terms to know

- Loss of control
- Addiction/dependence
- Tolerance
- Withdrawal syndrome

Behavioral “addictions”

- A debate continues over the questions of whether some non-pharmacologically based activities can be said to be addictions (Barber, 2008)
- Little evidence to support the idea of non-drug related behaviors resulting in physical addiction
- Clinicians increasingly classifying such behaviors as “behavioral addictions” or compulsive behaviors (Fong, Reid, & Perhami, 2012)

Unanswered questions

- Much of what is “known” about SUDs is based upon mistaken assumptions, distorted data, clinical myth, theory, or incomplete data
- Many unanswered questions, such as:
 - How to differentiate individuals who simple use substances from those will go on to develop an SUD or AUD?
 - Do those who limit their substance use to alcohol differ from those who are poly-drug abuser or addicts?
 - What is the effects of genetics vs. environment in regards to SUD and AUD?