

CHAPTER 2

Explaining Drug Use and Abuse

■ Chapter Outline

The chapter outline provides you with an organizational guide to the topics and ideas presented in this chapter of the text.

Introduction

Drug Use: A Timeless Affliction

The Origin and Nature of Addiction

- Defining Addiction
- Models of Addiction
- Factors Contributing to Addiction

The Vicious Cycle of Addiction

- Nondrug Addictions?

Major Theoretical Explanations: Biological

- Abused Drugs as Positive Reinforcers
- Drug Abuse and Psychiatric Disorders
- Genetic Explanations

Major Theoretical Explanations: Psychological

- Distinguishing Between Substance Abuse and Mental Disorders

The Relationship Between Personality and Drug Use

- Theories Based on Learning Processes
- Social Psychological Learning Theories

Major Theoretical Explanations: Sociological

- Social Influence Theories
- Structural Influence Theories

Danger Signals of Drug Abuse

- Low-Risk and High-Risk Drug Choices

■ Key Terms

Define the following terms:

- 1. Moral model** _____
- 2. Disease model** _____
- 3. Personality disorders** _____
- 4. Genetic and biophysiological theories** _____
- 5. Social learning theory** _____
- 6. Amotivational syndrome** _____
- 7. “Double wall” of encapsulation** _____
- 8. Neurotransmitters** _____
- 9. Habituation** _____

- 10. Master status _____
- 11. Subculture theory _____
- 12. Conventional behavior _____
- 13. Control theory _____

■ **Fill-in-the-Blank**

- 1. The belief that people abuse alcohol because they choose to do so defines the _____ model of addiction.
- 2. _____ theories explain addiction in terms of genetics, brain dysfunction, and biochemical patterns.
- 3. The brain transmitter believed to mediate the rewarding aspects of most drugs of abuse is called _____.
- 4. How drug substances alter and affect the brain's mental functions are known as _____ effects.
- 5. People who characteristically are continually seeking new or novel thrills in their experiences are known as _____.
- 6. The ratio between reinforcers, both favorable and unfavorable, for sustaining drug use behavior is called _____.
- 7. _____ is the theory emphasizing that other people's perceptions directly influence one's self-image.
- 8. The process of redefining a person in light of a major status position is known as _____.
- 9. _____ is the growth and development process responsible for learning how to become a responsible, functioning human being.

■ **Identify**

- 1. Identify and define three features usually present in substance dependence.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
- 2. Identify the three major models of addiction and briefly explain the beliefs of each model.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

3. Identify five danger signals of drug use.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

■ Discussion Questions

1. Why are drug use and abuse even more serious issues now than they were in the past? Give three possible reasons and discuss their significance. _____

2. Discuss the connection between psychiatric disorders and drug abuse. _____

3. Discuss some risk factors for the development of abuse. _____

4. Explain the major differences between social influence theories and structural influence theories. Give an example of each. _____

5. According to the labeling theory, what are the two phases of deviance? Explain the difference between the two. At what point does a person transition from one type of deviance to the other? What do you think causes this transition? _____

6. Discuss the importance of making low-risk drug choices. How might one maintain a low-risk approach to drug use? _____

Ten Reasons Why Drug Use Is More Serious Today (continued)

- Through the media (such as television, radio, magazine, and newspaper advertising), people in today's society are more directly exposed to drug advertising.
- Greater availability and wider dissemination of drug information through emails, drug websites for purchasing prescription drugs without prescriptions, chat rooms, and methods and instructions on how to make drugs.
- Crack as well as crystal methamphetamine and other manufactured "newer" drugs offer potent effects at low cost.

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Ten Reasons Why Drug Use Is More Serious Today (continued)

- Drug use endangers the future of a society by harming its youth and potentially destroying the lives of many young men and women.
- Drug use and especially drug dealing are becoming major factors in the growth of crime rates among the young.
- Seven in ten drug users work full-time and this increases the possibility of serious accidents in the workplace.

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Basic Reasons People Take Drugs

- Searching for pleasure
- Relieve pain, stress, tension, or depression
- Peer pressure
- Enhance religious or mystical experiences
- Enhance social experiences
- Enhance work performance, (i.e. amphetamine-types of drugs and cocaine)
- Drugs (primarily performance-enhancing drugs) can be used to improve athletic performance
- Relieve pain or symptoms of illness

Can you think of any additional reasons not listed above?

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Nature of Addiction

Should addiction be considered:

- A bad habit?
- A failure of healthy choices?
- A failure of morality?
- A symptom of other problems?
- A chronic disease?

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Costs of Addiction

- As a *major* social problem, the public's view of drug abuse and addiction has been debatable over the past 20 years while the social costs of addiction have not.
- The total criminal justice, health insurance, and other costs in the United States are roughly estimated at \$90 to \$185 billion annually.

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Defining Addiction

- The term **addiction** is derived from the Latin verb *addicere*, which refers to the process of binding to things. Today, the word largely refers to a chronic adherence (attachment) to drugs.
- Originally, the World Health Organization (WHO) defined it as "a state of periodic or chronic intoxication detrimental to the individual and society, which is characterized by an overwhelming desire to continue taking the drug and to obtain it by any means" (1964, pp. 9–10).
- Addiction is a complex disease.

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Addiction Usually Includes These Features

- **Tolerance:** The need to continually increase the amount of the drug taken or experience diminished effects of the drug
- **Withdrawal:** Persistent and nagging need to avoid withdrawal symptoms results in unsuccessful attempts to cut down on usage
- **Compulsive Behavior:** An increasing amount of time spent on obtaining, using, and recovering from the effects of the drug

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Addiction Includes Physical and Psychological Dependence

- **Physical dependence** refers to the body’s need to constantly have the drug or drugs.
- **Psychological dependence** refers to the mental inability to stop using the drug or drugs.



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Substance Abuse and Dependence (from DSM-IV-TR)

- **Substance abuse** is considered maladaptive, leading to recurrent adverse consequences or impairment, but it is carefully differentiated from true addiction.
- **Substance dependence** is true addiction, the essential feature of which is continued use despite significant substance-related problems known to user.

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Biological Explanations for the Use and Abuse of Drugs

- **Biological: Genetic and biophysiological theories**
 - Addiction is based on genes, brain dysfunction, and biochemical patterns
 - Biological explanations emphasize the effects of drugs on the central nervous system (CNS)
- **Reward centers in some people are more sensitive to drugs, resulting in more pleasure and greater rewarding experiences from the use of drugs**
 - Drugs interfere with functioning neurotransmitters (neurotransmitters are chemical messengers used for communication between brain regions)

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Three Principle Biological Theories

- **Abused Drugs Are Positive Reinforcers**
 - Most drugs with abuse potential enhance pleasure centers by causing the release of specific brain neurotransmitters such as dopamine
- **Drug Abuse and Psychiatric Disorders**
 - Biological explanations are thought to be responsible for the substantial overlap that exists between drug addiction and mental illness
- **Genetic Explanations**
 - Inherited traits can predispose some individuals to drug addiction.

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Abused Drugs as Positive Reinforcers

This explanation believes that most drugs with abuse potential *enhance the pleasure centers* by causing the release of *dopamine*, which is a specific brain neurotransmitter.

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Genetic Explanations for Contribution to Drug Abuse Vulnerability

- Character traits, such as insecurity and vulnerability, which is often found in many drug users/abusers may be genetically determined.
- Factors that determine how difficult it will be to break a drug addiction may be genetically determined.

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Genetic Factors Contribute to Drug Abuse Vulnerability

- Psychiatric disorders may be relieved by taking drugs of abuse, thus encouraging their use.
- Drug users may have reward centers in the brain that may be especially sensitive to addictive drugs.
- Addiction is a medical condition in the brain of addicts.
- Addiction is genetically determined, and people with this predisposition are less likely to abandon their drug of abuse.

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Psychological Explanations for the Use and Abuse of Drugs

- Psychological theories regarding drug use and addiction mostly focus on mental or emotional states of drug users, the possible existence of unconscious motivations that are within all of us, and social and environmental factors.
- The American Psychiatric Association classifies severe drug dependence as a form of psychiatric disorder.
- Drugs that are abused can cause mental conditions that mimic major psychiatric illness.

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Psychological Explanations for the Use and Abuse of Drugs (continued)

- Psychological factors of addiction include:
 - Escape from reality
 - Boredom
 - Inability to cope with anxiety
 - Destructive self-indulgence (constantly desiring intoxicants)
 - Blind compliance with drug-abusing peers
 - Self-destructiveness
 - Blindly using drugs without wanting to understand the harmful effects of drug use

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Theories Based on Learning

Humans acquire drug use behavior by the close association or pairing of one significant reinforcing stimulus (like friendship and intimacy) with another less significant or neutral stimulus (e.g., initial use of alcohol, marijuana, ecstasy, cocaine). In *learning* to use drugs the following occurs:

- **Conditioning:** The close association of significant reinforcing stimulus with another less significant or neutral stimulus
- **Habituation:** Repeating certain patterns of behavior until they become established or habitual
- **“Addiction to pleasure” theory:** Assumes it is biologically normal to continue a pleasure stimulus when once begun

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Who Is at Risk?

- People who are at a high risk for drug use and addiction are often known as **drug sensation-seeking individuals** or simply, **sensation-seekers**.
 - Sensation-seekers continually search for new or novel thrills in their experiences, and are known to have a relentless desire to pursue physical and psychological stimulation often involving dangerous behavior.
 - Sensation-seekers attracted to drug are more likely to maintain a constant preoccupation with altering their consciousness (getting high).

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Social Psychological Learning Theories

If the effects of drug use become personally rewarding, “or become reinforcing through conditioning, the chances of continuing to use are greater than stopping” (Akers 1992, p. 86)

Primary conditions determining drug use are:

- Amount of exposure to drug-using peers
- Extent of drug use in a given neighborhood
- Age of first use (exposure to drugs at younger ages results in greater difficulty in stopping drug use)
- Frequency of drug use among peers

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Sociological Explanations

- **Social Influence Theories:** Focus on *microscopic* explanations that concentrate on the roles played by significant others and their impact on the individual
- **Structural Influence Theories:** Focus on *macroscopic* explanations of drug use and the assumption that the organizational structure of society has a major impact on individual drug use

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Social Influence Theories

- **Social learning theory** explains drug use as a form of learned behavior.
- **Social influence and the role of significant others** says the use of drugs is learned during intimate interaction with others who, while using the drug, serve as a primary group.



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**Social Influence Theories
(continued)**

- **Labeling theory** says people whose opinions we value have a determining influence over our self-image. Key factors in labeling theory include:
 - Primary deviance
 - Secondary deviance
 - Master status
 - Retrospective interpretation

Can you define these four key factors in labeling theory?

- **Subculture theory** explains that peer pressure is a determining cause of drug experimentation, use, and/or abuse.

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Structural Influence Theories

- **Structural Influence Theories:** Focus on how the *organization* of a society, group, or subculture is largely responsible for drug abuse by its members
- **Social Disorganization and Social Strain Theories:** Drug use is caused by rapid and disruptive social change in society
- **Control Theories:** Believe that if people are left without attachments (bonds) to other groups (family, peers, social institutions), they have a tendency to deviate from expected cultural values, norms, and attitudes
 - Socialization: Internal and external controls

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Danger Signals of Drug Abuse

- Do those close to you often ask about your drug use? Have they noticed changes in your moods or behavior?
- Are you defensive if a friend or relative mentions your drug or alcohol use?
- Are you sometimes embarrassed or frightened by your behavior under the influence of drugs or alcohol?

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Danger Signals of Drug Abuse (continued)

- Have you ever gone to see a new doctor because your regular physician would not prescribe the drug you wanted?
- When you are under pressure or feel anxious, do you automatically take a depressant, stimulant, or drink?
- Do you take drugs more often or for purposes other than those recommended by your doctor?

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Danger Signals of Drug Abuse (continued)

- Do you mix other types of drugs with alcohol?
- Do you drink or take drugs *regularly* to help you sleep?
- Do you have to take drugs to relieve boredom or get through the day?
- Do you personally think you may have a drug problem?
- Do you avoid people who do not use drugs?
- Do you believe you cannot have fun without alcohol or other drugs?

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Low-Risk and High-Risk Drug Choices

- **Low-risk drug choices** refer to values and attitudes that lead to controlling the use of alcohol or drugs—self-monitoring your drug use behavior and abstinence.
- **High-risk drug choices** refer to developing values and attitudes that lead to using drugs both habitually and addictively, such as constantly searching for drinking and drug parties and hanging with drug abusers.

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