Self-Awareness and Addiction

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Self-Awareness Creates Choices, Including Staying Clean and Drug Free

Many psychological theories have been proposed to be the basis of addiction. For example, there is trait theory, which suggests that certain personality traits will predispose one to addiction. According to psychodynamic theory, those who use addictive substances do so to either experience pleasure or avoid pain. According to conditioning theory, addictive behaviors are primarily learned behaviors. There is also stress management theory, and according to this concept, individuals who become addicted to a substance do so in an attempt to reduce tension and anxiety related to stress.

Let's look at another theory called self-awareness theory. According to this concept, the self-awareness of the individual is destroyed by addiction and by improving self-awareness, the addiction can be treated.

According to self-awareness theory, addictive substances have a strong influence on self-awareness, especially on cognition. For example, smoking marijuana impairs short-term memory, decreases the attention span, has a negative influence on cognitive processes, decreases motivation and distorts the sense of time, although those who abuse substances are not aware of this.

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is essential to help one deal with addiction and prevent future relapses as well. Since the drugs impair self-awareness, the goal of the therapy will be to optimize it. For example, Gestalt therapy is centered on self-awareness and thus is a great therapeutic tool for managing addiction.

Gestalt Therapy

Gestalt therapy was developed in the 1940s and is a counseling technique practiced by psychologists. Gestalt therapists help an individual to gain awareness of him and the world by living in the now rather than digging into past traumas. They believe "power is in the present" and self-awareness, responsibility and changes can only occur if you focus on the present. Just live in the present and deal with it one day at a time. The person is treated in a holistic mode as a whole (both mind and body). According to this therapy, the "how" is more important than the "why." In other words, the results are more important than the root cause.

The purpose of Gestalt therapy is to help a person develop self-awareness of their thoughts and perceptions and understand how these internal dialogues and processes influence their actions and behavior.

According to Gestalt therapies, humans have various wants and desires for food, love and relationships. There is a cycle that begins when we are happy and content, at peace with ourselves and have no desires; this state is called fertile void. Then, the cycle will include the following steps: the first step will be a sensation, the feeling of want (i.e., wanting food, feeling hungry). The second step involves awareness, mobilization and action. Here, we are aware of the need (to eat in this case), and we resolve it by taking action; the third and final step in the cycle

is represented by contact, satisfaction and withdrawal, and here we obtained the food and satisfied our need.

According to Gestalt therapists, individuals with addictions do not achieve satisfaction of their needs and often may not be aware of what their needs are. Thus, Gestalt therapy can bring self-awareness and change unhealthy behaviors (addictions) in the process.