



Relias Spotlight Series

March 2021

*“It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold. When it is summer in the light and winter in the shade.” – Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations**

Hello Providers!

Welcome to the Optum Idaho **March Relias Spotlight Series**— a series devoted to providing you with access to **free, easily accessible and CEU-eligible** online education about topics that are of most importance to behavioral health providers, like you, across the state.

There are certain days that the quote above holds truth as the work provided to members can seem seamless and soothing like the sun or challenging like a cold, windy day. This month’s Relias Spotlight will focus on the topic of “Breaking Free from Addiction” as this process is a constant evolution just as we see in our weather.

Addiction is thought by many to be something that a person chooses to do or to have rather than considered an illness. Often, addiction is considered something that happens to a certain type of person and does not affect others. Research has shown us that any age, sex or economic status can become addicted.

Certain factors can increase the likelihood of developing an addiction:

- Family history of addiction
- Peer pressure
- Lack of family involvement
- Early use
- Taking a highly addictive substance
- Mental health disorders such as depression, attention -deficit/hyperactivity disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder.



All addictive behaviors have at least these two things in common:

1. They help people cut off painful feelings
2. They are strongly influenced or controlled by a destructive thought process, a critical inner voice, that both seduces the person into the behavior and punishes them for indulging in it.

If we understand what contributes to an addiction, what can we do about it? There are many forms of evidence-based behavioral treatments for substance abuse. Two of the most strongly supported include:

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) - This module teaches members to recognize and avoid destructive thought and behaviors. A cognitive-behavioral therapist can, for example, teach a member to recognize the triggers that cause his or her craving for drugs, alcohol or nicotine, then avoid or manage those triggers.



Motivational interviewing - This therapy technique involves structured conversations that help members increase their motivation to overcome substance abuse by helping them recognize the difference between how they are living right now and how they wish to live in the future.

If we understand the causes and have effective treatment choices, then why don't treatments always work?

- Members have more variables in the community than are presented in a controlled research study
- People providing treatment may be different as well: licensing regulations vary from state to state, training and education differ amongst providers
- Consistency in using the Evidence-Based Practices with its true intent is not always practiced.

Some common signs of substance use addiction include:

- Taking a substance after it's no longer needed for a health problem
- Building a tolerance of a substance and need more to get same effects
- Feeling strange when the substance wears off: shaky, depressed, sick to your stomach, sweat, headaches, etc.
- Even if it makes bad things happen in your life (with friends, family, work), you can't stop using the substance

- Spending a lot of time thinking about the substance
- Loss of interest in the things you once liked to do
- Having trouble doing normal daily things like work
- Borrowing or stealing money to get the substance; spending money on the substance even though you can't afford it
- Having a new set of friends with whom you do substances and go to different places to do them
- Looking in people's medicine cabinets for substances to take
- Changes in personality or motivation
- Lack of concern for personal hygiene.

If you would like more information and education around this topic, we encourage you to log into Relias and search for the following modules:

- Evidence-Based Practices in Treatment of Substance Use Disorders - Course#561939
- Substance Use Treatment and the Stages of Change Model - Course #684438
- CBT in Substance Use Disorder Treatment - Course#695469
- Best Practices in Alcohol Use Disorder Assessment and Treatment - Course #728699
- Wellness and Recovery - Course #1082211
- Cultural Dimensions of Relapse Prevention - Course# 561966
- Assessment and Treatment of Stimulant Use Disorders - Course #695468
- Motivational Interviewing in Clinical Practice – Course #REL-HHS-0-AMI-V2

The following resources are also available to you:

- SAMHSA's National Helpline: 1-800-662-4357
- Optum Substance Use Treatment Helpline: (855) 780-5955

Optum is a thought leader when it comes to improving access to mental health services for our youth. We are excited to offer these resources to you.

Sincerely,
The Optum Education and Training Team