**CHAPTER 1**

**Why Worry About Substance Misuse or Substance Use Disorders?**

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, students should be able to:

* 1.1: Understand why substance misuse and SUDs are legitimate problems for society
* 1.2: Identify the scope of the problem of alcohol and drug misuse and SUDs
* 1.3: Understand the costs related to alcohol and drug misuse and SUDs
* 1.4: Describe those who encounter and treat individuals with SUDs
* 1.5: Comprehend the lack of education prevalent in those who encounter individuals with SUDs

# CHAPTER OUTLINE

Substance Use Disorders as Unsuspected Influences on Society

The Scope of the Problem of the Substance Use Disorders

Alcohol Use, Misuse, and Alcohol Use Disorder

Estimates of the Problem of Opiate Misuse and Opioid Use Disorder

Estimates of the Problem of Stimulant Misuse and Stimulant Use Disorder

Estimates of the Problem of Cocaine Misuse and Cocaine Use Disorder

Estimates of the Problem of Marijuana Use, Misuse, and Cannabis Use Disorder

Estimates of the Problem of Hallucinogen Misuse

Estimates of the Problem of Tobacco Use and Tobacco Use Disorder

The Cost of Chemical Misuse and SUDs

The Cost of Alcohol Use/Misuse/AUD

The Cost of Tobacco Use Disorders

The Cost of Substance Use Disorders

Who Treats Persons with an SUD?

Designer Drugs for Pleasure: A (Frightening) Brave New World

# CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the subject of substance use disorders to the reader. We will examine why it is indeed a problem in the United States at this time, and why, in this era of budget reductions, the combined financial impact of substance use disorders is a significant financial drain on the resources of this country. There is also a discussion concerning those who diagnose and/or treat persons with SUDs.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**Discussion #1:**

*Correlation and causality:* One issue that is often a source of confusion for those of us who are not statisticians is correlation and causality. Many of the research studies cited in this text will utilize correlational data. To understand the conclusions of these research studies, you need to keep in mind that correlation implies that two or more factors are commonly found together. Causality implies that one factor *causes* the other. As statistics instructors repeatedly stress, *correlation does not imply causality!* Correlation simply states that there is a statistical relationship between the two factors being measured. However, if you interpret correlation as implying causality, you are going to make some rather interesting logical errors.

For example: every person with an alcohol use disorder (AUD) consumed water before the onset of their AUD. Thus the correlation between water consumption and the alcohol use disorders is a perfect 1:1. Does this mean that water consumption induces alcohol abuse? While this question appears silly at first glance, it also illustrates the admonition that *correlation does not imply causality!* To take this absurd example a step further, you have to be alive before you either drink water or engage in alcohol consumption. The relationship between being alive and having an alcohol use disorder is also a perfect 1:1 correlation. Does that mean that being alive causes the person to have an AUD? This is hardly the case since the majority of those persons who are alive do not have alcohol use disorders.

Questions

1. What other “junk science” correlations can you identify? Think about your day-to-day life, and also about advertisements and the media.

2. Compare your list with a classmate’s. Do you think most people believe that these correlations are actually causations? Why or why not?

**Discussion #2:**

*Which is the greater issue?* The problem of teen pregnancy has been discussed in the mass media. In some cases, it would not be unreasonable to say that teens who choose to keep their infants create a situation in which a baby is being raised by a child. The direct costs to society are estimated to be about $9 billion/year. However, there are indirect costs as well, including the loss of educational opportunities for the mother, who must care for her infant rather than pursue higher education, resulting in underemployment if she should finally enter the workforce.

Questions

1. What are different ways in which the issues of substance misuse and teen pregnancy might be related? Do you think that substance use or misuse plays a role in many teen pregnancies? How?

2. Do you think that reducing substance misuse would reduce teen pregnancy? Why or why not?

3. What are other indirect costs of teen pregnancy?

**LO/STANDARDS CORRELATION CHART**

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| A-head | LO | Standard 1—CACREP |
| Substance Use Disorders as Unsuspected Influences on Society | 1.1: Understand why substance misuse and SUDs are legitimate problems for society | 3d: theories and etiology of addictions and addictive behaviors |
| The Scope of the Problem of the Substance Use Disorders  Designer Drugs for Pleasure: A (Frightening) Brave New World | 1.2: Identify the scope of the problem of alcohol and drug misuse and SUDs | 3d: theories and etiology of addictions and addictive behaviors  3e: biological, neurological, and physiological factors that affect human development, functioning, and behavior  3f: systemic and environmental factors that affect human development, functioning, and behavior |
| The Cost of Chemical Misuse and SUDs | 1.3: Understand the costs related to alcohol and drug misuse and SUDs | 3f: systemic and environmental factors that affect human development, functioning, and behavior |
| Who Treats Persons with an SUD? | 1.4: Describe those who encounter and treat individuals with SUDs  1.5: Comprehend the lack of education prevalent in those who encounter individuals with SUDs | 1b: the multiple professional roles and functions of counselors across specialty areas, and their relationship with human services and integrated behavioral health care systems  1e: advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for clients |