



# Trauma, Addiction and Problem Gambling

HOW SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS MAKE US SICK

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## Addiction

Any repeated behavior, substance related or not, in which a person feels compelled to persist, regardless of its negative impact on their lives or the lives of others.

(Gabor Mate, 2010)

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## Addiction Involves

- Compulsive engagement with the behavior, a preoccupation with it
- Impaired control over the behavior
- Persistence or relapse despite evidence of harm
- Dissatisfaction, irritability, or intense craving when the object (drug, activity, or other goal) is not immediately available

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## Adverse Childhood Experiences Study

- 17,000 adults originally
- Mostly middle class and employed

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## Abuse

- Psychological (by parents) - 11%
- Physical (by parents) - 28%
- Contact Sexual Abuse (anyone) - 22%

## Neglect

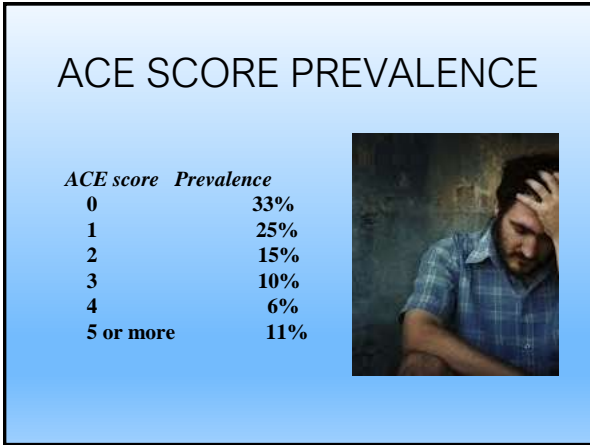
- Emotional - 15%
- Physical - 10%

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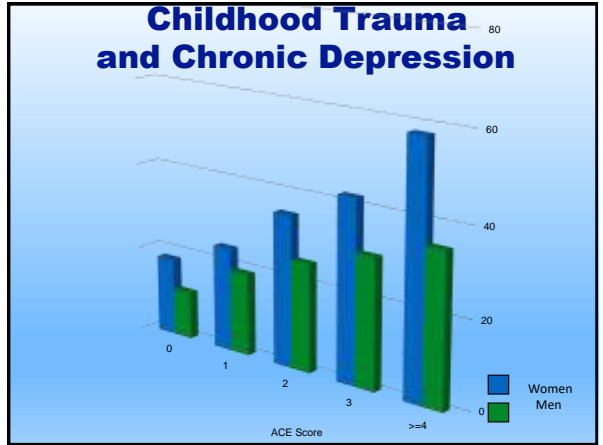
## Household Dysfunction

- Alcoholism or Drug Use in Home - 27%
- Loss of bio parent <18 - 23%
- Depression or mental illness in home - 17%
- Mother treated violently - 13%
- Imprisoned household member - 5%

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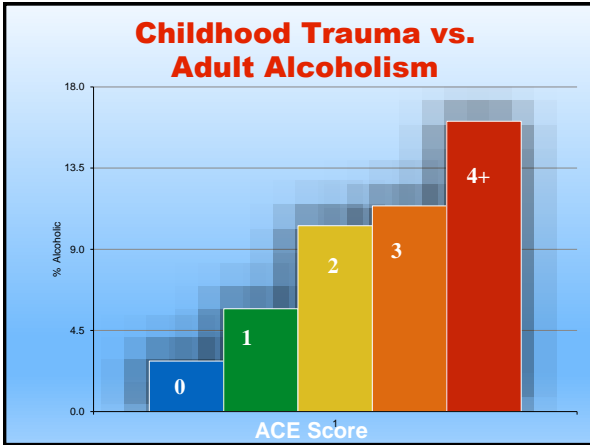
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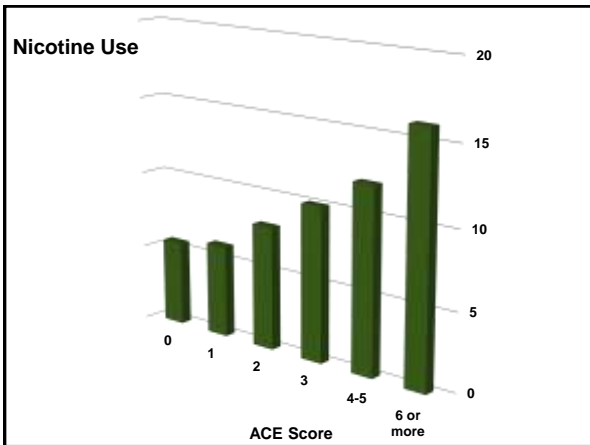
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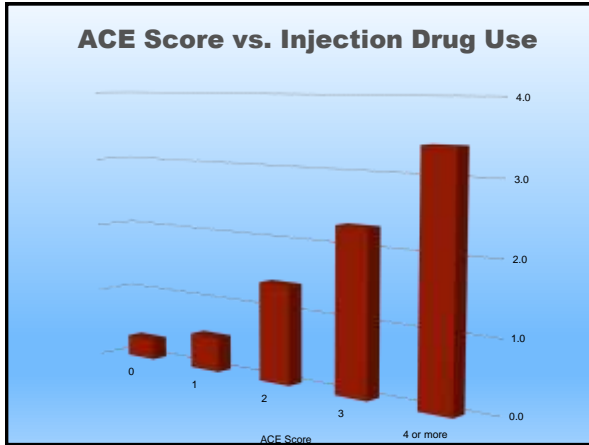
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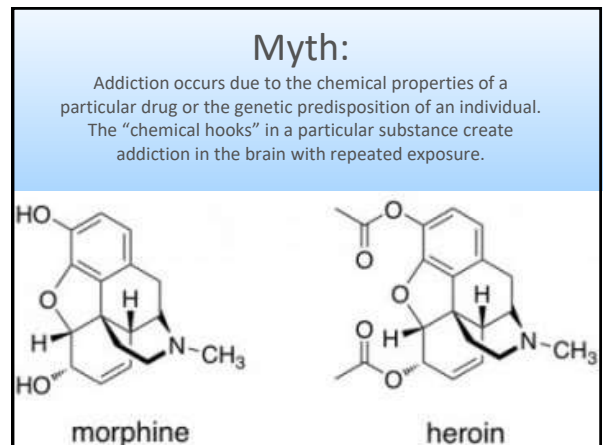
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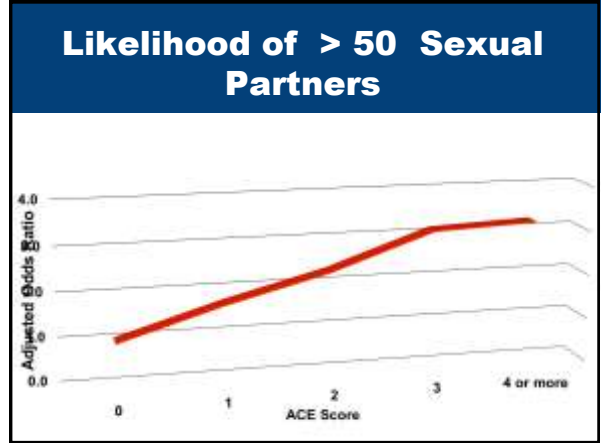


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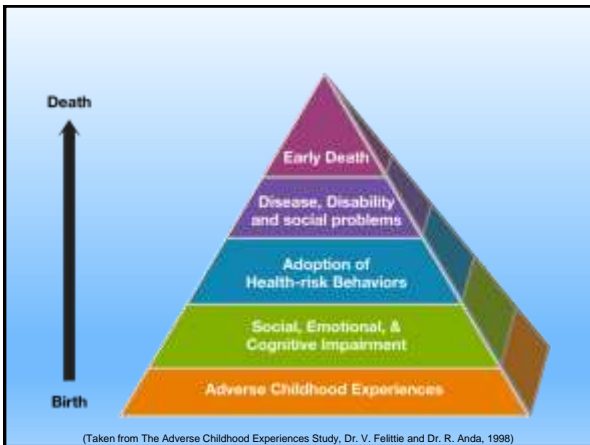
Addiction is a response to an injury from the social environment. It is an adaptation. An attempt to achieve balance in a toxic and unpredictable world.



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### ACES increases risk for physical disease

- Heart Disease
- Cancer
- Lung Disease
- Diabetes

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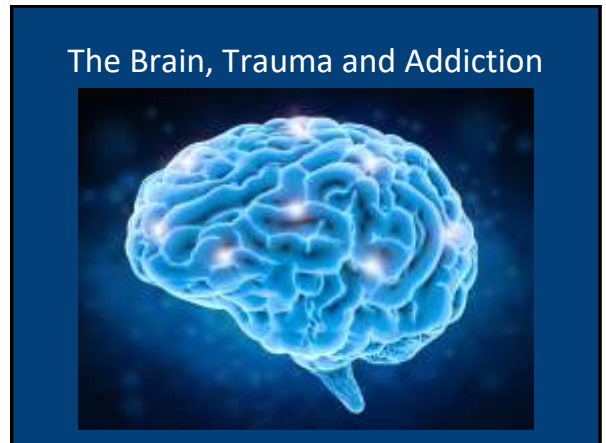
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### Three things necessary for addiction...

- potentially addictive substance
- susceptible individual
- stress

(Dr. Gabor Mate, *In The Realm of Hungry Ghosts*, 2010)

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## 4 Systems involved in addiction

- Endorphin/Opiate System
- Dopamine System
- HPA Axis/Stress System
- Prefrontal Cortex/Impulse System

## Endorphins

- Relieve physical and emotional pain
- Bring Joy, Elation, Reward
- The “Love” molecules
- Also helps us maintain social relationships
- Figures prominently in primary attachment (as in mother/child)
- Endorphins bind to receptors, producing the reward response
- Opiates bind to same receptors

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Through a needle....



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Through a needle....



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The brains of problem gamblers release fewer endorphins.


THIS IS THEIR WARM, SOFT HUG.



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Dopamine System turns past pleasures into present desires.

Mark Lewis, *Biology of Desire*, 2015

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### Dopamine Center

- Choses between competing desires
- Connects with the rest of brain
- It's a two-way street: visual or other stimulation can trigger desire




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### Dopamine Jackpot!

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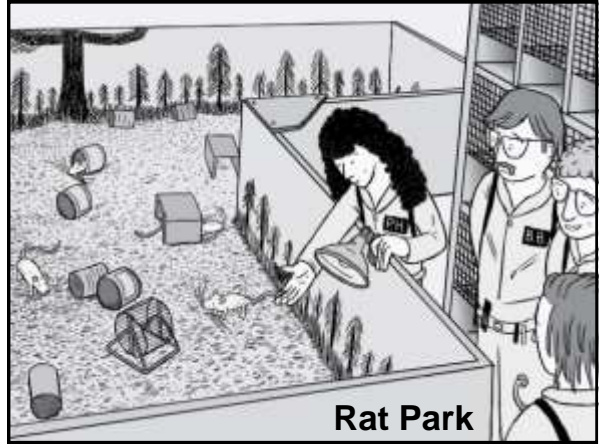
The Stress Response

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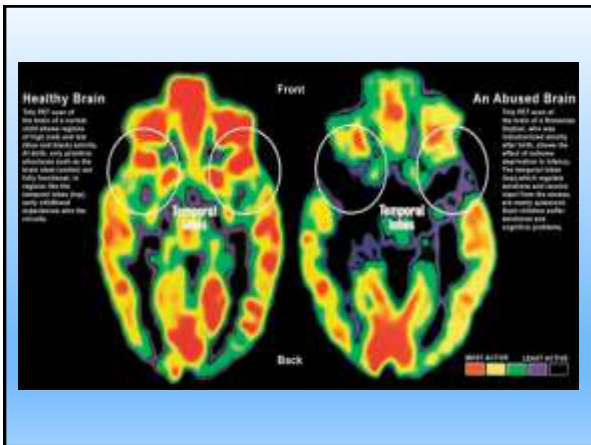
Despite all my rage....



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## The Multidimensional View of Addiction

Addiction is a pattern of adaptive behaviors that form in response to internal and external stressors.

Its roots are biological, psychological, social and spiritual.

Disordered and inadequate social relationships, as well as social disconnection, form the basis of most addictions.

Addiction is a **societal disease** expressed through individuals, groups and communities.

(Zenkus, 2019)

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Mind develops in relationship to social environment



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## Trauma survivors

are less likely to follow through with medical advice



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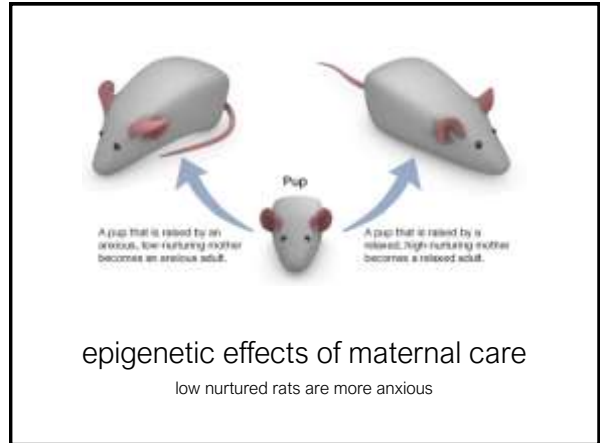
**EPI** **GENETICS**



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## Genes

Are not fixed and determinant. They respond to experiences in the social and physical environments, expressing themselves in ways that help them adapt to environmental cues.

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It's all in the genes- an explanation for the way things are that does not threaten the way things are. Why should someone feel unhappy or engage in antisocial behavior when that person is living in the freest and most prosperous nation on earth? It can't be the system. There must be a flaw in the wiring somewhere

-Louis Menand, New Yorker



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Treat the whole person...



by inviting the whole person

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