Sensitizing the Congregation
Substance Misuse/Addiction and Its Impact on Our Families

Purpose of this Webinar

• To Acknowledge the widespread impact of the addictive process on our communities and our congregations.
• To Address the nature of the essential crisis within the family when it is captured by addiction.
• To Embrace ways to promote healing and recovery through the Church’s ministries.

Let’s Acknowledge...
Within our congregations there are those persons and families who are captured by addiction.

• It is often a multi generational disease
• It is often hidden from congregation’s view
• It is often minimized within the family system
• It has long-term devastating impact on family members, especially children
• It isolates its victims from the rest of the community.

Let’s Acknowledge...
The disease of alcoholism is often mis-labeled and its victims stigmatized by the notion that “it’s their own fault” kind of thinking

• What he/she is doing is a sin and they are sinners for doing it.
• Or that “if only he/she would have the will power, they could stop drinking.”
• And other misdirected judgments.

Let’s Acknowledge...
• Some church members and some church bodies would separate themselves from the addict just as the addiction separates the person from the church.
• They say, “We love the sinner but hate the sin.” This judgment stems from retributive justice and not restorative justice, and is disconnective from the healing of the disease. It cuts off the addict from the body of faith.

Let’s Acknowledge...
• Every person and every system has addictive elements at work; it is just a matter of degree, not a difference in character.
• The Church has no claim in itself for moral high ground; it, too has “fallen far short” and stands in need of healing, sustaining, reconciling.
• If the congregation can get this truth about itself, and is willing to let it guide, there in lies the hope for its own healing. Reconciliation and healing has a chance in such a mutual context.
Let’s Acknowledge…

We’re all in the same boat…

Everyone Has Something Valuable To Offer Our Faith Journey

The current condition in most churches is a split….
Them and Us. We need one another to grow and mature as persons of deeper faith.

“I pray that one day the (confessed) addicted people downstairs on the folding chairs can meet the “saved” (addicted) people upstairs in the pews. Then we’ll come to know both our real riches and our real poverty.” (Richard Lewis)

Our Spiritual Healing Is At Stake In Such A Meeting

• Until we find that common ground, that table of our meeting, that connection in our real humanness, the church will remain stuck and ineffective in meeting this real challenge.
• This is the core of what we must acknowledge if we are to meet in our spiritual human walk.

The Core of True Hospitality

• Is the humility to seek and discover our connected humanity in all its parts in all our brothers and sisters,
• And to acknowledge it mutually, freely.
• And to embrace our own need for the same grace
• As we invite and accept invitation to a shared life!

Acknowledge and Confess

Our mutually shared humanity and spiritual journey
Our Own Addictive Process

The Ground of Effectiveness

Acknowledging One’s Own Addiction
Owning that some things tug at us and capture us and in so doing CONTROL us:
• Our Thinking
• Our Emotions
• Our Behavior
• Our Character
• Our Destiny
Addiction lives here in all of us....
ADDRESSING

Coming to Terms with Addiction In Families

Coming To Terms

Without naming it, identifying it, knowing it and its impact on families, addiction

• Hides in the shadows, behind closed doors.
• Uses this cover to deteriorate our fundamental connections of faith, hope and love of one another and ultimately of LIFE itself.
• Parades as harmless (or only slightly annoying) while carrying seeds of deadly force.

A Working Definition...

Addiction is a systemic de-construction that estranges, alienates and sedates the self-in-relation toward the Ultimate with outcomes of disenchantment and loss of meaning for life-experiences.

Paraphrased from James E. Royce, S.J., Ph.D.
The Effects of Alcoholism and Recovery, 1995 from Spirituality and Chemical Dependency

Spirituality

For our work today, we need a broad definition:

Spirituality finds its genesis in western culture as the existential awareness of non-being

The Courage to Be P. Tillich 1952

This awareness is triggered by or manifests itself in terms of loss (or threatened loss) of relationship with self, others and God.

Spirituality is grounded in the midst of history where messy life events are being experienced and interpreted.

Abuse of Alcohol Draws Life Away from Life!

Love of the bottle replaces
Love of oneself
Love of others, spouses, children, family
Love of God

We who care for our kids, congregations, and our communities have choices...

It’s Time to Stop Pretending

• Culturally, we have become deadened to the effects of substance dependence and misuse.
• So many persons are hurt by the effects of substance use disorders that it often seems to be “too much.”
• Many dollars are spent to seduce us away from the harsh facts.
• Denial is such a convenient option....
Motivation

- 94.4% of clergy consider alcohol or drug abuse and addiction an important problem; only 12.5% had any coursework on the subject in seminary. (CASA, 2001)
- 22.5 million Americans ages 12 and older have diagnosable alcohol or drug dependence or abuse. (NSDUH, 2005)
- 1 in 4 children under 18 lives in a family with alcoholism or alcohol abuse (NIAAA, 2000); countless others have drug-using parents.

Percentage of U.S. Population Aged 12 And Older Who Have Used Drugs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heroin</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THC</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alcohol and Violence

Alcohol is related to both aspects of violence -- perpetration and victimization

- Offenders were drinking in:
  - 86% of homicides
  - 60% of sexual offences
  - 37% of assaults
  - 27% of females and 57% of males involved in marital violence
  - 13% of child abuse cases

Source: Roizen, 1997

What Can We See As Pastors In This Data?

- Substance misuse has been shown to lead to violence in the lives of individuals, families and communities.
- Substance addiction diminishes and destroys our fundamental spirituality
- Our work as communities of faith is to (re)connect persons, families and communities with their fundamental spirituality

Long term effects within family system applications to spiritual development.

(McChy C. Raider, Ph.D. -1992, Assessing the Role of Religion in Family Functioning)

Tangled relationships
- “God” as the image of mom or dad
- Co-dependent behaviors
- Poor self-image

Instability of religious commitment
- Underdeveloped intrinsic values
- Overcompensated with rigid behaviors or beliefs
- Under-utilization of religious formation and support systems
- Inconsistent modeling and mentoring for children

In a Larger Sense...

- Substance misuse exacerbates all levels of violence.
- In understanding this, we can understand many levels of our personal, family, community systems as pastoral caregivers.
- Substance Misuse devastates the spirituality of more than individuals.
About the Affected Children.....

One out of every four children lives in an addicted family, 19 million under age 18. Growing up with addicted parent(s) has enormous effects on children---

• Distorts reality
• Interferes with a child’s developmental process
• Affects children’s self-esteem, ability to trust, intimate relationships, mental health...

Some Facts for Concerned Adults

A “relationship between parental alcoholism and child abuse is indicated in a large proportion of child abuse cases.”

CoA’s show:

• Greater anxiety and depression
• Greater physical and mental health problems
• Lower on tests measuring verbal abilities
• Difficulty in school
• More difficulty with abstraction and conceptual learning

More Facts....

• Children of alcoholics may benefit from adult efforts to help them.

• Children of alcoholics can be protected from many problems associated with growing up in an alcoholic family

What Kind of Future?

Captured Families Have “Rules”

Don’t Talk

• The “wall of silence” isolates family members from one another and others who can help them. Fear of being exposed and shamed often keeps any speaking out about it from occurring.

Don’t Trust

• The disease infects the family. Outsiders are seen as threats to the family “good image”.

Captured Families Have “Rules”

Don’t Feel

• Denial of feelings of abandonment, physical abuse, shame, or hope

Don’t Tell

• The “family secret” of the chaos in the home caused by the disease
• About parental rage outbursts, sexual abuse or neglect—the inconsistencies
Adverse Childhood Experiences

Shows the impact of ACE on children as they grow up.
• Confirms Erik Erikson’s earlier work on how parental substance abuse at developing life stages arrests.
• Not just impact in the moment, but over the life span.
• Time alone does not heal these wounds.

EMBRACING

Developing Care for Families and Children Through the Church

PREPARING OURSELVES

• CLERGY are often the “First Contact”—but...
  “...pastoral ministers are in a unique position to help, but most have not had the opportunity to acquire the requisite knowledge and skills to do so, and they often feel inadequate to the task.”

  • Sis Wenger, CEO, NACoA

  • We need to have knowledge and skills.
  • These are available and prepare us for “equipping the saints.” (Handout Info)

Clergy Competencies

• In 2005, NACoA published the outcomes of a national study group tasked engaging clergy and other pastoral care-givers with essential competencies in
  Addressing Alcohol and Drug Dependence and the Impact on Family Members

• National pastoral care groups endorsed and utilized these competencies in training chaplains, pastoral counselors and other clergy.

Clergy Competencies

• The “Core Competencies” form the basic outline for seminary curriculum and other care-givers training on this issue.

• They are included in the Appendix for your review and program planning

• Training Certification is available online at www.nacoa.org, click on Clergy and then Certificate or www.naadac.org and click on Certificate.

Approaching Congregations

• Break the “Rule of Silence” from the pulpit or other group platforms. Bridge the Breach and talk about drug/alcohol dependence.

• Treat these using a “disease model”, rather than a “sin model”

• It takes a faithful community to heal the disease; one cannot heal in isolation.
Treat It as a Major Concern for Your Congregation

- Both Prevention and Recovery are important tasks not just for individuals, or just families, but also for the community as a whole.
- Provide information on the impact of the disease and on the impact on the family and on the children. (youth, too).
- Provide ways to access local treatment: AA, Alanon, Alateen.

Prevention and Recovery

- Have a recovering person speak to groups about their experience in recovery and offer hope.
- Support a recovery-friendly attitude in the congregation often through small study groups.
- Let all persons know they can come to staff for resourced, confidential assistance.
- Al-Anon for spouses and adult children is vital for recovery of family life. (See Resources)

Prevention and Recovery

Educate Educate Educate

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER IN RECOVERY AND IN PREVENTION.
- Youth groups
- Premarital counseling groups
- Couples groups
- Church School Class studies
- Church Newsletter under “Healthy Lifestyles”
- Focus on needs of COA’s - posters flyers, talks, Resource: www.nacoa.org

Reaching Youth

It’s All About Relationships.
- Constancy, warmth, inclusion, empowerment
- Engage youth around “healthy lifestyles”, safety and independence, engaging community rules and authority, developing nourishing friendships across generational lines, confident sense of oneself with others.
- Work with youth around conflict with adults, parents and other persons.

Choosing Adult Leaders for Children and Youth

- Persons whose own maturity is available without being overly “parental”. You must sense they are willing to listen without judgment as they work out their life-choices. ... who will sit with them...
- COA’s in particular are sensitive to phony rule-bound adults who talk down to them. They also don’t want “buddies” who will let them do “whatever” they please.

Choosing Adult Leaders for Children and Youth

- Most children respond to non-smothering warmth. COA’s take time to trust again.
- Most youth respond to “real” adults who will make room for them with real interest in their lives and choices.
- The task of these leaders is to develop resilience of character and strength of a sense of worthy self.
Choosing Adult Leaders for Children and Youth

• These leaders need to provide a place of stability and constancy for these folks whose contexts are often chaotic and inconsistent.
• These leaders must have knowledge of the families into which they enter and be willing to stand up for the children’s- youth’s well-being when things fall apart.

The Seven C’s

• I didn’t CAUSE it.
• I can’t CURE it.
• I can’t CONTROL it.
• I can help take CARE of myself by
• COMMUNICATING my feelings.
• I can make healthy CHOICES.
• I can CELEBRATE being myself.

Four Things to Remember

• Addiction is a disease.
• You did not cause, nor can you control, you parent’s addiction.
• You are not alone. Others are here for you!!
• TALKING HELPS! Particularly with someone who listens!!

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!!

• There are many resources available to you and your congregation.
• A number are listed in the Resources.
• Many more are available online. Most are free...
• I will make a few recommendations...

Recommendations

Some Helps for Beginning a Ministry to Families Captured By the Addictive Process

For the Pastor’s Personal Work

For the Pastor’s Professional Work

* http://youthspecialties.com/events/

For Adult Study Classes

* Brown, Brene, Daring Greatly, Center City Minnesota, Hazelden, 2012.

Children and Youth Resources

* http://youthspecialties.com/events/
* https://nacoa.macrovolt.com/courseImages/courseImages_18/File/Appendix_D.pdf
* Search Institute - 40 Developmental Assets for Children-Youth Very helpful for developing resiliency based curriculum. Used by public and private education:

Leader’s Useful Resources

* The Children’s Program Kit for COAs
* NACoA – 1-888-554-2627. Also posters and flyers at this same source
* Also posters and flyers at this same source

Other Resources

* Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. 
  * www.al-anon.org , 757-563-1600
  * 888-4AL-ANON (888-4Al-Anon) toll-free meeting information

Other Resources

* NACOA: Important Facts COA
  * www.nacoa.net/impfacts.htm
* Core Competencies for Clergy and Other Pastoral Ministers In Addressing Alcohol and Drug Dependence and the Impact on Family Members U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services, SAMHSA.
  * www.samhsa.gov.
* Resource for religious group on effects of Al-anon membership from Al-anon Family Groups survey 2015.
  * www.al-anon.org
SAMHSA's National Helpline
http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline
A free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service (in English and Spanish)

Recovery and Recovery Support
http://www.samhsa.gov/recovery

Recovery Month
http://www.recoverymonth.gov

Clergy Education and Training Project®
National Association for Children of Alcoholics
10920 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 100
Kensington, MD 20895
Phone: 888-554-4COAS
or
301-468-0985
Fax: 301-468-0987
E-mail: necoa@necoa.org
http://www.necoa.org