**Subject: Addictions and Compulsions**

**Brief Overview**

Tonight's lesson is geared to briefly provide overview information as well as some basic facts about drug addiction, focusing on Opioids and Cocaine.

**OPIOIDS:**

An OPIOID tells your brain to block pain and to make you happy and calmer. **Legal** forms of Opioids are prescription pills such as OxyContin, Viking, Percocet.

**FACTS:**

* More people die from opioid overdose than any other drug.
* Addiction affects everyone.
* Every: Race, sex, age, profession etc.

**Illegal Opioids:**

 -Heroin:

 -Form of a black tar.

*Heroin is most commonly injected into the veins and some signs of being under the influence of heroin would be confusion, sleepiness/ drowsiness/nodding off, dilated pupils, never having any money, “losing” money {with an elaborate backstory}, I didn’t get paid and lost the wallet.*

Recently, you may have either read or heard about “fentanyl”.

Fentanyl is also a white powder but is **many times more powerful** than heroin.

Before selling to the street, dealers need to “cut” the heroin with a substance, often baking powder, etc. HOWEVER what we are currently experiencing, are dealers using fentanyl to cut with the heroin. As a result, the user purchases the heroin, *using the same amount* that they would normally use, BUT **not** knowing it’s cut with fentanyl... which is one big contributing factor to why they end up overdosing.

**COCAINE**:

Cocaine is a stimulant and is most frequently found in a white powder that is most commonly snorted.

Cocaine can also be injected but that’s not as frequent.

It’s also smoked mixed with ether, which is called freebasing, {which was the method

Richard Pryor was using back in 1980 when he went on fire}

Cocaine can also be melted into a rock crystal and smoked, which turns into what is commonly referred to as Crack, Crack Cocaine.

However this too is also often cut with fentanyl and is very dangerous again for overdosing.

***L*et’s be real*:***

By now, we have probably already touched on a subject which in one way or another has been personal to you or maybe at least touched you personally.

However, if not, *tonight* might just be your night.

I often make the comment: “there is one in every family.”

Seriously however, of **all** subjects I do really *personally* feel that this is one that has probably touched us *somehow in one form or another,* either when we were children, Adults or perhaps even both.

**If** you have lived this personally and are currently in recovery, I give you a huge congratulations. Just the fact that you’re sitting here shows your progress and your path in recovery because you are continuing on a positive path in seeking opportunities to help others.

However ***IF*** you are affected by addiction or compulsions due to your family or close friends, you already know how the impact can be huge.

I want to talk about that a little bit because, while the Addict is continuing forward focused on the drug and *obtaining the drug,*  the “survivors” of the addict are the ones left feeling numb and at a complete loss.

THEY {we} are the ones who are left feeling as if they’ve been run over by a truck for the fifth time and they either *don’t or can’t* understand **why** the truck won’t stop, even when you’re standing right in front of it, with your hand out to STOP.

The “survivors” are left behind and there are so many emotions involved, that it’s difficult to even put it into any type of category.

You become angry, you're confused. I mean the emotions experienced are so *varied and*  the behavior from the addict can almost make you feel as if you were Bipolar!

Because you’re jumping from feelings - all over the place. First, you know first of all Because there’s a stigma involved, you find that you are doing anything and everything you can, to keep these things more secretive and more to yourself. Yet, in doing so, you are now *covering* … you’re making excuses, you’re defending: both *their* actions AND your actions; you are justifying.

I don't even want to say the phrase: “you are enabling”, because that’s not where I’m going with this; I want to talk about emotions, NOT logic.

Instead, simply - your natural *love* for someone. You love **SO** much, so deeply...with SO much intensity that others would really have a hard time grasping the actual depth of your love and commitment.

This is your partner, your child, your parent, sibling, best friend… loving them is what we do *naturally -* we don’t need to label it.

Often - by this juncture, other family members have *already* cut ties and become “cold” and so you are the only one left holding the “bag” - and NOT the bag of dope - but the bag of years and years of love that you are so afraid of losing.

In a way - **YOU** are *also* now living your OWN private and personal addiction. They have no one else left and so you CAN’T leave them with no one….

You can’t discuss your feelings of helplessness, confusion and fear, because THEY have washed their hands and don’t understand why you won’t do the same. So you internalize your fears - and like a virus - more deeper and intense feelings fly inside of you and you find yourself losing patience with your family, arguing and withdrawing from them as not to be Further ashamed of your undying love for the addict.

And then you wonder: but if nobody else is left for them how *can*  they get help, *without* somebody’s help & support? I **MUST** be ready and waiting to help them.

You begin to feel you must choose - but of course you can’t and you never will. You will just ride this out on your own...because you KNOW it **will** change one day...as soon as our addict can see clearly and focus.

**But …**

The one you love - the Addict - they ALREADY **ARE focused.** They actually can see clearly and surprisingly are often **MORE** focused than you - they are focused on when, where and how to get their next fix. You, too, are highly focused: on home, where are they? Work, Did *they* go to work?, school, LIFE…

* You find you are fearful, yet at times, spiteful.
* You hate them - you love them.
* You’re ashamed of them - you’re ashamed of yourself.
* You’re embarrassed, you’re feeling guilty, you’re feeling to blame, you’re crying, you’re sick physically, SO overstressed -

You find that you’re always in a conflict of loyalties.

You’re always thinking, bottom line:

**If I am all that they have left, what if I turn them away, what if they killed themselves?**

You find it impossible **not** to ask yourself: **What if they OD and I’m not there?**

IF they are going to continue to use, they **ARE** going to eventually OD regardless. And if and when that happens: do you **REALLY** want to be in ***your*** house, in front of ***your*** *neighbors****, your*** kids?

**PONDER UPON THAT.**

**Then** you wonder: What if they get arrested? Well, honestly, if they go to jail they are certainly much safer there, than left to their own devices running the streets.

But still … you’re always waiting for the shoe to fall …. The phone rings as you continue to question the emptiness.

You **MOST OFTEN** YOU QUESTION - YOU WONDER:

 “Oh my God, don’t you love me enough to stop?

*AND … the cold, hard truth: “NO. No they* ***don’t*** *care how bad they are hurting you.* ***They are too wasted to care.***

*Sorry.*

Yet, Just as the addicts in our life need to accept responsibility for their actions, you must also answer for yours:

In bailing out, covering up, making excuses. Not for guilt, but simply to be aware of how your actions help, ONLY succeed in prolonging to hurt **you** more.