

## Why Some People Return to Substance\* Use After Abstinence: The Cards on the Table

Many memories of positive experiences of substance use

(experience of substance  $\neq$  experience of consequences of substance use)

Few memories of experiences of negative consequences of substance use

(experience of substance  $\neq$  experience of consequences of substance use)

Abstinence anhedonia:

Inability to feel pleasure during abstinence comparable to pleasure experienced using substances

Automaticity overpowers autonomy

- Unskillful attention management
- Unskillful emotion regulation
- Unskillful thought-sorting
- Environmental cues

Experience of substances and substance use outcompetes experience of available life offerings

("Is this all there is?!")

Experience of substances relieves inner experience better than other available options

Deprivation effect  $\uparrow$

Abstinence experienced as deprivation, resulting in unremitting feelings of panic or rage, causing bingeing to compensate

Deprivation effect  $\downarrow$

Abstinence experienced as deprivation, resulting in unremitting feelings of hopeless despair, causing a sense of helpless return to use

Mysterious brain changes inexactly defined despite the best efforts of the best minds and hearts among researchers, treatment providers, journalists, and those in remission

"Substance" is defined as any substance with which use or overuse can cause negative health consequences. Problematic substances may include nicotine, caffeine, alcohol, marijuana, methamphetamine, opioids, other drugs, and food. Cards are displayed as ordered and equal in size but order and magnitude of factors may vary. Individual factors may stack the deck as well.

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