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Pastoral Care Intervention with Drug Addicts

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Abstract: Recent studies have revealed common risk in drug abuse and its effect on the present day society. The title of this paper is Pastoral Care Intervention with Drug Addicts. This study examines how pastoral care can help to avert the problem of drug addicts in the society. The same interventions may decrease the risk of both of these forms of adolescent antisocial behavior. Furthermore, given the high rates of drug use among delinquents, drug-abuse intervention and treatment programs are clearly needed for delinquent populations such as pastoral care. Statement of the problem: Drug addicts are becoming difficult to care for due to non-availability of governmental resources and facilities in the hospital. The families of addicts are unable to care for them because of lack of financial accessibility and limited psychiatric hospital in state. Methodology: due to the essential nature of this work, the researcher will use primary, secondary and internet sources.

Keywords: Drug, Pastoral Care, Society, Government.

INTRODUCTION

Many observers and a host of professional counselors, clergymen and researchers have confirmed that drug abuse and addiction is a problem that needs more attention because they are getting worse. This problem is on the increase in some of the developed countries. One out of every ten high school seniors uses marijuana on a daily basis. Almost one in six high school seniors has tried cocaine or crack. Nearly one out of twenty six to twelfth graders has used cocaine sometimes in the past year. Every day in America, five hundred adolescents begin using drugs (McDowell, 1996).

Abuse and addiction in context is not rampant i.e. it is not growing or spreading quickly in a way that cannot be controlled. Abuse is difficult to define, perhaps because the term covers so many types of physical and psychological maltreatment. Abuse is when something is used for the wrong purpose in a way that is harmful or morally wrong. However, this paper uses "abuse" and "addiction" interchangeably and simultaneously because one leads to the other. This paper gives its definition for abuse by dividing the word into two parts: "AB+USE" which is equal to "ABNORMAL USE." Being addicted to drugs is when one is doing or using some drugs as a habit or compulsively. It is a state when one cannot make use of his/her real self without the stimulation of some drugs.

This paper will help the readers to know some of the causes, effects of drug abuse and the stand of the Bible, what the Bible teaches on abuse and addiction. Also it touches the practical steps of pastoral care for drug abuse and addiction.

CAUSES OF DRUG ADDICTION

It is to be noted that abuse of drugs and addiction are common among the youth. Youth become involved in drugs for a variety of reasons. Though the reasons for teenage drug use are often varied and complex, many are strikingly consistent, such as:

Peer Pressure

"Students now assume everyone takes drugs, and if you don't take them you are indeed part of the minority" (Nicholi, 15). Peer group influences some students into drug use such as cocaine, smoking marijuana and other narcotic drugs. A young lady explained the influence of peer pressure on her first experience with drugs: "I never wanted to smoke even one joint, let alone get high every day, but I was offered a joint at a blast (party) by a friend and I could not refuse it. I've been smoking ever since" (Mary, personal interview, 2020).

Sexual or Physical Abuse Lead to Addiction

Many of the people who turned to drugs were among people who have been physically or sexually abused. In a recent study of four hundred youths in a juvenile detention center in Florida, a team of researchers established a strong correlation between child abuse and later drug use. Sexual abuse is any form of sexual contact or conversation in which somebody is sexually exploited for the purpose of bringing sexual gratification to the exploiter. It is a term that covers a broad range of actions and activities, from exposure to actual intercourse. In order to achieve this, people go into drug use and later become addicted to it.

Parental Example

It is difficult for children to say no to drugs and alcohol when they find that their parents and relatives are using them. "Some parents like Eli, brought up their children to bring down their home" (APA, 1994). Parental bad example contributes a lot to drug abuse and addiction of their children and younger generation.

A psychologist cites some considerations that make a person more prone to drug abuse and addiction; these are personality, heredity, and physiology, past background and culture, present stress, perpetuating influences and spiritual influences.

Personality, Heredity and Physiology

There are some traits which appear with above average frequency in those who abuse drugs. These include a high level of anxiety, emotional immaturity, problems in accepting authority, a low ability to tolerate frustration, low self-esteem, feeling of isolationism, perfectionism, guilt and compulsiveness. Personality, heredity and physiology may make some people more prone to become drug abusers but in themselves these factors do not cause drug addiction.

Past Background and Culture

The family environment and society in which we are raised also can increase or decrease the likelihood of addiction. If a culture or sub-culture group has clear guidelines about the use of alcohol or drugs, abuse is less likely.

Present Stress

The roots of addiction most often are found in the teenage years. Drugs are used as a way to escape pressures temporarily and enjoy a feeling of tranquility or euphoria which later becomes an indispensable crutch by which people deny stress and dull the pains of life.

Perpetuating Influences

In understanding addiction it is important to consider what makes some people vulnerable, what motivates people to start taking the drug and what keeps the addiction going. At some stage in the addiction process, endocrine and biochemical changes occur which makes withdrawal very difficult. Even more powerful are the psychological changes which have built up over the years. The drugs have become the core around which life is organized. Other perpetuating influences include the addicted family. Alcoholism and to a lesser extent, drug addiction has been described as family diseases because treatment will be delayed if families or employers perpetuate the problem by denying its reality, hiding it from others and protecting the addicted from facing the consequences of his or her irresponsible and self-centered behaviour.

Spiritual Influences

One Christian writer has emphasized that by far the most important cause of drug abuse is the existence of a spiritual and existential vacuum. Stated concisely, human beings have an inner need for a real and growing relationship with God. When this craving is denied, unrecognized and unfilled, there is a search for something else which will fill the vacuum. No more clearly is this stated than in the Bible: "Don't drink too much wine, for many evils lie along that path; be filled instead with the Holy Spirit and controlled by Him." Here in one sentence, is a warning, an implied cause and the answer to the problem of addiction (McDowell, 1996).

Environmental Stress

This is the view that whenever people get really frustrated, a common reaction is to respond to these feelings by verbally or physically lashing out at some other person or object. The frustrated driver who leans on the car horn to get other motorists moving or the aggravated tennis player who throws his racket on the ground are examples. It is easy for parents to get frustrated with crying, whining children and to wish there was some way to silence them and so on (Collin, 2007). Tension-building stage, where frustrations and stress increases and coping techniques become less and less effective lead to abuse and alcohol. Environmental stress, most especially in Africa, contributed greatly to many hazards in which drug abuse and addict is one.

THE EFFECT OF DRUG ADDICTION

Discussing the effects of drug abuse requires a distinction between the psychological effects produced by various substances and the long-term effects – physical, spiritual and social-of drug abuse and addiction. The long-term effects may include physical ramifications, guilt, shame and remorse; sexual activity, dropping out of school, problem behaviours, depression, suicide and delinquency. However, these long-term effects shall be discussed one after the other.

Physical Effects

Physical effects of drug abuse and addictions include dry skin, chronic sore throat, liver and pancreas disease, among many others. But other long-term effects of drug use are not so easily detected. In addition to the risk of overdose and their babies, the drug abuser faces such physical ramifications as leukemia (a serious disease in which a person's body produces too many white blood cells), heart attack which even small amounts of cocaine can decrease blood flow to the heart, and increasing the risk of heart attack (McDowell, 1996).

Also, other physical effects include infertility which long-term use of cocaine may be a major contributor to in men and tissue damage through

inhaling of cocaine and lastly, malnutrition which the use of certain drugs may cause the abuser loss of appetite, which sometimes results in malnutrition.

Psychological Effects

A drug abuser and/or addict will often experience feelings of guilt, shame and remorse. Regardless of how vehemently or cavalierly a drug abuser or addict may explain or defend his behaviour, he will often be haunted by feelings of guilt (an inner response to a wrong act) (Warlick, 1976), shame (a feeling of personal inadequacy or unworthiness in response to a wrong act), and remorse (a feeling of regret for the harm the person has caused something or someone else).

Depression

Drug use is often caused by depression, while depression can also be a result of drug abuse. The mood changes induced by the drug can lead to severe and prolonged depression that heightened by the effects of the drug and/or withdrawal from the drug can provoke an almost unimaginably deep depression.

SOCIAL EFFECT: Sexual Activity, Problem Behaviour, Suicide and Delinquency

Sexual Activity:

Researchers Elliot and Morse of the University of Colorado have documented a correlation between drug use among youth and teen sexual activity. They reported that “the risk of engaging in sexual intercourse is highly dependent on one’s drug use status. Similarly, among those who are sexually active, the frequency of sexual intercourse is consistently higher for those who are involved in drug use.”

Problem Behaviour

Ralph and Bar identified what they called “Adolescent Behavioural Chemical Dependency Syndrome,” a condition that may include increased defiance toward parents, rejection of parental values, decline in school achievement, truancy, compulsiveness, depression and hyperactivity. Such behaviours are sometimes a result of more (or other) things than drug use, but they are often associated with it (Ralph & Bar, 1989).

Suicide

The depression and despair that often accompany drug use can lead to suicidal thoughts, threats and actions. Research shows that chemical abuse is a major contributor to adolescent mortality (drunk-driving facilities and suicides), (Medina, 1982). According to the surgeon general’s report, healthy people, American teenagers are the only age group in the United States whose mortality rate has gone up during the past two decades. The chief reasons for this are due to drink and drug impaired driving and drug-related suicide. The suicide rate among 10-14 year

old children has risen almost as fast as the rate among 15-24 years old. Furthermore, there are a hundred attempted suicides among young people for every one that succeeds. Suicide rates among teenagers have tripled in the last two decades, which coincides with the epidemic of marijuana use among our young people (McDowell, 1996).

Delinquency

Drug use and abuse often breeds delinquency and criminality, not only among adults, but among youth as well. about two-third of the people arrested in the larger cities for felonies such as robbery test positive for illegal drugs and about half of the juvenile in prison are there for a drug offense.

Academic Effect: Dropping out of School

Both male and female dropouts have more serious and frequent involvement in substance abuse, research shows that the dropouts admitted to having drug problems, and drug use among male dropout was nearly triple that of male students and female dropouts were more seriously involved in substance use than either male or female students.

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES TO DRUG ADDICTION

”The Bible does not specifically address drug use and abuse. It is silent, of course, on the subject of all drugs other than alcohol, primarily because most modern drugs were unknown or common in the Biblical era” (McDowell, 1996). If the Biblical writers were to return to earth and saw how so many people held to drug as their lifestyles, the biblical writers were not certain on drugs because the issues of drug abuse was not in their days. Before they died, they were inspired to write and give us instruction on how to live as Christians, which are as follows:

Don’t be mastered by anything: It is possible to be enslaved even by action or substances that are permissible and not bad in themselves” (Collins, 2007). Many people become master of a particular thing and the value in such things become addicted to it. Such silence, however, does not mean that God’s word leaves them to continue without direction, the Bible offers several ways or perspectives on handling the subject of drug abuse.

“The Bible’s commands are incompatible with drug abuse. God’s word clearly commands attitudes and behaviours that are compromised or negated by drug use and abuse” (McDowell, 1996). Paul told the people of Corinthians not to get mastered to anything even though is good for you... (1 Corinthians 6:12) instead of been filled or been compatible with drug, they should be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

Obey the law: The Bible instructs us to be law abiding citizens. It is wrong, therefore, to buy, sell, condone,

possess or use any drug substance that is illegal where one lives (Collins, 2007), everyone must obey the state authorities... (Rom. 13:1-5). The Nigeria constitution also states that anyone found with drug, he/she is guilty and the penalty is imprisonment. Every living soul must abide in the law to enable sanity in the country as it is stated in Romans 13.

Keep your purity: The Bible required us to be holy and pure as our Father is Holy. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, whoever defiles the body sin against the Holy Spirit. Paul to the people of Corinthians... (1 Cor. 6:15-20).

“The Holy Spirit dwells in the body of every Christian and for this reason, we must do whatever we can to keep our bodies free of pollutants – including drugs, excessive amounts of food, lustful thoughts and immoral sexual behaviour” (Collins, 2007).

The Bible commands a compassionate but firm approach to the addict: Be merciful to those who doubt.” “Snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear” (Jude 22-23). Christians are called to gently restore those who are drug addict, stumbled and struggling (Gal. 6:1).

PASTORAL CARE RESPONSE TO DRUG ADDICTION

The pastor counselling drug addict patient “The pastor offer can depend much on the patient’s cooperation and the help of the Christian fellowship and the home” (White, 1981). It is the cooperation of the patient that will also determine the efficiency of the care rendered by the caregiver and the Christian fellowship at home. Most drug addict patients who fail to help themselves in the healing processes of the fellowship and the caregiver will take time to manifest.

In most cases, the minister is dealing with ego malformation and weakness when he counsels with alcoholics, drug addicts, the overtly or borderline psychotic, he chronically depressed or delinquent or dependent, and those with multiple psychosomatic problems (Clinebell, 1966). Minister’s counselling a patient with psychosomatic problems should be careful, because problem is a compared one. Such problem consist of worries, stresses, angers, etc, the pastor must first deal with ego malformation and weakness while counselling.

“Without a clear understanding of how problems develop, counselling can become nothing more than a warm, friendly conversation full of good intentions” (Crabb, 1977). The pastor knowing how the problems begin he can as well bring his solution therapy which will come in different dimensions that can have positive effect on his client. Pastoral care and counselling however, leads a person to do certain things

for him/herself after having contact with a pastor. In guidance, the minister will help deal with the problems in different levels. The pastoral care and counselling should help pursue the following:

Response through Healing: These are different dimensions; it may be physical, emotional or spiritual. Some physical ailments can be traced to emotional problems such as stresses which weaken the body (Ayandokun, 2010). The ailment can be physical or spiritual; the minister who is the caregiver will know what dimensions to use in bringing healing to the patient. Some are spiritual that later manifest physically such require prayer in dealing with the situation and through that processes the healing will manifest physically. Healing process is a way of bringing wholeness to a patient to either physical or spiritually ill. As a pastoral caregiver, your first method is healing method and that will lead to the next one.

Response through Sustaining: This is an act of keeping alive or to give hope to the hopeless and help in a helpless situation. “Sustenance involves helping someone to keep alive by comforting, counseling and advising when they have extreme distresses” (Ayandokun, 2010).

For the healing ministry to be effective in the life of the patient, the pastor needs to bring in the ministry of sustaining to reassure the patient that God can still deliver him/her. Despite the situation confronting the patient, the future can be as bright as hoped for. Telling the patient that something good can come out of him/her. With this message of hope and reassurance, the patient will be sustained.

Response through Guidance: “This involves giving advice educative and spiritual directive. In educative guidance, the counsellor will provide rooms for exploration of different options out of which a person will choose” (Ayandokun, 2010). The minister guides the patient in taking affective decision that leads to healing. Every patient needs guidance irrespective of one’s state of health even in administering of drugs to patients they need guidance on their usages. The pastor will do so well by guiding the patient intellectually, physically, medically through referral and spiritually directs and exploits.

Response through Reconciliation: It is believed that every patient needs to reconcile to person or with God. Drug abuser and addict must have directly or indirectly sinned against fellow men and God. It is the duty of the minister to lead the patient into having a repentant heart and thus reconcile with God and man. By so doing, the ministry of care through the practical steps of healing, sustaining, educating and guidance will be effective. “Many emotional problems arise from the problem of interpersonal relationship. A person in such problems must be assisted to make reconciliation quickly with others and those involved” (Ayandokun, 2010).

Response through Nurture: “Nurture means helping one to grow and to control self. It could come in form of religious, educating, training of members in Christian life growth through group counselling/guidance, preaching, prayer and Bible study and so on” (Ayandokun, 2010). It is the trained counsellor that will nurture a patient to grow effectively and be useful to him/herself and the society.

Growth is not speed, it is a gradual process and the minister should make the family of the patient to know that healing or wholeness is in a developmental process not as fast as one’s expectations. With time, as the care giver continues, the patient will be whole.

CONCLUSION

Drug addiction such as cocaine has extremely potent euphoric effects and individuals exposed to it can develop dependence after using drugs for a short period of time. An early sign of drug dependence (addiction) is when the individual finds it increasingly difficult to resist using the drug whenever it is available. When one is addicted to a particular drug, normal dose will have less effect on the user, therefore, frequent dosing or multiple dosing will be used to maintain a “high” or to have effect on the users. It is also necessary not to be ignorant of the fact that little or common drugs like paracetamol do a great harm when it is abused. This paper suggests that people should seek the advice of their physicians on what type of drugs to use and how to make use of them. This will avoid self-medication. Also, the use of herbal medicine is not recommended

for many of the medicines are not prepared in a clean environment and it has side effect on the users.

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