



Understanding Mental Illness

Session Four: Understanding Substance Use Disorders

Webinars presented by the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare in observance of May is Mental Health Month

Program content based upon Mental Health First Aid USA



Bryan Gibb

Director of Public Education, National
Council for Community Behavioral
Healthcare

Overview

- + Understanding Substance Use Disorders
 - *Substance Use Disorders*
 - *Alcohol*
 - *Illegal Drugs*
 - *Prescription Drugs*

- + How to Help
 - *Overdose*
 - *Withdrawal*
 - *Listen Non-Judgmentally*
 - *Give Reassurance and Information*
 - *Professional Help, self-help, other supports*



What Is Mental Health First Aid?

Mental Health First Aid is the help offered to a person developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The first aid is given until appropriate treatment and support are received or until the crisis resolves.



Why Mental Health First Aid?

- + Mental health problems are common.
- + Stigma is associated with mental health problems.
- + Many people are not well informed about mental health problems.
- + Professional help is not always on hand.
- + People often do not know how to respond.
- + People with mental health problems often do not seek help.



The Mental Health First Aid Action Plan

- + **A**ssess for risk of suicide or harm
- + **L**isten nonjudgmentally
- + **G**ive reassurance and information
- + **E**ncourage appropriate professional help
- + **E**ncourage self-help and other support strategies

What Is a Mental Disorder?

A **mental disorder** or **mental illness** is a diagnosable illness that:

- + Affects a person's thinking, emotional state, and behavior
- + Disrupts the person's ability to
 - Work
 - Carry out daily activities
 - Engage in satisfying relationships

U.S. Adults with a Mental Disorder in Any One Year



Type of Mental Disorder	% Adults
Anxiety disorder	18.1
Major depressive disorder	6.7
Substance use disorder	3.8
Bipolar disorder	2.6
Eating disorders	2.1
Schizophrenia	1.1
Any mental disorder	26.2



Recovery from Mental Illness

“Recovery is the process in which people are able to live, work, learn, and participate fully in their communities.”

“For some, this is the ability to live a fulfilling and productive life despite a disability.”

“For others, recovery implies the reduction or complete remission of symptoms.”

— *President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, 2003*



Novelette Pierce, LMSW

Director of Community-Based Services

Contact Community Services, Inc. &

Mental Health Association of Onondaga

County, East Syracuse, NY

What Are Substance Use Disorders?

- + The use of alcohol or drugs does not mean a person has a substance use disorder.
- + Substances affect a person's brain in different ways, and people may use alcohol or drugs because of these effects.
- + Substance use disorders include:
 - Dependence
 - Abuse that leads to problems at home or work
 - Abuse that causes damage to health

Understanding Substance Use Disorders

- + 3.8% of U.S. adults have a substance use disorder in any given year.
- + Alcohol use disorders are three times as common as drug use disorders.
- + 75% of people who develop substance use disorders do so by age 27.
- + Substance use disorders can co-occur with almost any mental illness.
 - Some people “self-medicate” with alcohol and/or other drugs.
 - People with mood or anxiety disorders are 2-3 times more likely to have a substance use disorder.

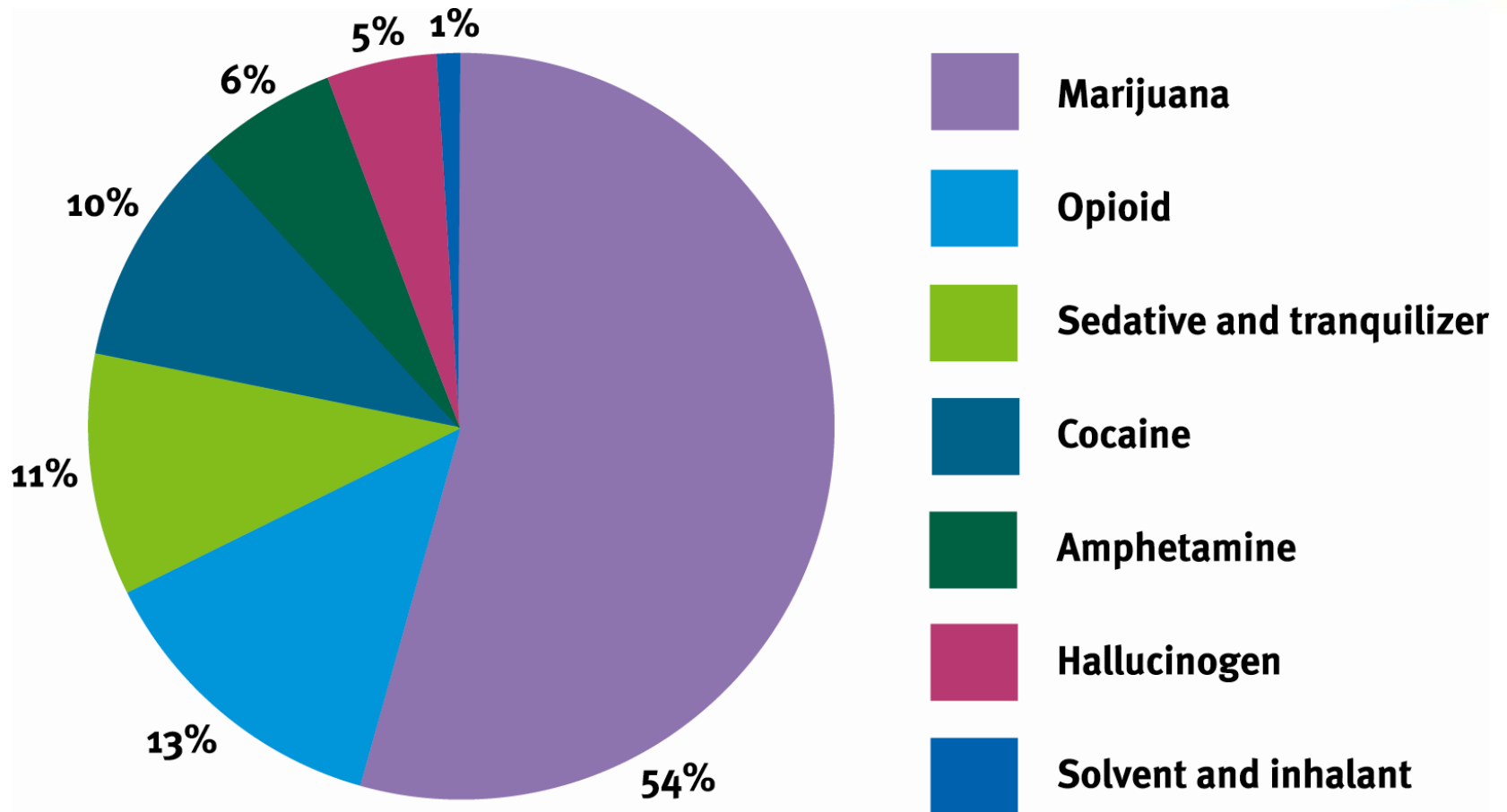
Warning Signs

- + Increased use over time
- + Increased tolerance for the substance
- + Difficulty controlling use
- + Symptoms of withdrawal
- + Preoccupation with the substance
- + Giving up important activities
(work, social, family, etc.)
- + Continued use even after recognizing problem with
substance use

Common Substances

- + Marijuana
- + Heroin (and other opioids)
- + Sedatives and tranquilizers
- + Cocaine
- + Amphetamines
- + Methamphetamines
- + Ecstasy and other hallucinogens
- + Inhalants
- + Tobacco
- + Alcohol

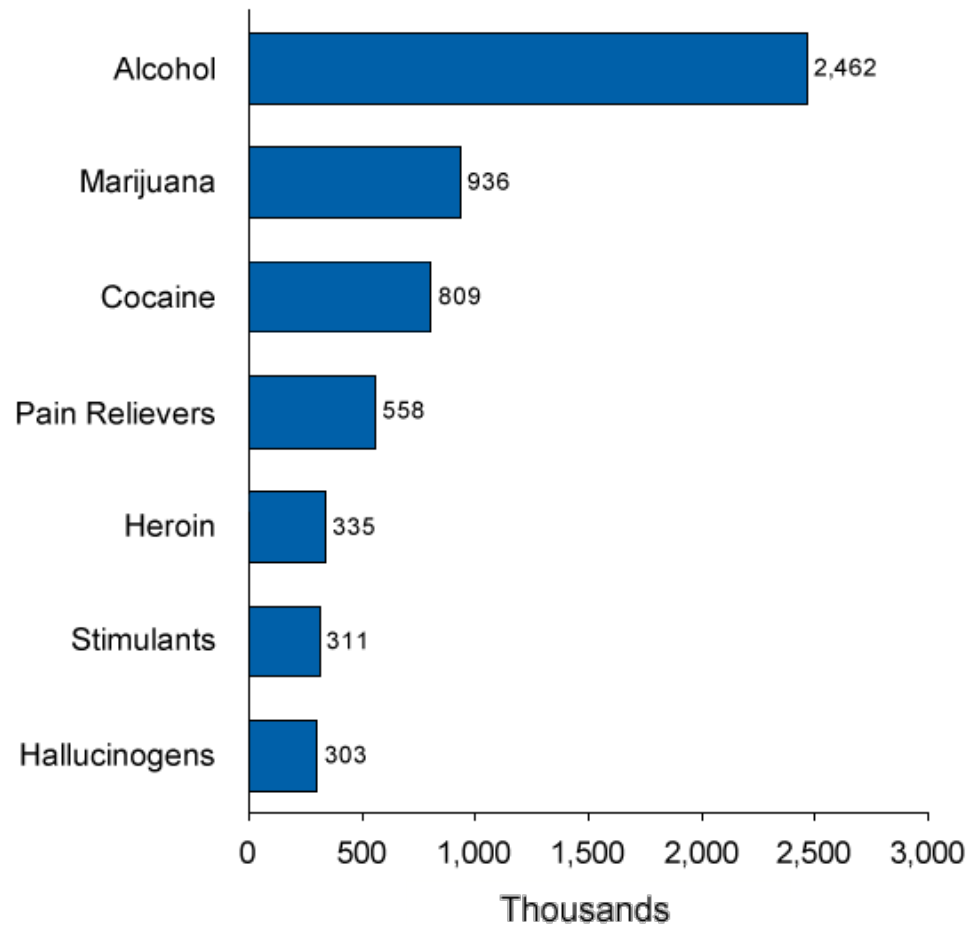
Drug Use Disorders in the United States, 2001-2003



Risk Factors for Substance Use Disorders

- + Availability and tolerance of the substance in society
- + Social factors
- + Genetic predisposition
- + Sensitivity to the substance
- + Learning
- + Other mental health problems

Number of People Receiving Substance Use Treatment in the Past Year by Substance



2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health,
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Crises Related to Substance Use

Four main crises are associated with problem drinking:

1. Intoxication, alcohol poisoning or severe withdrawal
2. Aggression
3. Suicidal thoughts and behaviors
4. Nonsuicidal self-injury

When to Call an Ambulance

Call 911 when the person:

- + Is unconscious
- + Has irregular, shallow, or slow breathing
- + Has irregular, weak, or slow pulse
- + Has cold, clammy, pale, or bluish skin
- + Is continually vomiting
- + Shows signs of a possible head injury (e.g., talking incoherently)
- + Has seizures
- + Has delirium tremens — a state of confusion and visual hallucinations

How to Help: No Medical Emergency

- + If the person is intoxicated, stay calm, ensure your own and the person's safety.
- + When both of you are sober, talk with the person about his or her substance use openly and honestly
- + Talk with the person in a quiet, private environment

Keep in mind

- + The person's own perceptions of his or her drinking
- + The person's readiness to talk
- + Use of "I" statements
- + The person's recall of events

How to Help: Listen Nonjudgmentally

Try to

- + Listen to the person without judging him or her as bad or immoral
- + Avoid expressing moral judgments about his or her drinking
- + Show you are concerned for his or her well-being

Try not to

- + Be critical of the person
- + Label the person or accuse him or her of being “an addict” or “an alcoholic”
- + Express your frustration at the person for having these problems

How to Help: Considerations about Substance Use

- + Changing drinking and drug habits is not easy.
- + Willpower and self-resolve are not always enough to stop the problem.
- + Giving advice may not help the person change substance use habits.
- + Not everyone wants abstinence as a goal — reducing the quantity of use can be worthwhile.
- + A person may stop or try to stop substance use more than once before being successful.

How to Help: Treatments Available

- + Professional Therapies
 - With drug & alcohol specialists, certified peer specialists or other mental health professionals: brief intervention, cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational enhancement therapy, withdrawal management
- + Medical Treatment
 - Medication
- + Self-Help, Peer & Community support
 - Friends, family, faith networks, support groups (AA)
- + Self-help groups (12 step groups, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, etc.) are more effective when combined with professional treatment services and are helpful for continuing care.

Questions on Substance Use Disorders

?



Mental Health First Aid in your Community

- + A recording of this webinar & the power point will be available on www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org 48 hours after it has ended.
- + Visit www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org for further information on the course and to find an instructor near you.
- + Become a fan of **Mental Health First Aid USA** on **Facebook** & get updates and information on a variety of mental health topics.
- + For any further questions, contact Bryan Gibb at bryang@thenationalcouncil.org or Susan Partain at susanp@thenationalcouncil.org or 202.684.3732.