

Alcoholism, Drug Addiction, Chemical Dependency

Considered diseases by leading American health organizations and World Health Organization since the mid-1950's.

Diseases with biological and genetically-based causes

There is no predicting who will become dependent, but resistance and vulnerability vary among persons

Environmental, occupational, cultural, or psychological factors may affect pattern of use or how the disease is manifested

- ▶ Alcoholism, drug addictions, and addictive disease are generally interchangeable terms. Many alcoholics have used other drugs, legally prescribed or not, that are addictive. Addictive disease or chemical dependency are terms used to help the public understand the clinical nature of addiction. They are helpful in reducing stigma.
- ▶ Addiction is a disease process and it is primary. Patients are therefore taught to manage their disease in order to prevent relapse in the same way diabetics are taught to manage their illness. Use of alcohol or drugs begins with experimentation or peer pressure for almost every drinker. Physiologic susceptibility determines the progression of the disease. This heavily influenced by genetics, but other factors can influence severity and course of the disease.
- ▶ Alcoholism declared a disease in 1957 by the American Medical Association.
- ▶ Alcoholism declared a disease in 1956 by the World Health Organization.
- ▶ Research demonstrates most people believe alcoholism (addiction) to be a disease, however, this belief does not contribute easily to self-diagnosis because of denial. Most people attempt to define alcoholism by behaviors (how much one drinks, when, or what) rather than medical, objective symptoms. Changing this view is key to intervention and reducing stigma.
- ▶ Some occupations are characterized by more frequent opportunities to use alcohol socially or without observation. Higher rates of alcoholism may therefore be found among workforces that are predominantly male, or in occupations such as traveling sales, etc. (NIAA Research) The opportunity to tax one's susceptibility increases one's risk and the speed of onset for the illness.

NOTES: Add instructors own notes here.