



INTERVENTION WEBINAR

Is Drug of Choice Relevant in Intervention?

 Starting Soon



Mike Loverde, MHS, CIP

President & Founder,
Family First Intervention

Mike has an extensive history of helping families treat addiction. He is an authority in addiction treatment and remains dedicated to providing hands-on expertise at our clinic.

Is Drug of Choice Relevant in Intervention?

Why Drug of Choice Matters.



The short answer is yes—and for reasons you may not realize. Knowing what the substance user is abusing ahead of time helps the intervention team understand some crucial things. Being aware of alcohol or benzodiazepine use allows the clinical treatment team to formulate safe protocols and solutions for withdrawal, given the risk of seizures and death from those two substances.

When someone abuses opioids, families and treatment professionals need to be equipped with Narcan in case of an overdose. We also know that with opioids, it is only a matter of time before the person may become unwell during the intervention or while being transported.

Why Drug of Choice Matters (cont'd)



In cases of stimulant abuse such as Adderall, Crystal Methamphetamines, Cocaine, or Crack Cocaine, it is vital to know which substance has been used so the professionals can prepare for paranoia and very erratic and volatile behavior. Many stimulant users present as having severe mental illness symptoms.

Understanding the drug of choice helps the treatment team prepare and assess for appropriate detox protocol. However, except for a few isolated cases, knowing the alcohol and drug of choice is not so relevant for the overall treatment plan and implementing a long-term recovery solution.

Who does Drug of Choice Matter For?



Families often place much emphasis on the drug of choice for obvious reasons. Some families are unaware of the substance their loved one is using and is determined to find out before doing anything about the addiction. Unbeknownst to many, the alcohol or drug problem results from behaviors that must be addressed.

Your inquiry for help may start with addressing the addiction, but it is the behaviors and lifestyle choices that have most families and substance users upside down.

To summarize, if a family called and spoke about the devastation they have experienced and insisted their loved one was abusing heroin (but the intervention revealed it was alcohol), would that change anything? **It certainly does for medical reasons and detox, but for the reasons you sought help, it does not.**

Who Does Drug of Choice Matter For? (cont'd)



The drug of choice can help a therapist or counselor understand some things substance users may not disclose about themselves. However, it is less relevant than some feel it needs to be. When patients arrive at treatment, they are not sectioned off by those who are alcohol or drug users.

Patients will find that, regardless of the substances used, there are overwhelming similarities within the group regarding how they think and behave and what they have said and done, ultimately leading to finding themselves together in a treatment center.

The Triangle



Think of addiction as a triangle. In one corner are found the behaviors; the second corner is home to the obsession or compulsion to use substances, and at the third corner are the symptoms (or problems and losses) that result from the substance use.

Unfortunately, many substance users relapse and fail because they enter a rehabilitation program to address only their symptoms and reclaim things they have lost.

Their initial focus is not on addressing trauma or behaviors but on reuniting with children or spouses, finding employment, clearing up legal issues, purchasing a vehicle, attending the gym, and so forth. These are all important matters and worthwhile goals.

The Triangle (cont'd)



What is often misunderstood is that these things were not lost because of drug use. They were lost due to the behaviors and unaddressed trauma that triggered the obsession and compulsion to use alcohol or drugs, leading to the symptoms (problems and losses).

It's comparable to losing your driver's license due to speeding because you're always late. So you focus exclusively on recovering your driving privileges. Once you do, you start speeding again. You never concentrate on why you were constantly late and felt the need to resume speeding everywhere you went.

Within a few weeks or months, you're returning to where you started and losing your driver's license again. With willpower and self-control, some may obey the speed limit for some time. But unless the underlying causes are addressed, the cycle will inevitably repeat.

If you somehow manage to continue speeding without getting caught, you will be miserable, yelling all the while about others' bad driving. A similar analogy would be to a dry drunk or Addict.

Interventions Address Behaviors, Not the Substance of Choice



If alcohol or drugs were the problem, substance users would not need treatment centers, counselors, therapists, and psychiatrists. The protocol would be to have an order signed by a judge, have them picked up and brought to a hospital for 5 to 10 days for detoxification, and then allow their release. Having “learned their lesson,” they should be able to call on their willpower and self-control to forego ever using drugs or alcohol again.

If only it were that simple.

Interventions Address Behaviors, Not the Substance of Choice (cont'd)



If the drug of choice were the problem, why can't a heroin addict start consuming alcohol in moderation and not return to heroin? The thought of a crystal methamphetamine addict taking medically-prescribed Adderall to control a substance use problem responsibly sounds plausible, yet that plan would most likely fail.

Choose Family First Intervention for Your Recovery



If your family is struggling with the chaos and insanity brought on by your loved one's behaviors resulting from using substances, an intervention can be the needed bridge. Your loved one is most likely unaware of the damage ongoing behaviors are having on them and the family.

Addicts, alcoholics, and their families often struggle to understand what each of them is going through and why. As previously stated, knowing the drug of choice helps inform the professionals' work. For a family to know the drug of choice before doing something about it is far less relevant and should not prevent seeking solutions for you and your loved one.

Please reach out to us today to learn more about our services and how to get started on the road to recovery.

Stop Accepting Excuses and Start Getting Help

Questions? The Floor Is Yours!

Prefer to talk in private? Get in touch below.

Call Us: 1 (888) 291-8514

Chat with us: family-intervention.com
