

Addiction

By Jeffery Miller, LCPC, CADC

Addiction is one of the most prevalent and widespread epidemics in the United States today. It is estimated that as many as one out of every eight Americans suffer from some type of drug or alcohol addiction. It is also worth noting that due to the stigma associated with addiction and the likelihood of it being underreported, that number is likely higher. While there are a number of definitions of addiction, it can often be summarized as, “*an uncontrollable compulsion to repeat a behavior in spite of its consequences.*” Individuals can develop addictions, not only to substances, but also to particular behaviors. Examples of addictions include:

- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Prescription drugs
- Pornography
- Shopping
- Gambling
- Sex
- Internet
- Work
- Food
- Relationships
- Nicotine/caffeine

While specific symptoms will vary depending on the nature of the substance or behavior related to the addiction, general symptoms of addiction involve:

- The substance or behavior has a negative effect on one’s ability to meet responsibilities at home, school or work
- Substance use or behavior continues even when dangerous or in spite of harm
- There is an increased need to use the substance or engage in behavior to achieve the same effect or feeling
- There have been unsuccessful attempts to quit or curtail the use of the substance or the behavior

Addiction is a complex issue with a host of contributing factors, including genetics, family history and untreated mental health issues such as anxiety or depression, and is commonly a symptom of trauma or abuse. In treating addiction, most often the focus is on developing a program of relapse prevention. Common treatment interventions include:

- 12 Step Programs (such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous)
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Solution-Focused Therapy
- Bibliotherapy
- Psychotropic/Medication Management
- Specialized Addiction Treatment (such as inpatient or intensive outpatient treatment)

If you feel that you or someone you know may be suffering or is at risk of having an addiction, your therapist at Arbor Counseling Center can assist with confidential screenings and counseling services as well as referrals to specialized addiction treatment, community-based support groups, treatment resources and medication management. Call us at **847-913-0393** for more information or to make an appointment.