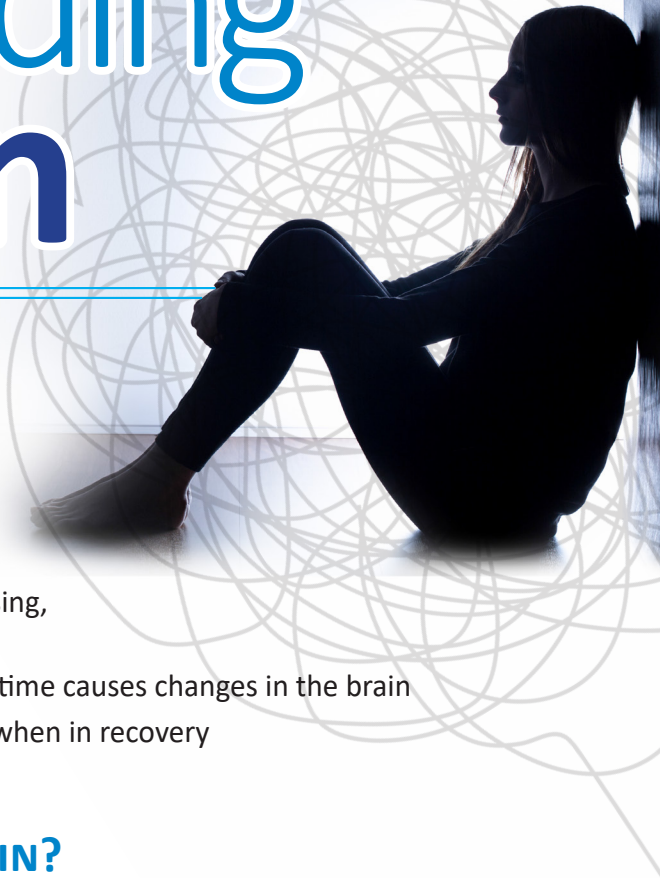
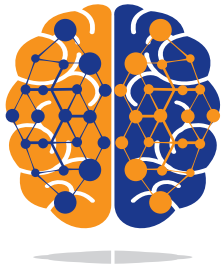


Understanding Addiction



WHAT IS DRUG ADDICTION?

- Drug addiction is also called substance use disorder (SUD)
- Addiction is a chronic medical disease
- Drug seeking and using that is difficult to control despite knowing it is harmful and unhealthy to continue
- Drugs change the brain in ways that make it hard to quit using, even when someone wants to quit
- Repeated drug use (chronic drug use) over long periods of time causes changes in the brain
- Brain changes can continue for long periods of time, even when in recovery
- Addiction/SUD is NOT a lack of willpower or strength



WHAT HAPPENS TO THE BRAIN?

- Most drugs affect the reward or pleasure circuit of the brain
- Causing elevated mood (feeling “high”) by releasing a brain chemical named dopamine
- Higher levels of dopamine and effects on mood reinforce use, even though it’s unhealthy
- Over time, the brain gets used to these chemical changes which is called tolerance
- When tolerance occurs, the person experiences less pleasure or feeling high. This may cause someone to use higher doses or more frequently

WHY DO SOME PEOPLE BECOME ADDICTED TO DRUGS?

- There are several things that increase a person’s risk of addiction
- Heredity or genes from family influence the risk of addiction
- About 50% of the risk of addiction is related to a person’s genetic makeup
- A person’s environment which includes where you live, the friends and family you spend time with, economic status (money) and quality of life also affect risk
- Stressors such as peer pressure, physical or sexual abuse, early exposure to drugs, parents divorced, loss of a parent to incarceration or death may increase risk of addiction
- Development: the younger a person is when starting to take drugs, the more likelihood of addiction
- Taking drugs at any age may progress to addiction

To find help, contact **Find Help Now KY**
1-877-318-1871 or www.findhelpnowky.org



Understanding Addiction



HOW CAN ADDICTION BE PREVENTED?

- Education on the harmful nature of taking drugs through social media, religious organizations, school and healthcare providers
- Prevention programs that work with communities, churches, families, schools and the media are effective

IS ADDICTION CURABLE?

- SUD or addiction is a chronic, long-term condition that can be successfully treated
- Medication for treatment which prevents withdrawal symptoms is readily available
- Like Diabetes, High blood pressure and many chronic medical conditions – addiction is not curable. Relapses may occur, but getting into treatment for recovery is the first step
- Recovery is possible!



988
LIFELINE



WHERE CAN I FIND TREATMENT FOR ADDICTION?

- If you or someone you know needs help to recover from drug addiction, talk with your doctor or health care provider
- Call Find Help Now KY at **1-877-318-1871** or www.findhelpnowky.org
- Call Kentucky Opioid Assistance helpline at **1-800-854-6813**
- Contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Helpline at **1-800-662-4357**
- If you or someone you know is having a crisis, call **988** immediately or 988lifeline.org
- If using drugs, always be sure to have naloxone available and don't use alone
- Call the national Never Use Alone hotline: **1-877-696-1996** or www.neverusealone.com
- Find naloxone at no charge, Find Naloxone Now KY: www.findnaloxone.ky.gov

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