



CWTP

Substance Abuse Training Partnership



TOPIC

Understanding Addiction – Implications for Practice

The overwhelming problem of addiction causes great frustration for those working with families involved with the child welfare system. Expectations of what “they should be able to do and understand” cause grief and disappointment. Understanding addiction as a chronic brain disease helps it all start to make sense. This webinar looks at the effects of alcohol and drugs on the brain and offers a working definition of addiction that helps define how best to approach solutions with families.



KEY POINTS

1. Individuals bring their own perspectives regarding addictions from families of origin and other personal experiences.
2. Anyone assisting persons with substance use disorders needs to ensure that personal views, perspectives, and experiences do not interfere with what is known about best practice strategies.
3. Cognitive effects from substances can make it difficult to benefit from treatment and can make everyday life tasks more difficult.
4. Child welfare staff and partners need to understand that these cognitive deficits are common and that they need to collaborate on interventions and expectations that encourage hope and recovery.



CHILD WELFARE APPLICATION

Many of us know someone with a substance use disorder. We all bring our personal perspectives, including views and experiences regarding addiction, from our families of origin. Consider how your own viewpoint may affect the way you view parents with substance use disorders. Discuss this issue with your supervisor or peers to ensure that your own experiences do not interfere with your ability to work objectively with your clients. Recognize that this work is difficult, and it is normal for your work to bring out emotions or feelings about past experiences.

- Personal/Professional Dynamic: Anyone working with persons with substance use disorders needs to ensure that personal views, perspectives, and experiences do not interfere with what is known about best practice strategies with clients. Use staff meetings and supervision opportunities to support this process.
- Engagement: The relationship of the client and helper is more important than any specific modality of treatment – your relationship is an important key to hope for recovery. Always acknowledge and validate feelings; offer acceptance of individuals where they are at this time.
- Structure and Consistency: Cognitive effects from addiction affect the executive function of the brain. Be clear, consistent and concrete with expectations. Put everything in writing and be willing to repeat communications as many times as needed.
- Collaboration: The whole team needs to be on the same page together. All team members must provide a balance of empathy and structure that support appropriate interventions matched to the cognitive abilities of the parent and the safety of the children.



LEARN MORE

Webinar Learning Tools

1. [Learning Assessment](#) – Assess your learning and identify areas for improvement. This tool can be used individually or as a team activity.
2. [Individual Learning Guide](#) – Spend some time on self-reflection and application of webinar content.
3. [Team Discussion Guide](#) – Use this guide for conversation with your team applying webinar content to collaborative practice.

Handouts

[Understanding Addiction – Implications for Practice](#)

[Enhancing Motivation](#)

[Guidelines for Helping Parents with Substance Use Disorders](#)

Resources

Ohio Substance Abuse Training Gateway. www.osatg.org

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) (2014). [Drugs, Brains, and Behavior: The Science of Addiction](#).

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (2016). [Chronic Substance Use and Cognitive Effects on the Brain: An Introduction](#).

California Evidence Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (2016). [Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams \(START\) Model](#)

Training

[Using Motivational Interviewing in Everyday Practice](#) This online course is available at no cost. Five (5) continuing educational credits, or contact/clock hours are provided with successful completion of the course and post-test. OCWTP continuing education credits are available for this course.

Motivational Interviewing Training is available from Case Western Reserve University [Center for Evidence Based Practice](#) and from the [Ohio Child Welfare Training Program](#).



CONTACT US

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