

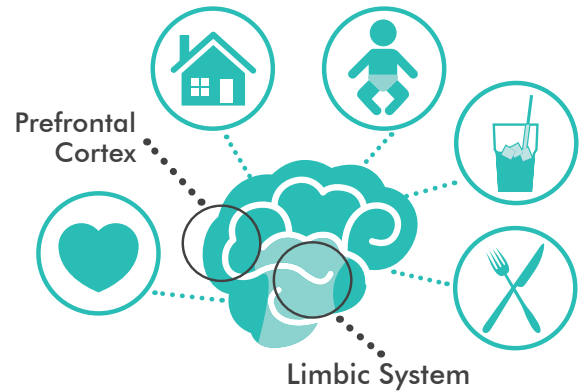
ADDICTION AND THE BRAIN

ADDICTION IS A BRAIN DISEASE

Addiction, the severe form of a substance use disorder, is a chronic, relapsing brain disease characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences.

When substances are used repeatedly they change how some circuits in the brain function, including:

- The prefrontal cortex, which regulates decision making and impulse control, and
- The limbic system, which is responsible for our emotions and basic survival instincts.



ADDICTION IS PREVENTABLE

- Delay the age of first use while the adolescent brain is developing.
- Limit access to drugs and alcohol.
- Increase attachment to community and positive social engagement.



ADDICTION IS TREATABLE

- Intervene early and treat substance use disorders before the disease progresses.
- Effective treatments include counseling, medications for alcohol, opioid, and tobacco use disorders, and wraparound recovery support services.



RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE

- People can and do recover from addiction. 10% of American adults identify as having previously had a substance use disorder.
- Brain scans show that once in recovery, the tissue in the limbic system and cortex can recover.

