Substance Abuse

Unit Learning Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should know…

* how to explain the rationale behind why *“Substance Abuse”* is a more appropriate title for the unit versus *“Drugs and Alcohol”.*
* how to define **terminology** such as *use, misuse, abuse*, *tolerance, physiological dependence, psychological dependence, addiction, overdose, synergistic effect*, *withdrawal, etc.*
* how to **categorize substances** by characteristics and/or effect. For example:
  1. Alcohol—depressant, gateway drug, legal, organic in origin
  2. Nicotine—stimulant, legal, organic in origin
  3. Anabolic Steroids—in a category of its own (mimics testosterone), synthetic, illegal…and so on
* why young people choose to start abusing substances and/or what could influence their decision.
* the signs and symptoms of **intoxication**.
* the legal limit of intoxication (BAC) in Washington and why the age of 21was chosen as the legal age to consume alcohol.
* what **BAC** stands for and means; what factors *do* and *do not* influence a person’s BAC.
* some short-term and long-term effects of drinking alcohol.
* what **FAS** stands for and is, as well as,what causes it.
* short and long-term effects of **smoking and chewing.**
* why alcohol is the biggest contributor to health problems, accidents, deaths, etc over ALL other abused substances.
* how **addiction** happens and what kind of structural and functional changes occur in the brain that helps define addiction as a disease. (A review of *neural communication* from the Mental Health Unit would be advised!)
* what **risk factors** *may* increase the likelihood of a person becoming addicted to a substance.
* some possible **treatment** options for addicts and what it takes for treatment to be successful/effective.
* some ways other people’s substance abuse can impact our health (i.e. date rape, violence and crime, DUI’s, guilty by association, etc.).
* what we can do to **prevent** substance abuse in young people and the importance of practicing refusal skills. (A review of *peer pressure, communication and communication styles* from the Social Health Unit would be beneficial here!)
* how to correlate/connect the information covered in the Substance Abuse Unit back to topics/issues addressed in the Social and Mental/Emotional Health Units (like I’ve been doing above in parentheses…☺).
* information about amphetamine use/abuse through watching **“Take Your Pills.”**