



**Integrated
Therapeutic
Solutions, LLC**

*Integrating Mental Health
With Overall Wellness**

I.T.S. Wellness Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2020



National Drug and Alcohol Recovery Month

September is National Drug and Alcohol Recovery Month. Commemorate this month by learning more about the effects of addiction and the community and how you can help those you love who might be struggling.

Who is affected by drug addiction? Addiction affects people of all ages, ethnic backgrounds, socio-economic groups, and occupations. Not everyone with substance use issues has the same symptoms, some may use daily while others do so in periodic “binges” and have the ability to abstain from problematic substance use for a length of time.

Why can't they stop using? Brain imaging studies show that people with addiction have changes in areas of the brain related to learning, memory, decision making, and impulse control. Many people struggling with addiction want to stop but are unable to do so without proper treatment and support.

How do I know if my loved one has a problem with addiction? Individuals with addiction have trouble managing their substance use, such as using after deciding not to, using more than they intended to, or continuing to use despite the fact that their substance use is negatively impacting them in some way. This can include strain in relationships, work, school, physical health or emotional well-being. You may notice your loved one is increasing the amount of alcohol or drugs they use or not being honest about how much they are using. Other symptoms include changes in the individual's sleeping patterns or eating habits and variations in their mood or energy level.

What can I do if I am concerned about a loved one or my own substance use? You can't fix a loved one's addiction and it is challenging to stop using without any help. The National Institute on Drug Addiction, (www.drugabuse.gov) has information about addiction and links to resources for professional help & community supports. I.T.S.'s counseling methodology is designed to address the core issues that lead to maladaptive coping mechanisms like substance abuse. Call us at (678) 722-1031 for more information.

The Stomach: Our Second Brain

Though the stomach and brain may seem totally unrelated, there is actually a strong link. Think about the everyday associations we make between our stomachs and various emotional states that we never question: the butterflies we feel around a romantic interest or the knot in your stomach you feel when dreading something. This link between the two lies in the vagus nerve, a direct neuronal connection between the gut and the brain with 100 million neurons, more than in either the spinal cord or the peripheral nervous system. Depression & anxiety has actually been treated in some cases utilizing vagus nerve stimulation through an implanted electrode. Many digestive issues, such as irritable bowel syndrome and ulcerative colitis are strongly impacted by emotional states and stress can cause symptom flares. The stomach also regulates the body's immune response, at least 70 percent of our immune system is aimed at the gut to expel and kill foreign pathogens. Improving gut health promotes general wellness. One way to start promoting gut health is limit your intake of processed carbohydrates and refined sugar while opting for a high-fiber, vitamin rich diet. Another is to eat foods high in probiotics, the good bacteria in your gut, such as yogurt or kefir. There are a number of supplements designed to promote gut health, including probiotics, digestive enzymes, and L-glutamine which is an amino acid. Always be sure to consult your doctor before introducing a new supplement into your wellness routine.

