

Nature of Addiction

Addiction is not a series of discrete, unrelated events.
It is a process in which a person engages, with long term ramifications .

Understanding your addiction

Pain From early on in life...years of it

Panic Permeates ones being

- Makes one anxious, agitated
- Sometimes produces a constant buzz...like rock music

Desire for a quick fix

- Always in a hurry
- A desperate need to control feelings
- Low frustration tolerance

Panacea (cure-all) A need to medicate the anxiety and pain with something that is...

- Fast acting - yes!
- Effective - yes! (at first)
 1. It produces a state of being that is stimulating, numbing, or fantasy-like, and one becomes addicted to this state of being.
 2. However, “best” highs get less and less over time, and it takes more and more panacea to get the high. (tolerance)
 3. And if you stop using the panacea there is a penalty to pay which also increases over time. (withdrawal)
 - a. Eventually the panacea doesn't so much produce a high as simply stave off the ever-increasing withdrawal
 - b. Also, eventually one has to choose between dangerous levels of the panacea or a very painful (and sometimes dangerous) withdrawal
- Long lasting -- no, short acting
- In summary, people use the panacea (1) because **the high feels good**, (2) **to medicate away pain and anxiety**, and (3) to **avoid withdrawal**

Note, most medications for anxiety (and pain) prescribed by doctors are addictive...so it is not surprising that behaviors used to medicate anxiety are addictive.

Promoting recovery

Detoxing

- Stopping the medication by abstaining from the panacea
- Being able to “sit with” (tolerate) the anxiety, boredom and emptiness that follows--seeing it as a place where you will eventually experience some of your most important recovery

De-traumatizing

- Addressing major past events that have caused such high levels of depression and anxiety

Centering

- Learning to function without highs and without medicating anxiety
- Serenity