

Information Brief

Principles of Chemical Dependency

- The initial use of any drug is generally both casual and naive.
- Using a drug "one time" predisposes a person to try it again, since the taboo was breached without any impending disaster.
- As drug use becomes increasingly more important to the user, it takes on a social component. Users gravitate toward one another to "share" the experience.
- With continued use, users equate feeling intoxicated with feeling good. Binge users consider drug use the highlight of a "good time."
- Over time, users equate feeling intoxicated with feeling normal. At this point, binge use is taken over by chronic, problem use.
- Those who care about the user (e.g., parents, teachers, non-using friends) tend to become enablers of the problem - ignoring the users behavior changes or ascribing them to something less serious.
- Because of the chemical action drugs have on the brain, regular users lose control of their behavior and find it extremely difficult to stop drug use on their own.
- Children and adolescents are more susceptible to the physical and psychological effects of drugs than are adults. A teenager can easily become drug dependent within six months.
- Chemical dependency is a contagious, progressive disease and does not get better on its own.