Quick Study: Substance Abuse

**Substance Abuse**  A maladaptive pattern of using certain drugs, alcohol, medications, and toxins despite their adverse consequences.

**Substance Dependence**  Continued use, craving, and other cognitive, behavioral, and physiological symptoms that occur through the use of certain drugs, alcohol, medications, and toxins. Some symptoms include being preoccupied about the substance, taking greater amounts than intended, making persistent efforts to control its use, reducing occupational and social activities, and continually using the substance despite recognizing that it is causing recurrent physical, psychological, or social problems. Tolerance and withdrawal are essential.

**Substance Intoxication**  The development of a reversible, substance-specific syndrome as a result of the recent ingestion of a substance; must include maladaptive behavior or psychological changes and specific signs of the substance’s effects on the nervous system.

**Substance Withdrawal**  A substance-specific maladaptive behavioral change with physiological and cognitive correlates, due to cessation or reduction of heavy or prolonged substance use.

**Alcohol**

**Signs of Intoxication:** inappropriate sexual or aggressive behaviors; impaired judgment; slurred speech; emotional lability; incoordination; unsteady gait; involuntary, rhythmic movement of the eyes; impaired attention or memory; stupor; coma.

**Signs of Withdrawal:** sweating; tachycardia; hand tremor; insomnia; nausea or vomiting; transient illusions or hallucinations; anxiety; psychomotor agitation; grand mal seizures; delirium tremors (DT’s).

**Wernicke’s Encephalopathy:** caused by thiamine deficiency often associated with alcoholism; symptoms include confusion, loss of muscle coordination (leg tremors), and vision changes (abnormal eye movements, double vision, eyelid drooping).

**Korsakoff’s Syndrome:** retrograde and anteretrograde amnesia and confabulation (attempts to compensate for memory loss by fabricating memories); hallucinations.

**Amphetamines/Cocaine**

**Signs of Intoxication:** euphoria; anxiety; hyperactivity; grandiosity; confusion; anger; paranoia; auditory hallucinations; tachycardia; elevated or lowered blood pressure; dilated pupils; perspiration or chills; nausea or vomiting; weight loss; psychomotor agitation; muscular weakness; confusion; seizures.
**Signs of Withdrawal:** dysphoric mood; fatigue; vivid and unpleasant dreams; insomnia or hypersomnia; increased appetite; psychomotor agitation or retardation.

**Caffeine**

**Signs of Intoxication:** restlessness; nervousness; excitement; insomnia; flushed face; diuresis; gastrointestinal disturbance; muscle twitches; rambling flow of thought and speech; tachycardia or arrhythmia; periods of inexhaustibility; psychomotor agitation.

**Cannabis**

**Signs of Intoxication:** impaired motor coordination; euphoria; anxiety; sensation of slowed time; impaired judgment; social withdrawal; conjunctival injection (redness of the eyes); increased appetite; dry mouth; tachycardia.

**Hallucinogens**

**Signs of Intoxication:** perceptual changes; anxiety; depression; ideas of reference; paranoid ideation; pupillary dilation; tachycardia; sweating; palpitations; blurred vision; tremors; incoordination.

**Hallucinogen Persisting Perception Disorder (Flashbacks):** Following the cessation of use, the reexperiencing of one or more of the perceptual symptoms that were experienced while intoxicated with the hallucinogen; this reexperiencing causes significant distress or impairment in social, occupation, or other important area of functioning.

**Opioids**

**Signs of Intoxication:** initial euphoria followed by apathy or dysphoria; pupillary constriction; drowsiness or coma; slurred speech; impairment in attention and memory.

**Signs of Withdrawal:** dysphoric mood; nausea or vomiting; muscle aches; lacrimation or rhinorrhea (runny eyes & nose); pupillary dilation; diarrhea; yawning; fever; insomnia.

**Other Important Facts/Considerations**

The symptoms of intoxication, withdrawal, and withdrawal delirium for Sedatives, Hypnotics, and Anxiolytics are the same as those associated with Alcohol (see above).

**12 Step Programs** (AA, NA, etc.) are almost always part of addiction treatment and are based on a disease model (the idea that alcoholism is a disease that cannot be cured but only controlled).

**Motivational Interviewing** is a treatment model that focuses on resolving ambivalence and using the person's own values and concerns to elicit change (rather than imposing or "coercing" a person to change behavior).
The Alcoholic Family

1. **Dependent**: the alcoholic family member

2. **Enabler**: often the spouse; the person who does everything to get the dependent to stop drinking except what might actually work (confrontation or leaving the relationship)

3. **Hero**: the family member who is aware of what is going on and tries to assume responsibility for the family by being successful (often the oldest child)

4. **Scapegoat**: the family member who rejects the family system (often the 2nd child)

5. **Lost Child**: the member who quietly withdraws from the family system (often the 3rd child)

6. **Mascot**: the member who “plays the clown” in order to relieve family tension or their own pain (often the youngest child)

Remission: The following specifiers are used only after NO criteria for Dependence or Abuse have been met for at least 1 month. (These specifiers do not apply if the person is on agonist therapy [e.g., methadone] or in a controlled environment, [e.g., locked hospital unit].)

- **Early Full Remission**: None of the criteria for Dependence or Abuse are met for at least 1 month but less than 12 months.

- **Sustained Full Remission**: None of the criteria for Dependence or Abuse have been met at any time during a 12-month period (or longer).

- **Early Partial Remission**: One or more criteria for Dependence or Abuse have been met (but not full Dependence criteria) for at least one month but less than 12 months.

- **Sustained Partial Remission**: Full criteria for Dependence have not been met for a period of 12 months or longer. However, one or more criteria for Dependence or Abuse have been met.