

DRUG Addiction Triggers

ARE SOME PEOPLE MORE AT RISK THAN OTHERS?

Addiction is a chronic, often relapsing brain disease. It causes compulsive drug seeking and using, despite the harm it costs. Over time, brain changes occur that destroy a person's ability for self-control. Even if a person wants to quit, willpower is not enough to fight the urges.

THE BRAIN ON DRUGS

Drugs contain chemicals that disrupt the way nerve cells normally send, receive, and process information. Over time, changed brain cells reduce the user's ability to enjoy the drug's effect without higher dosages. Long-term abuse also alters other brain chemicals and circuits. This impairs areas of the brain that are critical for judgment, decision-making, learning, memory, and behavior control.

WHY DO PEOPLE RELAPSE?

Addiction is a chronic disease that can be managed, but relapse is common. Treatment helps counter the addiction's powerful effects. This includes medications and behavioral therapy. A relapse should not be viewed as failure. It is a sign that the treatment should be adjusted.

Action Step

If you or someone you love has a problem with drugs, seek professional help.

TIPS TO DEAL WITH TRIGGERS

- Try to avoid situations that involve alcohol and/or drugs.
- Do things you know and do well to build confidence.
- Attend self-help groups for drug users. These include:
 - Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
 - Cocaine Anonymous (CA)
 - Narcotics Anonymous (NA)

WHY ME?

The risk for drug addiction is due to a mix of:

- **Genetics** – The risk is higher if other family members have addiction issues.
- **Environment** – Finances, peer pressure, abuse, stress, and the quality of parenting play roles. Having family and friends who abuse drugs is also a factor. So is age. The younger a person is when drug use starts, the greater the risk for addiction.