



Substance use disorder in medical and behavioral health settings

Created by: William Zackeru MA, MBA

Presentation agenda

- 1 Overview of substance use disorder
- 2 Common signs and symptoms of SUD
- 3 Behavioral and medical impacts of SUD
- 4 Best practices to improve treatment of SUD
- 5 Resources

What is substance use disorder?

- Substance use disorder: a medical condition that is defined by the inability to control the **use** of a particular **substance** (or substances) despite harmful consequences.
- *Substances* can be prescribed medications being improperly used or illicit narcotics/drugs obtained illegally for consumption.
- A large portion of abused substances take the form of commonly prescribed medications used to treat pain, chronic illnesses, and behavioral health conditions (such as depression or anxiety).
- Recent interest in the healthcare field have emphasized a focus on prescribed opiates/opioids, it is important to focus on other prescribed substances as well such as benzodiazepines, barbiturates, etc.

Medical and behavioral impacts of substance use disorder

Medical

- Abnormal labs from substance use.
- Abnormal vitals as a result of sustained use of a substances or after a period of abstaining from a substance.
- Weight loss or weight gain.
- Decrease or decline in communication to providers.
- Emergence of a disease or disorder related to substances such as organ functions and hepatitis.

Behavioral

- Increase in compulsive behaviors including: lying, stealing, failing to meet personal/professional obligations consistently, etc.
- Increase in isolation.
- Stress on relationships due to SUD behaviors.
- Increased stress/inability to perform daily, routine tasks, or functions of life.
- Decrease or increase in sleeping and eating.

Best practices in treatment of substance use disorder

Medical Practices

- Drug screenings, if the patient consents.
- Asking family history questions related to SUD.
- Ensuring all other providers involved in patient care have releases of information on file.
- Include SUD questions in routine screening (i.e., how many drinks per week? Tobacco use?).
- Know when to refer for SUD or behavioral health specific treatment.
- Check patients pharmacy interactions for prescribed narcotics to ensure proper use.
- Share information with other providers on care team, following HIPPA laws.

Behavioral Practices

- Provide a safe environment for patient to be honest about current or past substance use.
- Ensuring all other providers involved in patient care have releases of information on file.
- Gauging social support for patient and monitoring patient for any changes in their support system.
- Document all sessions with patient with a special notice to any SUD related topics.
- Appropriately gauge risk/consequences or substance use (i.e., casual drinker versus physically dependent on alcohol).
- Share information with other providers on care team, following HIPPA laws.

Resources for substance use disorder

- www.ddap.pa.gov/pages/default.aspx - This is a useful state-owned website that provides useful statistics and resources for substance use disorder.
- www.ddap.pa.gov/Documents/Toolkit/GetHelpNow%20%20POSTER.pdf - This link provides a way for members and providers to find out how and where they can receive substance use treatment.
- www.cdc.gov/rxawareness/ - Resources from the CDC aligned with the prescription opioid epidemic.

Thank You