

CHAPTER SIXTEEN PSYCHOEDUCATION OF DRUG USE AND ABUSE

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter became necessary to psychoeducate undergraduates in Nigeria about drug use and abuse. Based on experience as a practicing clinical psychologist, the onset of abuse of drugs has usually been during undergraduate, and, for a few, before admission. Throughout history, people have used different kinds of drugs to change the way they feel or see the world. Different organizations and social cultures have developed rituals and rules around drug use as a way to control their impact on society. However, the spate of use of hard drugs among the students is on the increase. This chapter will equip the Nigerian students with basic understanding of drug use and abuse, the process of addiction, formulations of hard substances, and treatment procedures.

Understanding the concept of Drug "Use" and "Abuse"

There are numerous definitions of what a drug is. However, a drug is any chemical that changes a person's mental and physiological state and that may be used repeatedly by a person for that effect. The term 'drug' includes both illegal and legal substances such as paracetamol, alcohol, caffeine, kola nut, tobacco, petrol, heroin, cannibals (marijuana) among others. Almost everyone is expected to have used one form of drugs or the other either legally or illegally. Drug abuse is the use of substances (illegal drugs) or excessive use (of legal drugs) of substances without a prescription. Many individuals that are addicted to the use of legally recognized substances, exempted themselves from the category of substance abusers. The fact that substances or drugs are legally recognized and readily available for consumption does not inform exemption from being categorized as psychoactive.

Psychoactive drugs are the drugs that people use recreationally. Psychoactive drugs have content(s) chemical properties that can modify the mental, emotional, or behavioral functioning of the users. The chemical contents often time affect perception, sense of mood, or consciousness as a result of changes elicited in the functioning of the nervous system (brain and spinal cord). Certain neurotransmitters can be blocked, while some released in excess to elicit the changes (Lin et al., 2016)

Drug Related Terms and Concepts

- i. **Abstinence:** this is period abusers dissociate self with the use of drug under certain circumstances.
- ii. **Addiction:** Drug addiction is an abnormal condition which arises due to frequent drug use. It is marked by overwhelming and compulsive desire to obtain and use drug.
- iii. **Tolerance:** If a person repeatedly takes a drug, the person's body becomes working with a certain level of the drug in the bloodstream, the person's body develops a tolerance to the presence of the drug, and that is, the person develops a tolerance to the drug. The person then has to increase his or her intake of the drug to get the desired effect. Tolerance occurs when a drug becomes central to the person's life.