

What is Addiction?

by Steve Danzig

Addiction is a frequently heard and less understood term used in today's society. The word conjures up a different vision for nearly every person that hears it. From the skid row drunk to the wealthy cocaine addict to the suburban shop-a-holic, addiction is a way in which people have found to comfort themselves often at the expense of their bank account, their livelihood, their spouses, their children, their homes, and sometimes even their lives.

There has been a trend within society to differentiate between hard drugs and soft drugs in the last several years. Hard drugs are earmarked for cocaine, heroin, morphine, crystal meth, and some others that are closely related. The soft drugs include marijuana, LSD, mushrooms, ecstasy, and alcohol, to name a few.

There has been an increasing tendency for many people to merely disregard soft drug use in the wake of the current epidemic use of heroin, Oxycontin, crack, and the more recent increase of crystal meth use. There is unanimous agreement among people that those hard drugs are indeed hard drugs. However, to disregard or even minimize the use of other substances can and often does have devastating effects on the user. Many of the substances that 10-15 year olds start with are marijuana, alcohol, and ecstasy. These substances are the access point at which most people begin their journey into the world of substance use and abuse. The use of one drug does not necessarily mean that someone will try the next on the list but there is an increased risk in doing so if that person is already drinking and using other "soft" drugs. People are more likely to be exposed to someone using harder drugs if they are in an environment where there is any drug use at all. The exposure can come from an older sibling, a friend, a parent, a neighbor, etc.

If you or someone you know is an alcoholic or an addict, contact an addiction specialist for an assessment. They can then assist you in determining the most appropriate treatment options.

Steve Danzig is a clinical social worker, addiction specialist, and interventionist. He is dedicated to helping people whose lives are being affected by their own or a loved one's alcohol/drug use. To learn more about Steve and his addiction assistance services, please visit www.danziginterventions.com or call him toll free at 855-893-8200.