

CHAPTER 1

What Are Substance Use Disorders?

Defining Substance Use Disorders

In this program, we are going to discuss evidence-based treatment planning for substance use disorders (SUD). Let's begin by looking at the criteria for the disorder according to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM). The DSM distinguishes the more debilitating condition of Substance Dependence from Substance Abuse. The criteria for Substance Dependence are summarized in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1

DSM Criteria for Substance Dependence

Diagnostically, substance *dependence* is defined by a maladaptive pattern of alcohol or drug use that leads to significant impairment or distress, as manifested by three (or more) of the following, occurring at any time in the same 12-month period:

- (1) Tolerance, as defined by either of the following:
 - (a) a need for markedly increased amounts of the substance to achieve intoxication or desired effect
 - (b) markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of the substance
- (2) Withdrawal, as manifested by either of the following:
 - (a) 2 or more of the following, developing within several hours to a few days of reduction in heavy or prolonged alcohol or substance use:
 - Sweating or rapid pulse
 - Increased hand tremor
 - Insomnia
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Physical agitation
 - Anxiety
 - Transient visual, tactile, or auditory hallucinations or illusions
 - Grand mal seizures

(continued)

- (b) The same (or a closely related) substance is taken to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms
- (3) The substance is often taken in larger amounts or over a longer period than was intended.
- (4) There is a persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control substance use.
- (5) A great deal of time is spent in activities necessary to obtain the substance (e.g., visiting multiple doctors or driving long distances), use the substance (e.g., drink all night), or recover from its effects.
- (6) Important social, occupational, or recreational activities are given up or reduced because of substance use.
- (7) The substance use is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by the substance (e.g., current cocaine use despite recognition of cocaine-induced depression, or continued drinking despite recognition that an ulcer was made worse by alcohol consumption).

From the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV-TR* (APA, 2000)

Figure 1.2

DSM Specifiers for Substance Dependence

SPECIFY IF:

- With Physiological Dependence: Evidence of tolerance or withdrawal
- Without Physiological Dependence: No evidence of tolerance or withdrawal

COURSE SPECIFIERS:

- Early Full Remission
- Early Partial Remission
- Sustained Full Remission
- Sustained Partial Remission
- On Agonist Therapy
- In a Controlled Environment

From the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV-TR* (APA, 2000)

The *DSM-IV* requires the diagnostician to specify whether physiological dependence is present or absent as indicated by tolerance or withdrawal in the client. Therefore, the specifier “With Physiological Dependence” or “Without Physiological Dependence” must be selected.

Lastly, there are also six “course specifiers.” The four remission specifiers can be applied only after none of the criteria for Abuse or Dependence has been present for at least one month. The other two specifiers apply if the individual is on agonist medication therapy such as methadone or the individual is in a controlled environment (Figure 1.2).

Criteria for Substance Abuse

The essential feature of substance *abuse* is a maladaptive pattern of substance use evidenced by recurrent and significant adverse consequences related to the repeated use. Diagnostically, the pattern of alcohol or drug use must result in significant impairment or distress, as manifested by one (or more) of the following, occurring within a 12-month period:

1. Because of intoxication or other substance-related symptoms, the person fails to fulfill major role obligations at work, home, or school. For example, there may be repeated absences or poor work performance; suspensions or expulsions from school; or neglect of children or household responsibilities.
2. There may be recurrent substance use when it is physically hazardous, such as while driving an automobile or operating a machine.
3. There may be recurrent substance-related legal problems such as arrests for substance-related disorderly conduct.
4. There may be continued substance use despite persistent social or interpersonal problems such as arguments with family or friends about consequences of intoxication or physical fights.

Unlike the criteria for substance dependence, the criteria for substance abuse do not include tolerance, withdrawal, or a pattern of compulsive use. Instead, they include only the harmful consequences of repeated use (Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3

DSM Criteria for Substance Abuse

- A. A maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as manifested by one (or more) of the following, occurring within a 12-month period:
- (1) Recurrent substance use resulting in a failure to fulfill major role obligations at work, school, or home
 - (2) Recurrent substance use in situations in which it is physically hazardous
 - (3) Recurrent substance-related legal problems
 - (4) Continued substance use despite having persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused or exacerbated by the effects of the substance
- B. The symptoms have never met the criteria for Substance Dependence for this class of substance.

From the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV-TR* (APA, 2000)

Key Points

SUBSTANCE DEPENDENCE VERSUS SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- *Substance dependence* is defined by a maladaptive pattern of alcohol or drug use that leads to significant impairment or distress.
- It is manifested by three (or more) criteria indicative of physiological tolerance, withdrawal, or chronic use.
- The diagnosis of dependence may or may not include physiological dependence.
- *Substance abuse* is a maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress and manifested by recurrent and significant adverse consequences related to the repeated use of substances.
- Unlike the criteria for substance dependence, the criteria for substance abuse do *not* include a possibility of tolerance, withdrawal, or a pattern of compulsive use. Instead, they include only the harmful consequences of repeated use.

Chapter Review

1. What are the seven diagnostic criteria for substance dependence, three (or more) of which must be evident within the same 12-month period?
2. What are the four diagnostic criteria for substance abuse, one (or more) of which must be evident within the same 12-month period?

Chapter Review Test Questions

1. After several months of substance use, Bill has begun using the substance when he awakens in the morning with some shakes and feelings of anxiety. He states that, "It calms me." Diagnostically, this pattern of use is considered a manifestation of which of the following:
 - A. Anxiety
 - B. Insomnia
 - C. Tolerance
 - D. Withdrawal
2. True or False: According to the *DSM*, substance dependence is not diagnosed unless there is evidence of physiological tolerance or withdrawal.

Reference

American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed., text rev.; DSM-IV-TR). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.