**Lecture Notes for Chapter 10: Substance Use and Addiction**

When a person uses substances (alcohol, tobacco, other drugs), or engages in a behavior (sex, gambling) to the point that relationships and the ability to cope with ordinary tasks and activities are affected, the person may be said to have a substance use problem. Aspects of addiction include people’s behaviors, thoughts, emotions, and interactions with others, including their relationships with family and community members, and their own psychological state.

Substance abuse includes maladaptive patterns of substance use, despite their adverse consequences. Over 500,000 deaths per year – or one in four—in the U.S. is attributed to abuse of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs, including drug overdoses, teen suicides, traffic fatalities, murders, and manslaughter. Substance abuse is also associated with rapes, assaults, burglaries, thefts, and child abuse. The healthcare costs of substance abuse are immense, including cancer and cardiopulmonary disease from tobacco, falls and over-sedation from misuse of prescription drugs, and bacterial or viral infections (including HIV) from people injecting illicit drugs.

Substance Use as a Mental Disorder

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)*, defines substance use disorder as a mental disorder associated with the consumption of a harmful addictive substance. Addictive Disorders has been addedas a new category based on behavioral, not substance, addictions. Gambling disorder is the only addictive disorder in the DSM-5 that is considered a diagnosable condition. This new term reflects recent research that links gambling disorder to substance-related disorders based on their origin in the brain.

* Causes of Substance Abuse – Both genetics and environment play a role.
  + Genetics - An addicting drug causes physical changes to several areas of the brain. Neurobiological researchers have found definitive signs that addictive tendencies run in families.
  + Environment - The way a person is raised and later life experiences can all affect the extent to which genetic predispositions lead to the behavioral and other manifestations of addiction. Culture also contributes to how addiction becomes actualized in people with biological vulnerabilities. The decision to start using a drug can be influenced by a family’s beliefs and attitudes, and by exposure to a peer group that encourages drug use.
* Co-Dependency
  + When other people in the user’s environment are enabling the substance abuse, the term for the relationship between the user and these other people is codependency.
  + Codependents may appear as people pleasers, denying themselves and their own needs because they are or have been so busy taking care of others.
* Addictive Substances and Behaviors
  + Alcohol - the most commonly used psychoactive**,** or brain-affecting, substance of abuse. Alcoholism is a chronic and often progressive disease that includes problems controlling your drinking, physical dependence, or having withdrawal symptoms when you stop drinking.
  + Prescription Drugs - depressants, opioids and morphine derivatives, stimulants, and other substances that are meant for medical use but frequently used in ways that are not intended or by people to whom they were not prescribed.
  + Illegal Drugs and Marijuana - The most commonly abused illegal drugs include cannabis (marijuana), organic solvents (for example, Toluene, which is used in dry cleaning and the aviation and chemical industries), amphetamines, and opioids like morphine.
  + Anabolic Steroids - similar to testosterone and often used for medical reasons. However, they are also abused, especially by men, who want to “bulk up” for sports or look more imposing physically.
  + Tobacco and Nicotine - nicotine may be pleasurable while smoking but afterward, smokers feel anxious, moody and depressed. Nicotine can harm a person’s heart, lungs, skin, and muscles, and can lead to gum disease. Nicotine addictionis linked to serious health problems such as bronchitis, emphysema, heart disease, and various forms of cancer.
  + Food and Caffeine - food is necessary for life, however, food can also be addictive, sharing a similar neurobiological and behavioral framework with substance addiction. Some people derive psychological pleasure from food. Like tobacco, there are social cues that popularize caffeine, and it is often consumed to improve performance. Caffeine can cause sleep problems that affect mood and abruptly quitting caffeinated beverages can cause depression until your body adjusts
  + Gambling - compulsive gambling--the uncontrollable urge to keep gambling—can thoroughly disrupt a person’s life. The gambling addict often keeps at it until all financial resources have been lost, which in turn destroys families and other relationships and increases the risk of turning to crime as a way of either paying off debts or finding more money with which to gamble.
  + Sex Addiction - sex addicts are not just people who crave lots of sex. They have underlying problems that include stress, anxiety, depression and shame and guilt that drive their often risky sexual behavior.

Policies Related to Substance Use

* Social policies related to substance use have influenced the development of practices and treatment programs. For example, in Colonial America and early 1800s drinking alcohol was accepted and opiates and cocaine were legal and widely used. In the nineteenth century, however, it became problematic to use alcohol and become drunk.
* Social work advocacy is needed to assure that state and federal policies are just and effective in addressing substance abuse issues.

Social Work Practice in Substance Use and Addiction

A substance abuse social worker might become involved in manage cases, crisis intervention, education, client advocacy, and group therapy. To carry out these tasks, social workers need to interview people, monitor progress, review records, conduct assessments, assess adherence with treatment plans, and consult other professionals.

* Prevention of Substance Use Disorder - Schools and other community facilities may offer programs on understanding the ill effects of substance abuse and fighting peer pressure to use drugs or require drug testing in certain circumstances. Some workplaces, especially those whose employees operate public transit and heavy machinery, also require periodic drug testing. Some require drug testing as a part of the hiring process.
* Treatments and Interventions for Substance Use and Addiction –

No matter the specifics of the individual case, the substance abuse social worker should be concerned with assessing the following issues:

* loss of control (cannot stop or limit drug use)
* tolerance (or the need to use more and more of the substance to avoid withdrawal or to maintain a desired state
* impairment in functioning (such as failure to work or keep other life obligations)
  + Detoxification and Recovery - The first step in overcoming either physiological or psychological addiction is detoxification*.* This short term medically supervised treatment program for alcohol or drug addiction is designed to purge the body of intoxicating or addictive substances. Detoxing alone and at home is dangerous. If a person stops substances too suddenly they can experience hallucinations, convulsions, or have a heart seizure that can turn deadly. Recovery is the process that follows, referring to the difficult challenge of learning to live without the substance of abuse.
    - Treatment models may include:
* 12-step approach: traditional treatment model based on a moral and spiritual understanding of addictive behavior.
  + - * Rational-recovery model: teaches addicts to recognize and to dispute irrational thoughts that encourage substance abuse.
      * Harm reduction model: a motivational approach to increase people’s desire for better health and well-being.
    - The four major dimensions of life that support recovery are:
* *Health* : overcoming or managing one’s disease(s) as well as living in a physically and emotionally healthy way
* *Home*: maintaining a stable and safe place to live
* *Purpose*: pursuing meaningful daily activities, such as a job, school, volunteerism, family caretaking, or creative endeavors, and the independence, income and resources to participate in society
* *Community:* forging relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love, and hope
  + Motivational Interviewing - a client-centered, goal-oriented counseling style for eliciting behavior change by helping clients to explore and resolve their ambivalence about continuing to use the substance. It is based on the “stages of change” (or trans-theoretical) model. The five stages of change are:

1. Pre-contemplation Stage (Not yet acknowledging that there is a problem)
2. Contemplation Stage (Acknowledging a problem but not ready to change)
3. Preparation Stage (Determination: Getting ready to change)
4. Action Stage (Willpower: Changing behavior)
5. Maintenance (Maintaining the behavior change)
   * Alcohol and Drug Treatment Programs - While at a treatment center, participants spend some time being counseled one on one and a lot of time attending group meetings.
   * Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous - Twelve step programs that involve admitting to having a serious problem, recognizing there is an outside (or higher) power that could help, consciously relying on that power, admitting and listing character defects, seeking deliverance from shortcomings, apologizing to people you have harmed, and help others with the same problem.
   * Needle-Exchange Programs – An intervention for reducing the transmission of HIV among those who inject drugs like heroin.
   * Methadone Treatment Programs – Methadone can be used to detoxify opiate addicts or to maintain the addict on a stable dose so he or she can live a safer and more functional life.

Diversity and Substance Use and Treatment

* Age - The age at which adolescents begin using alcohol and drugs is a powerful predictor of later problems, especially if they begin using before age 15.
* Class - Only a small percentage of individuals with alcohol and other drug problems are homeless. However, individuals of lower socioeconomic status frequently face barriers to recovery that include unemployment, health disparities, and poor unsafe living conditions.
* Race/Ethnicity - Members of oppressed racial and ethnic groups may distrust agency professionals, especially if they are mostly white. Although substance abuse treatment should not center on race or ethnicity, it is important for the social worker to understand the role of culture, history, oppression, and ethnic pain.
* Gender - Female substance abusers typically have more frequent and serious health outcomes from addiction than males do, more psychiatric issues (like depression) and except for African American women, are more likely to live with a partner or spouse who has a substance abuse problem.
* Sexual Orientation - LGBTQ clients may go unrecognized in addiction treatment centers, especially if they are assumed to be heterosexual. Recognizing LGBTQ clients is imperative to gain their trust and willingness to seek health care, mental health services, and addiction treatment.

Advocacy and Substance Use Disorder

* Economic and Social Justice – level of insurance coverage may impact access to services.
* Environmental Factors – place of residence may impact initiation into substance use and access to substance abuse treatment centers.
* Human Needs and Rights – addiction is a disease, not a character defect, and should be treated as such.
* Political Perspectives – legalization/ decriminalization of various substances is part of ongoing debate, and has implications for the legal system.

Your Career in Treatment for Substance Use and Addiction

* Job growth for substance abuse social workers is expected to be much faster than the average for all careers through 2020. This increase is partly due to new laws that send drug users to treatment programs instead of jail. Employment growth will also be driven an increased overall need for health care.
* Returning veterans with mental disorders such as PTSD are at risk of drinking more alcohol to cope with their stresses. Consequently the VA may consequently increase job opportunities for mental health and substance use social workers.
* Aging baby boomers may abuse not only alcohol but also illicit drugs such as cocaine, heroin, and marijuana. The stress of transitioning into older adulthood may exacerbate this.

Social Work and Substance Abuse

Social work professionals have a unique role and skill set to offer the multidisciplinary team. They consider the person in their environment, advocate for timely access to rehab treatment and follow-up community services, and offer hope. Skills in motivational interviewing and an understanding of 12-step principles and change processes help social workers garner their client’s trust and encourage their client’s growth.