



American Drug Testing

Drug-Free Workplace Programs

Volume 1

Issue 74

(843) 747-4111

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE ADVISOR

AN ONGOING SERIES TO PROTECT YOUR COMPANY BY HELPING TO KEEP DRUGS OUT OF YOUR WORKPLACE.

Addiction and Dependence, Part II

(second of a four-part series)

What is the nature of addiction?

Although addiction unquestionably begins with a voluntary act of using a drug, continued use often becomes involuntary, ultimately to the point that the behavior is driven by a compulsive craving. The compulsion results from a number of factors, including dramatic changes in brain function produced by prolonged exposure to the drug. This is why addiction is considered a brain disease. It is this compulsion that causes most of the problems surrounding addiction and what requires multidimensional regimens of treatment. Once addicted, it is almost impossible for most people to stop the

spiraling cycle of addiction on their own without

“Once an addiction is developed, it will always have to be addressed”

treatment. Furthermore, addiction often becomes a chronic recurring disorder for which repeated treatment episodes are required before an individual achieves long-term abstinence.

What are the characteristics of addiction?

Addiction to alcohol or other drugs may be:

Chronic – Once an addiction is developed, it will always have to be addressed. An addict may manage to stop using alcohol or other drugs for significant periods of time, but the disease typically does not disappear. Rather, it goes into remission. Should “normal” drug use be at-

tempted, “out of control” use will return rapidly.

Progressive – Addiction gets worse over time. With some drugs, the decline is rapid. With others, like alcohol, it can be more gradual.

Primary – Addiction is not just a symptom of some underlying psycho-

Hepatitis C and HIV rise with use.

Is addiction a brain disease?

Yes. Research by the National Institute on



Drug Abuse (NIDA) suggests that long-term exposure to

drugs produces addiction – that is, the compulsion to take drugs – by eliciting changes in specific neurons in the central nervous system.

Does addiction result from moral weakness or overindulgence?

No. Addiction can be a life-threatening condition, like adult diabetes or hypertension, with roots in genetic susceptibility, social circumstance, and personal behavior.

In part III we examine denial and enabling.

Source: US Department of Labor



logical problem. Once the use of alcohol or drugs becomes an addiction, the addiction itself needs to be treated as the primary illness.

Terminal – Addiction to alcohol or other drugs often leads to death through damage to major organs of the body. Also, the risks of contracting

The Drug-Free Workplace Advisor



is published by American Drug Testing, a leading drug-free workplace administrator and testing company. Let us help you maintain a drug-free workplace. Call

(843) 747-4111.

© 2006 American Drug Testing

Distribution List

- _____ HR
- _____ Management
- _____ Office Staff
- _____ Manufacturing
- _____ Transportation
- _____
- _____