ADDICTION

- Broadly defined as persistent or compulsive use of a substance or behavior despite adverse consequences.

- Substances (alcohol, drugs, caffeine, tobacco)
- Behaviors (gambling, food, pornography, exercise)

Characteristics
- Impaired control
- Pre-occupation with substance/behavior
- Continued use
- Denial
HOW SUBSTANCE ABUSE AFFECTS FAMILIES

Although each family differs, there are some common qualities within families:

• Feels chaotic
• People feel inconsistent
• Roles are unclear
• Rules are arbitrary
• Change feels daunting
• Illogical thinking

The family is dominated by the co-existence of denial and substance use. The use becomes the major family secret, often denied inside the family as well as to outsiders.
COMMON STRUGGLES

- Guessing at what is normal
- Difficulty having fun
- Judging themselves mercilessly
- Difficulty with emotional relationships
- Feeling "different" from other people
- Tendency to be impulsive
- Either super responsible or super irresponsible
- Desperately seeking approval and affirmation
- Suffering from chronic anxiety
- Fear and mistrust for authority figures
5 ROLES

The Caretaker / Enabler / Helper

Purpose: The caretaker’s purpose is to maintain appropriate appearances to the outside world.

In a College Setting:
Seek situations and people to take care of to sustain their role, possibly friends who drink to much. Grades, projects, and performance are done to please others instead of self. Relationships are based on the needs of others.
The Hero

Purpose: The hero raises the esteem of the family

In a College Setting:
Sometimes take on more than they can handle. Strive for perfection. Stay busy so that they don’t have to stop and take a look at themselves. Run themselves ragged trying to please everyone and keep grades and studies up.
5 ROLES

The Scapegoat / Black Sheep / Family Rebel

Purpose: The scapegoat turns focus away from the substance, thereby allowing the user to continue. This role may seem strange in purpose. However, if there were no scapegoat, all other roles would dismantle. He/she allows others a pretense of control.

In a College Setting:
Difficulty fitting in with others. May damage property in anger. Sexual acting out is common, or casual relationships. Can develop a substance abuse problem themselves. Tend to blame others for their problems. Can develop the attitude others are out to get them.
5 ROLES

The Mascot / Cheerleader

Purpose: The mascot’s purpose is to provide levity to the family. Often serving as the “favorite” in the family.

In a College Setting:
Can be the life of the party in a college setting. Many mascots have difficulty with intimacy in relationships and avoid getting serious. Inner feelings may consist of fear, guilt, anxiety, insecurity, confusion, and unidentified depression.
5 ROLES

The Lost Child

Purpose: A lost child does not place added demands on the family system. He/she is low maintenance.

In a College Setting:
Alcohol in college helps them to become a part of things, have something in common with others. May have problems with intimacy leading to promiscuity. Inner feelings may consist of emptiness, loneliness, hurt, sad, confused, fearful, and feeling worthless, pained and inadequate.
STUDENT EXPERIENCES
WHAT CAN YOU DO?

• Acknowledge the problem
• Be informed
• Be aware of your emotions
• Learn healthy coping strategies
• Find support
• Find a safe environment
• Stop the cycle
RESOURCES

www.helpline-online.com