

Hope. Heal. Recover.

A Quarterly Newsletter for
IBH Addiction Recovery

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Opening Up About Addiction

Understanding the disease and learning how to talk about it can help remove stigma

A growing number of people throughout our country - and in our own community - struggle with substance abuse. However, statistics show that only a small percentage of those with a substance use disorder receive the help they need. Many refrain from seeking help because of the shame and embarrassment, or social stigma, associated with addiction. Even after decades of campaigns dedicated to educating the public, many still do not understand it.

“I think understanding what addiction is goes a long way towards addressing it. To me, our cultural attitude towards addiction is the underlying barrier to advancement, both in treatment and prevention,” says Jonathan Wyly, executive director of IBH Addiction Recovery. “We can talk about the best ways to treat patients. We can talk about different ways to pay for treatment. But until we address the issue of stigma, it’s going to be an uphill battle.”

What Is Addiction?

“By explaining what addiction is not, we can directly address the mindset of what it is often perceived to be,” says Wyly.

Addiction is not a choice.

People do not choose to become addicted. “That’s not to say that we are not accountable for the choices we make in our everyday lives and that there aren’t bad choices that might lead to addiction,” says Wyly, “but the disease itself isn’t a choice.” Compare addiction to someone who smokes cigarettes even when they know they shouldn’t. The individual is not choosing to get lung cancer. Still, they should be responsible and accountable for their behaviors that may lead to the disease.

Addiction is not social deviance.

Social deviance refers to actions or behaviors that violate social norms. “There’s a certain level of shame carried by the person with the addiction. They are led to believe that somehow they’ve done something wrong.” However, addiction is not a moral failing, character flaw, or sign of weakness, but rather a chronic neurological disease. Addiction is often categorized under the umbrella of behavioral health, further contributing to the stigma.

Addiction is not a lesser disease.

Addiction is a recognized medical disease, no less than heart disease, cancer, or diabetes. “Until society understands and accepts that,” says Wyly, “we will continue to have a social bias against those who are addicted.”

Addiction is not a disease of the socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Addiction affects everyone, from someone experiencing homelessness to the corporate executive who drinks to get through the day. “People tend to have a preconceived notion of what the majority of addicted people look like,” says Wyly, “but I can tell you that addicted people look just like you and me.”

Stigma Consequences

The stigma of addiction has many consequences that impact all of us in different ways. Perhaps the most significant is the sense of isolation it creates for the person struggling and their family members and support system. The individual is likely to feel completely on their own. At the same time, family and support members are less likely to seek the support they need to process their feelings surrounding their loved one’s addiction. “This can result in the family not being as supportive - or as understanding and

Dual Diagnosis Disorder

When substance use and mental health disorders co-occur, integrated intervention is an effective treatment plan



“If a person has insight into the interrelation between their mental health symptoms and their substance use concerns, it improves their ability to walk free from substance use...”

Mental health and substance use disorders affect people from all walks of life and age groups. Both also affect how we relate to others and make choices. But what many people don't realize is that substance use disorders often occur simultaneously in individuals with mental health disorders, like anxiety, depression, and schizophrenia. In fact, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 45% of people with addiction have a co-occurring mental health condition. The combination of the two is known as a dual-diagnosis disorder.

“I believe that addiction and mental health are interrelated,” explains Clinical Manager Emily Linder. “Mental health can contribute to substance use, like when someone uses drugs or alcohol as a way to cope with symptoms of depression or trauma. However, substance use can also contribute to mental health symptoms and disorders. For example, substance use can contribute to placing individuals with addiction in traumatic situations.”

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the most effective treatment for a dual diagnosis is integrated intervention, when a person receives care for mental illness and substance use disorder. IBH Addiction Recovery supports this approach by offering residential

clients access to a psychiatrist while in treatment. It also helps connect outpatient clients with needed psychiatry services within the community.

What's more, all IBH Addiction Recovery counselors are licensed and trained to treat both addiction and mental health disorders. They utilize evidence-based practices, such as cognitive behavioral therapy interventions, to help clients develop coping strategies and skills. “Our counseling staff is trained in the diagnosis and treatment of mental health disorders as part of their education to obtain their license,” explains Residential Treatment Director Richard Rice, LPCC-S. “They help bring awareness to the client of how psychiatric symptoms can contribute to and be interrelated with their substance use.”

However, co-occurring disorders can be challenging because residential treatment is relatively short. “It can often take a significant amount of time to get to know a client and their experience well enough to accurately diagnose a mental health disorder,” says Linder. “It also takes time for mental health medications to begin working to their fullest extent. As a result, a client may graduate from residential treatment before we know how

effective the medication will be.”

While challenging, IBH Addiction Recovery has achieved success in treating dual-diagnosis disorders through evidence-based practices. Its interventions are supported by research and shown to be effective in treating both addiction and mental health disorders.

“We're looking to help our clients reach a place of recovery,” says Rice. “If a person has insight into the interrelation between their mental health symptoms and their substance use concerns, it improves their ability to walk free from substance use - because now they have all these other coping skills that they've started to implement in their life.”



**In 2020,
17 million
people
were diagnosed with
both mental illness
and a substance use
disorder.**

National Survey on Drug Use and Health

Treatment Planning

A proper assessment ensures clients receive the appropriate treatment

A thorough assessment is the first step in drug and alcohol addiction treatment at IBH Addiction Recovery. It involves a complete physical and psychological evaluation that helps treatment professionals gain an accurate understanding of a client's mental and physical health. Ultimately, the assessment provides vital information to design the client's individualized treatment plan.

Once a person has completed the registration process, they are offered an assessment appointment or informed about walk-in assessments. (Walk-in assessments are available on Wednesday and Thursday mornings.) In addition, instructions on what to bring to the assessment, such as proof of identification and insurance, are provided.

When clients arrive for their assessment, they are checked in and given forms to complete before meeting with a financial intake specialist. Next, our case manager and peer supporter introduce them to the IBH Addiction Recovery Drop-In Center, where coffee and snacks are available. They also help clients

understand what to expect during the assessment, introduce them to treatment programs we offer, and provide encouragement for taking this critical step in the treatment process.

Assessments typically take between one to two hours. Once the assessment is complete, the clients receive a recommendation on which level of care is most appropriate based on the severity of their symptoms and needs. They are then assigned a licensed counselor to work

with them to develop a treatment plan. Counselors work with clients to set goals, identify the steps to complete those goals, and help them determine which services to utilize. Counselors meet with clients regularly to review their progress.

According to Director of Outpatient Services Laura Kidd, LPCC-S, LICDC-CS, planning is a standardized and required element of any treatment program. All plans must be individualized for each client and based on the results of their assessment. "I think what is unique to IBH is not so much related to treatment planning," says Kidd, "but that we offer a continuum of care that allows our clients to move between our levels of care as they progress on their treatment plan."

"Because clients have access to our continuum of care, IBH Addiction Recovery is like a one-stop-shop," she continues. "IBH is likely to have the level of care that a client needs."

If you or someone you care about needs treatment for drug and alcohol addiction, please visit ibh.org/admissions or call 330.644.4095 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Our staff is ready to help you.

TAKE NOTE

Akron Community Foundation Awards Grant to IBH Addiction Recovery

Akron Community Foundation's Board of Directors recently approved their quarterly competitive health and human services grants. IBH Addiction Recovery is grateful to be among the grant recipients.

We want to thank **Akron Community Foundation** for supporting our work of offering those with drug and alcohol addiction the opportunity to restore hope and gain skills for a lifetime of sobriety.



We Dig in to Help Out

In honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, men in our **Recovery House** volunteered for a Day of Service. These volunteers helped shovel driveways of individuals who were snowed in from the recent winter storm. Way to go, gentlemen!

Giving back to the community that does so much to support us while paying tribute to Dr. King is how we live our mission.

36th Annual Golf Outing

Save the Date

The date for **IBH Addiction Recovery's 36th Annual Golf Outing** has been set for Monday, June 20, 2022. The event will once again be held at Silver Lake Country Club. Proceeds from the Golf Outing help to support the IBH REACH Program.

For sponsorship and golfer information, contact Chief Development and Communications Officer Jess Rist at 330.237.6883 or JessR@ibh.org.

Join The Conversation

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Opening Up About Addiction

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compassionate – about what the addicted person is going through,”Wylly explains. “The stigma can impact their willingness, their proactive choice, to help.”

Another consequence of the stigma is the criminalization of addiction. Many U.S. laws treat addicted people punitively rather than providing treatment. According to Wylly, our laws “reinforce the misperception that addiction is a choice – that addiction is a behavior – something that should be punished, not something that should be treated.” However, he believes that changes are occurring. “In the last 20 to 25 years, there’s been an increase in drug court development and incarceration initiatives. So, it’s not all bad, but we still have a long way to go.”

Parity is yet another consequence related to the stigma of addiction. Parity laws aim to create fairness in insurance coverage for mental health and addiction treatment by requiring coverage and management of their treatment to be equal to physical health coverage. “Parity laws say that, if you cover addiction, you shall cover it at the same degree or level that you cover other diseases,” says Wylly. “But there’s

nothing that says an insurance carrier has to cover it.” Even as more carriers cover addiction treatment, there’s still the issue of providers being paid enough to provide quality care and inequitable service limits.

Overcoming the Stigma

IBH Addiction Recovery is committed to overcoming the stigma of addiction. For example, the organization focuses on better education delivery to client families and support systems. By doing so, we can increase awareness around the disease of addiction and provide the tools to help them to support those who need it. .

IBH Addiction Recovery also encourages supporters of the recovery community to be proactive. “It’s one thing to properly understand what addiction is and its underlying causes, but we all need to be more proactive in de-stigmatizing it,” says Wylly. “We need to be willing to talk about it with friends, family, and coworkers, in any setting we can. If the system that supports IBH and other recovery centers aren’t willing to talk about it, then who will?”

To learn more about how you can help support IBH Addiction Recovery in our efforts, please visit ibh.org/giving.



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