

Handout 1, Definitions and Challenges

Addiction: “...any compulsive, habitual behavior that limits the freedom of human desire. Is caused by the attachment, or nailing, of desire to specific objects.” (Gerald G. May, MD.)

Basic Elements of Addiction

- Tolerance – the need for more to achieve the desired affect
- Craving – strong desire to use despite negative consequences and is primary symptom of addiction
- Loss of willpower – not being able to stop the behavior
- Withdrawal – nausea, sweating, shakiness, irritability
- Self-deception – denial, rationalization, displacement, repression

Behavioral Indicators of Addiction¹

- Preoccupation/obsessing on substance or behavior
- Inability to control or stop addictive behavior
- Frequent and progressive involvement in addictive behavior
- Deception and dishonesty regarding addictive behavior
- Neglect of job, school, family, church, etc
- Continuation of behavior despite problems.

Warning Signs of Substance Use/Abuse

- Loss of interest in school and school activities
- Change in friends
- Loss of appetite
- Change in sleeping patterns
- Withdrawal from family
- Involvement with the criminal justice system
- Others

¹ Spiritual Caregiving to Help Addicted Persons and Families, SAMHSA