Addiction and Evolution
Implications for Self-care and Communication

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Role Plays Later…

- Volunteers?
- Senior and junior staff
Brief topics:

- Signs and symptoms of addictive disorders
- Diagnostic names and criteria
- Statistics about the extent of problems
- Levels of care; types of treatment
- Pictures of brain damage from substance use
- The 12 Steps, SMART Recovery, others
- Drug screening methods
Brief Topics, 2:

- Hi pressure career: substance use common
- Spectrum: use, misuse, disordered use
- Labels not helpful
- Substance disciplinary problems: about half
- Lawyer’s Assistance Program
What Are We Driven to Do?

- Seek pleasure
- Avoid pain
- (and various bodily functions)
Sources of Pleasure

- Food
- Sex
- Attention/Attachment
- Power
- Competence (will to power)
- Learning
Why Driven?

- Pleasure = Survival
- Innate reward systems promote survival
Drugs “hijack” these reward systems

Drugs are recent (evolutionarily)

Reward systems not created for them
In the 21st Century:

- Pleasure may lead to impairment or death
- The environment no longer protects us
In a Free, Contemporary Society:
Greater self-control is needed
“I couldn’t help it. I can resist everything except temptation.”

- Oscar Wilde (1854-1900)

Lady Windermere’s Fan, Act I 1893
Coping With Craving

- Time-limited
- Not harmful
- Does not force us to act
Fasting from Food
Why Would I Change an Addictive Behavior?

- Cost-benefit analysis
  
  "What do I like about it?"

- Poor insight?

- Self-deception?
“Can one desire too much of a good thing?”

As You Like It, Act IV, Scene 1 (Rosalind)
William Shakespeare (1564-1616)
Moderation of Alcohol Problems

BAL slowly rising to .05
If Substances Help Me Cope:

- I need new ways to cope
- Short-term vs. long-term satisfactions
- Willpower vs. addiction
What Does NOT Work:
Confrontation
Role
Plays