

What is Abuse

Addiction is a chronic, often relapsing brain disease that causes compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences to the addicted individual and to those around him or her. Although the initial decision to take drugs is voluntary for most people, the brain changes that occur over time challenge an addicted person's self control and hamper his or her ability to resist intense impulses to take drugs.



Dangers

Sedative drugs like alcohol and heroin can lead to fatal overdose if a lot is taken. They can also affect co-ordination making accidents more likely. Use of sedatives can also lead to physical dependence and withdrawal symptoms while others drugs like cannabis cannot.

Stimulant drugs can produce anxiety or panic attacks particularly if taken in large quantities. They can also be particularly dangerous for people who have heart or blood pressure problems.

Hallucinogenic drugs sometimes produce very disturbing experiences and may lead to erratic or dangerous behaviour by the user, especially if they are already unstable. And of course some drugs are legal to use and others are not. Being arrested and getting a conviction can lead to all sorts of problems.



Treatments

Medication and behavioral therapy, especially when combined, are important elements of an overall therapeutic process that often begins with detoxification, followed by treatment and relapse prevention.



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