Resources for Alcoholism/Addiction

“Addiction is not about drugs; it’s about brains. It’s about what happens in a person’s brain when they’re exposed to rewarding substances or rewarding behaviors. Addiction is a chronic brain disease” (American Society of Addiction Medicine).

These are my top two:

1. **Breathing Under Water** by Richard Rohr. This book connects the 12 Steps of AA with the Christian life. There's a chapter for each step. Each chapter has scripture references for that particular step and then a short explanation by Richard Rohr. I think this would be a great "bible study" for a clergy person with her vestry or a bishop with her convocations. The book also contains a bibliography and a study guide for group discussions or individual reflection.

2. **Thirst** by James Nelson. This book is written by a priest who is in recovery, so he knows what he's talking about. (I tend to look a bit askance at stuff written about alcoholism by people who haven't experienced it firsthand. There is so much misinformation and subconscious prejudice out there by well-meaning but clueless people.) And the author tackles the subject from a spiritual (Christian) point of view, which I think is absolutely essential because addiction is both a physical and a spiritual disease.

Other good resources are:

3. **Addiction & Grace** by Gerald May. This book covers the psychological, neurological, and theological nature of addiction, but it was written in 1988 so it’s probably a little dated. But dated Gerald May is still Gerald May, which is great. Another great book by Gerald May is The Dark Night of the Soul. It’s not about addiction, but it describes the wilderness that addicts (and all people if they’re honest with themselves) go through.

4. **A Gentle Path Through the Twelve Steps** by Patrick Carnes. This is a do-it-yourself kind of book, which is sort of contradictory since AA is all about recovery in community. Still it might be a good step for someone who's not quite ready to take the first step (pun intended) of going to an AA meeting. My therapist recommended it.

5. **Meditations for The Twelve Steps**—A Spiritual Journey. Also recommended by my therapist. This one is like Forward Day by Day. Each page has a step, a related bible passage, and a reflection/story. At the bottom is a one-two sentence prayer/summation. Each step has multiple reflections/pages.

6. **The Life Recovery Bible** (NLT) by Tyndale. Yet another recommendation from my therapist. Each book of the bible has recovery-type commentary. There are also several indexes and chapters such as The Twelve Steps, The Twelve Steps and Scripture, The Twelve Laws of Recovery, etc.
7. **The 12 Step Prayer Book**: A Collection of Favorite 12 Step Prayers and Inspirational Readings, Written and Compiled by Bill P. and Lisa D.

8. **So You Think You Don’t Know One** by Nancy Van Dyke Platt and Chilton R. Knudsen. We all have this one. Have we read it yet?

9. Anything put out by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services such as *The Big Book, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. The down side is that the language in a lot of these books is very dated. That can be a turn-off.

10. **Dreamland**: The True Tale of America’s Opiate Epidemic, Sam Quinones--I haven’t read this yet, but it’s supposed to be great.

11. **Drinking in America: Our Secret History** by Susan Cheever

12. **Pleasure Unwoven: An Explanation of the Brain Disease of Addiction**—This is a dvd.

13. **The Anonymous People**—A feature documentary film about the 23.5 million Americans living in long-term recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction.