

Addiction Basics

Information for pastors and parish nurses
as they relate to persons who are dealing
with substance abuse issues.

The trap of addiction

In a sense, addicts get trapped by their own drug. They started using it to feel good, but end up needing it just to avoid feeling bad.



But can't the addict ever go back to normal? Even if he quits?

The Trap of Addiction (continued)

Addicts can learn to experience pleasure in ways other than using. Unfortunately, research and clinical experience shows that the biological changes are permanent.

This is why addiction is considered incurable.

Implications of addiction

We know that repeated drug use causes permanent biological changes in the brain. An important implication of these changes is this:

Once an addict, always an addict.



An addict can never assume it's safe to resume using addictive drugs. Using even once will get the addict back to Square One. 12-Step programs call this “waking the tiger.”

Spotlight: 12-Step Traditions

In 12-step programs, a person commemorates the beginning of sobriety with a "sobriety date."

If a person relapses, he or she starts with a new sobriety date.

This tradition emphasizes the fact that addiction never "goes away."

Clinical File

Alcoholics Anonymous is the world's largest secret society, with over 2 million members worldwide.