Treating the Compulsive Over-Eating Client in Addictions Treatment Services

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Is Compulsive Overeating an Addiction?

- We might as well get right to the point on this one.......Nature vs Nurture, Genetics vs Environment

- What we may believe versus what the research tells us (continued next slide)
I Need to Hear From You!

- What Motivated You to Take This Class?
- Do You Believe Compulsive Overeating is an Addiction?? (Why yes?....Why no?)
- Can You Tell Us Any Stories about Morbidly Obese Patients You Have Treated?
- Anything about Food, Nutrition, obesity??
Is Compulsive Overeating an Addiction?

- Where was Alcohol Dependence prior to 1958? (1958 is the year that the American Medical Association declared Alcohol Dependence to be a treatable disorder "addiction" and not a behavioral issue as previously considered)

- Are we at the same place with "Food Addiction, as alcohol pre 1958"
"If You Loved Me – You’d Quit"

- Erroneous views of why individuals drank too much
- Lack of willpower???
- Lack of self esteem??

- What about the science of addiction??
- (film Clip: Science of Addiction)
Does Compulsive Over Eating Hold Up to the Science of Addiction???

- Lets look at the comparison of Alcohol as an addiction and food as an addiction...
- 1) Why do some people become alcoholics
- 2) What percentage of people become alcoholic?
- 3) Is everyone who drinks an excessive amount of alcohol an alcoholic???
Defining Alcoholism

- If Quantity and Frequency of alcohol ingestion are not good indicators of diagnosing the illness of alcoholism...then what is??????
Defining Alcoholism

- Family History
- Progressive Use Pattern
- Attempts to Modify or Abstain
- Previous Treatment History
- Replace legal consequences w/ physical consequence
- RELAPSE.....(THIS IS A BIG ONE!!!)
Relapse in Terms of Step 2

- Father Martin’s Story about Bill Wilson’s explanation about Step 2

- Escaping your problem….but the “insanity” of your illness is to return back to your addiction again and again……
And what about that old AA adage that “while your sober….your addictions doing push ups……and if you return to it …it will be worse and stronger than where you left it….

Does this apply to individuals who gain and lose weight???
Inside the Addictive Personality

It has been widely accepted and written about that the addictive personality...the alcoholic personality... is a particular, predictable, and dynamic personality...

Can you describe what you believe defines the personality predictable to those who suffer from alcoholism...
Alcoholic/Compulsive Over Eater

- Creative...Articulate....Intelligent?
- Does a better job caring for others than caring for themselves?
- Alone in a crowd? (Disease of Isolation)
- Ego manic with an inferiority complex?
- A good leader who rebels against authority?
- Can forgive anyone.....but themselves.....?
Alcoholic/Compulsive Over Eater

- Struggles with rigorous honesty
- Self will run riot
- Creative, problem solving, quick thinking
- Takes better care of others than self....

- Needs others to do what they cannot do themselves...
Question?

- Do you believe that drugs are addicting?

- Do you believe that Gambling is an addiction???. If so Why?....Why not??

- Do you believe Tobacco is an addiction?? Why?...why not???
The Path of Treatment For Alcoholism/Addiction

- 1958 American Medical Association declares Alcoholism is a DISEASE...Therefore it is a treatable illness....and the “Industry” of addiction treatment moves forward from there
FOOD ADDICTION

- Compulsive Over Eating

- Has a 12 Step Fellowship that has decades of success

- Has a strong propensity to exist in families that suffer from generational alcohol dependence patterns
WILL SCIENCE SUPPORT COMPULSIVE OVEREATING AS AN ADDICTION???

Compatible Features to Drug Addiction

Comparable Clinical Features

Biological Mechanisms
Question?

- Is everyone who drinks too much an alcoholic??

- Is everyone who gets drunk an alcoholic

- What threshold, what frequency, what quantity.....what are the real indicators???
That Obesity and Addiction are **NOT** one and the same...

...but that a Binge Eating Disorder (BET) is a “phenotype” appropriate for comparison...
Why now???

- Question....Why now????????
- 1970-2000 PER CAPITA dietary increases (due to marketing and affordability...)
  *Consumed added fats +42%
  (Cheese up %162)
Changing Times – Changing Food

- From 1983 to 2008 the number of people with diabetes has gone from 35 million to 240 million!
Why Now??

- Sugar, Flour, Oils (fats)
- Massed produced, highly refined, much longer shelf life, allows for incredibly reduced costs and availability
Hyper Palatable Food

- What we can learn from Salmon Farms!
- Fat, sugar, processed carbs, salt
- Tolerance and Withdrawal (Two words we know very well!!!!)
- The addiction potential of hyperpalatable foods.
- Gearhardt AN¹, Davis C, Kuschner R, Brownell KD.
Hyper Palatable Food

- Dopamine....
- Nucleus Acumbens
- Pre Frontal Cortex
- Mesocorticocolimbic Neural Network
- SAME REWARD PATHWAY AS DRUG ADDICTION (Sci Guy-You Tube Video)
Tolerance and Withdrawal

- Animal Studies had concluded that processed sugar intake increase food consumption over time (tolerance)
- Removing sugar from the diet produces withdrawal symptoms most similar to opiate withdrawal
BRAIN REWARD CIRCUITRY

“Experts are now generally agreed that the reinforcing effects of addictive drugs and palatable foods are regulated by the same dopamine pathways (Corwin, 2006, Kelley, 2005, Wang et al, 2004)
Treatment Implications??

- First ....Is there treatment for compulsive over eating today???
- What methods do they employ in treatment???.is it an addictions treatment model???
Low Self Esteem?

- Until recently the issue of eating disorders and low self esteem being a casual factor (rather than being a result of the illness!)...has been a prominent focus of that type of treatment........
Treatment Focus Today

- Mood (self esteem)
- Interpersonal relationships and supports (Isolation)

....Again...These are viewed as Casual ...not a result of the impact of the illness
Over Eaters Anonymous

- What Experiences have you had with OA?
- What is recovery in OA?
- What format does OA use?
ABSTINENCE?

- You have to eat don’t you???

- If some one said to you that they attend OA and have two years in “Recovery”...what are they saying???
Do OA’ers...

- Drink?
- Drug?
- Exercise?
- Diet?
WHAT IS H.O.W.???

- Yes...Honest Open Willing for sure...

- OA HOW is a subset of the main fellowship that addresses recovery in a more stringent manner ...which includes...daily weighing and measuring to address VOLUME of food consumption...
The Only Requirement for Membership is...

- A sincere desire to stop eating compulsively....
- No weight requirements or weigh in’s
- No fee’s (Basket is passed ...give what you can ....individual group expenses...the rest goes to intergroup...sound familiar?)
AA/OA

- Same format
- Same literature on the literature table
- Same type of meetings
- They are both spiritual programs
Treatment Recommendations

- During intake assessments for Drug and Alcohol Treatment I do ask (regardless of the person’s size) “as I see you today...is this your normal weight”
- You will get some real info from that...but you can further prompt with...”What’s the most / lowest you’ve weighed......
Treatment Recommendations

- Do you Diet?
- What age were you when you first dieted?
- What methods have you used to lose weight?
- In your extended family is there a pattern of weight problems?
If a Client is Willingly Talking About Their Struggles with Food...

- Ask them how they would describe their problem with food...

- ...you’d be surprised how often folks will come right out and say “It’s like an addiction”...
Alcohol, Sugar, Opiates

- May all be sugar based addictions....
- While opiates would seem an odd thing to be on this list...watch the food consumption pattern of opiate addicts in treatment...they will frequently hoard and consume any available sugar products...as if they were going thru sugar withdrawal...
Referral to OA is Appropriate if..

- The Individual has a progressive struggle with overeating....
- There are physical, social, employment, consequences to their compulsive eating...
- Multiple attempts to “Self Regulate” have failed (and resulted in decreased self esteem or even self loathing).
BENEFITS TO OA REFERRAL?

- Every benefit an alcoholic would experience by going to AA...
- Will Occur for a compulsive overeater going to OA
- ....and you should approach this in the same manner you would working with an alcoholic (program of attraction)
Should Some One Attend AA and OA???

- Yes....
- They are both 12 step programs working with the same 12 steps....
- They both promote decreased isolation...
- They are both based on spiritual principles
- They are both readily available in the community....
What about Bulleemia and Anorexia?

- While there are research supported similarities between compulsive overeating and drug and alcohol addictions...
- Bulimia and Anorexia have significant psychological components that have best treatment models that include psychological services
- Individuals with Bulimia do attend OA and have some level of success with that fellowship
Counselors Responsibility

- Our society has some odd “taboo’s” about obesity....and often will pretend they don’t notice.
- As Addiction Counselors you need to be able to discuss and assess an individual's obesity/compulsive overeating (Binge Eating Disorder will be in the DSM V) without hesitation...
Discuss Compulsive Overeating as a Recognized Addiction

- Provide an explanation of the benefits of meetings
- Refer to a meeting...and have meeting lists available
- View over eating as an addiction......blameless for the addiction but responsible for their recovery....
What works!

- It is not okay for a CADC/LCADC to refer every patient they treat to go to OA
- It is not okay for a CADC/LCADC to NEVER in their whole career ever refer anyone to OA!!!!
- For now lets just go with progress not perfection and be committed to treating and referring the most obvious cases to an available and successful 12 step fellowship in our communities!!!
Screening / Assessment

- Weight Fluctuation
- Regret, anger at self for inability to control eating
- Frequent attempts at diets (formal and self devised)
- Secretive eating behavior
Screening and Assessment

- Ask about present weight in relation to having weighed more or less
- Ask about previous efforts to change how much they weigh
- Ask if they are concerned about their weight / weight changes
- Ask if they would like help in the future with their eating
Treatment?

- DO EVERYTHING YOU WOULD DO FOR A CLIENT/PATIENT SUFFERING FROM ALCOHOLISM!
Treatment?

- Let Them know people get well!
- Let them know there is a fellowship
- Let them know it is an ILLNESS (Disease Concept Applies)
- Think Bio/Psych/Social/Spiritual...
- Let them know a primary symptom of the illness is RELAPSE
TREATMENT

- Let them know that they ARE NOT ALONE
- Let them know they probably can’t do it ALONE...
TREATMENT

- If you are a good Alcohol Dependence Therapist / Counselor........

- You will be an equally great counselor for Compulsive Over Eaters...
Taking a class such as this...is a wonderful first step towards helping those we serve who suffer from compulsive Over Eating....

...Like many of you the most important lessons I’ve learned over my career about the course of addiction and the course of recovery...HAVE COME FROM MY CLIENTS
Counselor Professional Growth

- Be honest...be direct....be non judgmental...and be open....
- ...and you will learn from your clients!
Thank You

- Please don’t ever hesitate to contact me for follow up or additional info!

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