

The Elephant in the Room

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Co-morbidity

- Approximately half of those that experience MI will also experience SUD and visa versa
- About 1 in 4 with “serious MI” also have a SUD

(NIDA, April 2020)



Co-morbidity in teens and young adults

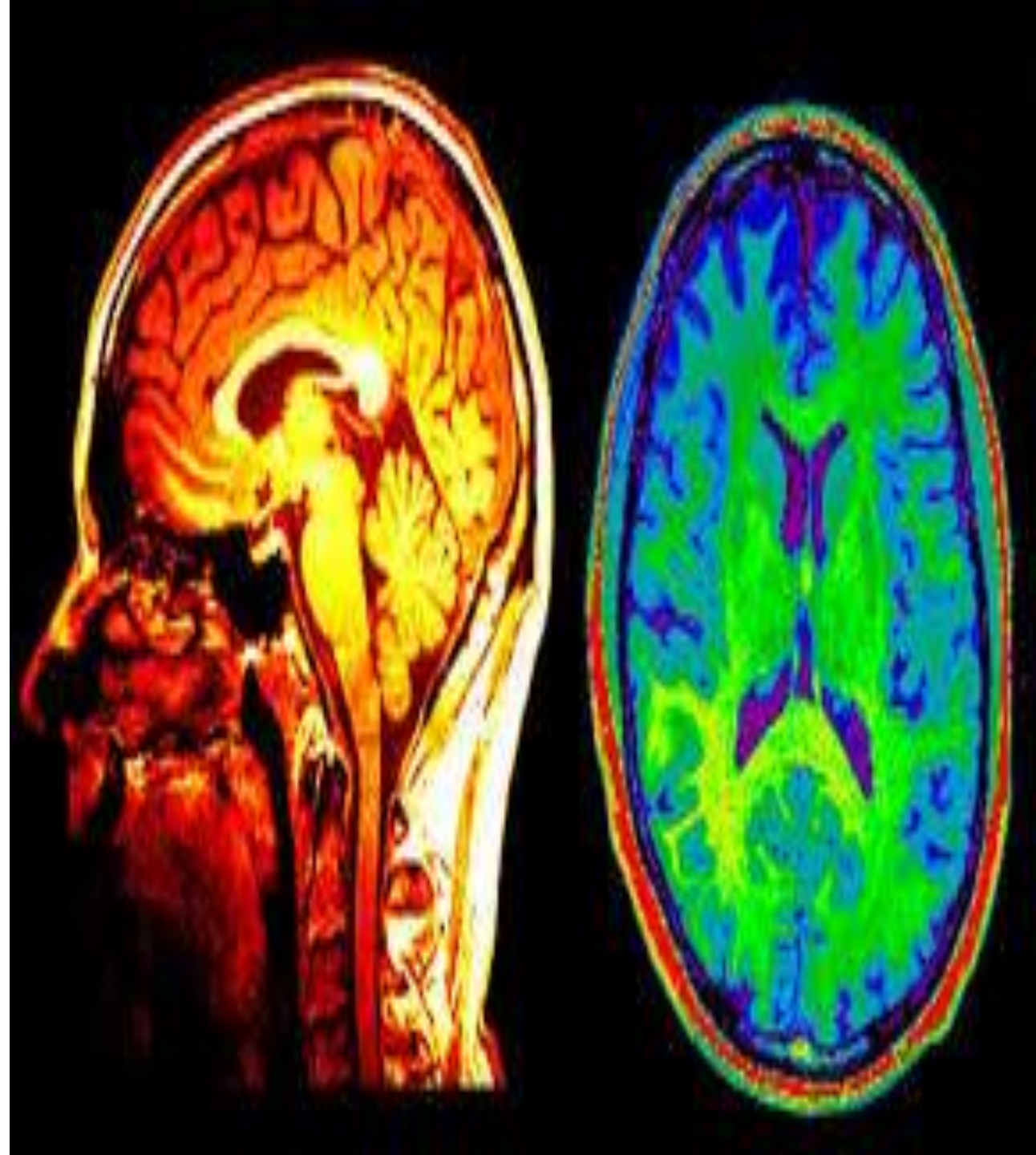
- Over 60% of youth in community-based SUD Tx programs also meet diagnostic criteria for MI

(NIDA, April 2020)



Brain changes

- Genetic vulnerability
- Nature vs. Nurture
- Dis-regulation
- *Restless/Discontented*



**Which came first –
The chicken or the egg??**

Correlation vs. Causality
Cause or Effect?



What personalities are “pre-disposed”?

- **Externalizer** (sensation seeker, risk taker)
- **Low responder** (high tolerance)
- **Internalizer** (sensitive, holds things in)
- Shy, low self esteem, anxious



Risk factors for early use

- Coexisting issues (ie: depression, anxiety, ADD/ADHD)
- Biological family history (genes)
- History of trauma or loss (ACE's)
- Chronic stress
- Isolation and disconnection
- Identification with others who use

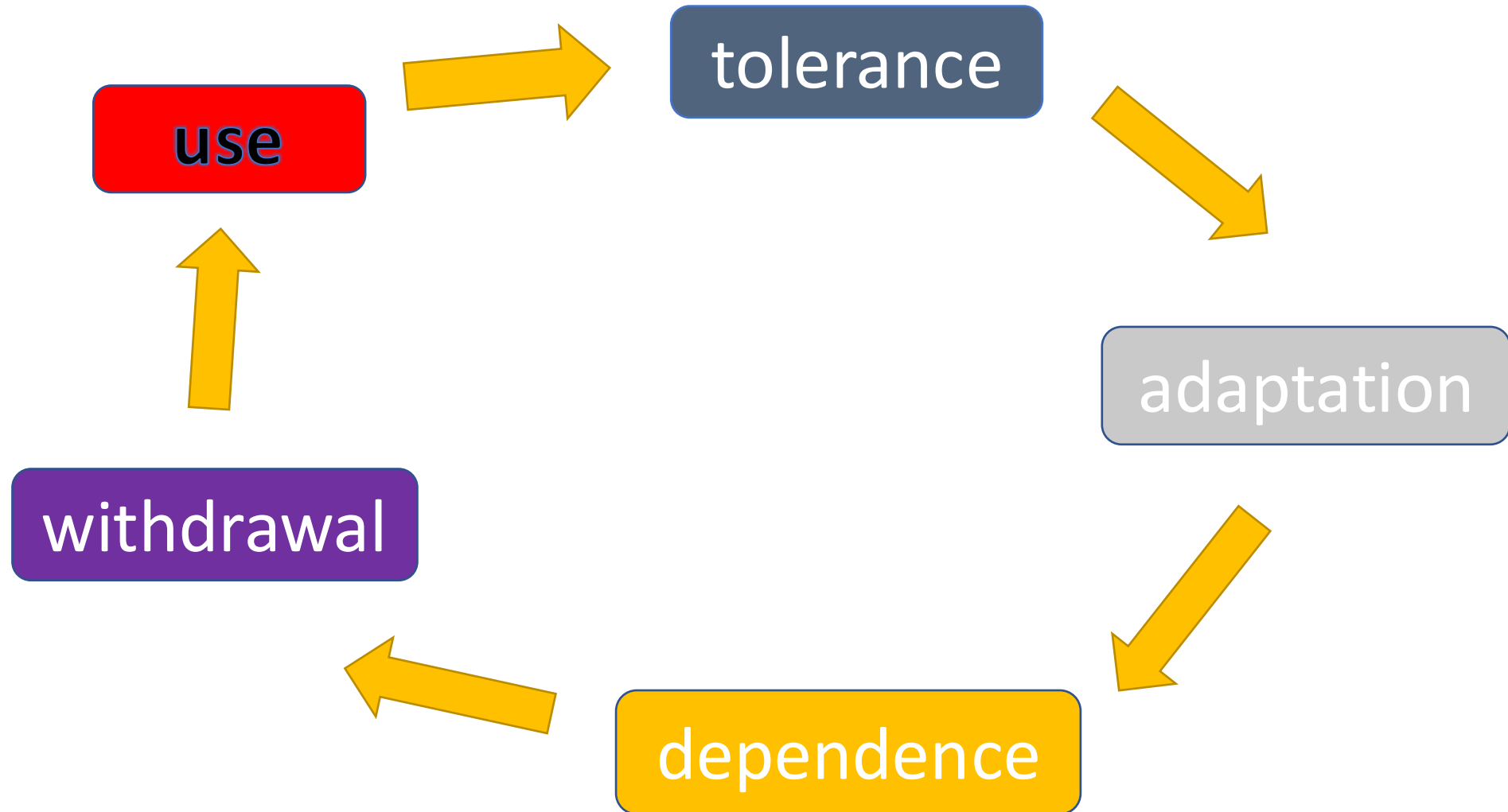


What lens do you use?

- Biases and blind spots
- Frame of reference
- If you have a hammer, is everything a nail?



Understanding the Cycle



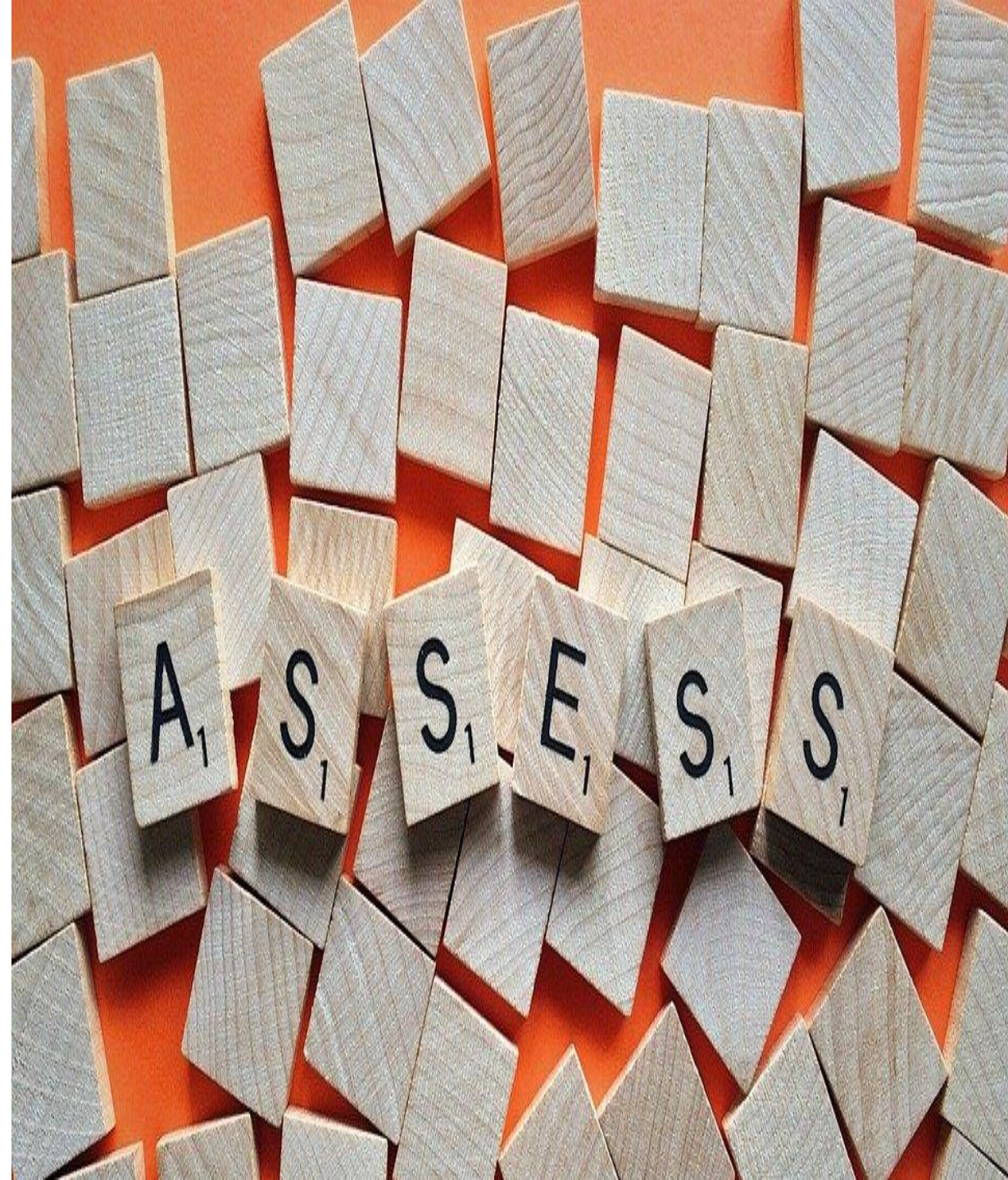
Let's talk about Cannabis

- Tolerance and SUD
- Withdrawal
- *ANHEDONIA*
- “Green Out”



Knowing what questions to ask and how to ask them

- Taking a thorough hx (including family hx)
- Normalizing conversation about substance use
- Basic assessment tools



C.A.G.E.

- Have ever felt the need to **cut down** on your use?
- Have people **annoyed** you by criticizing your use?
- Do you ever feel **guilty** about your use?
- Do you use for an “**eye opener**” (to steady nerves or nurse a hangover)?

(Ewing, 1984)



Self-regulation skills

- What do you do to relax?
- What kinds of thing do you enjoy doing with friends?
- How do you soothe yourself when you are hurting?
- What are some things you do to energize or motivate yourself?
- How successful are you at managing your moods?



Having the Conversation

- Words matter
- Watch the judgment
- Be aware of assumptions
- Remember it takes courage
- Be curious and listen!!
- The “what if” question



What are the options?

- Triage and referral
- Contract for abstinence or limits on use while in therapy
- Get good supervision/support
- Referral for substance use assessment (and any treatment recommendations) prior to resuming therapy
- Other?? Get creative!!



Medications

- Obtain history of medication use and responses to meds
- Consider other interventions first
- Contract for abstinence prior to referring
- Choose prescriber carefully
- Communicate and Collaborate



Whose goal is it?

- Compliance
- Temporary abstinence
- “Selective” abstinence
- Reduction in use
- Harm reduction
- Recovery



Mutual Aid for those considering, seeking or in recovery:

- AA
- NA
- CA
- MA
- Smart Recovery
- Collegiate Recovery



Checking up and Checking In

Substance use may get better or it may get worse...

But SUD's are both

Chronic and Progressive;

They don't tend to go away on their own!



Additional Resources

- Kevin McCauley, “Pleasure Unwoven”, “Memo to Self”
- Jessica Lahey, [The Addiction Innoculation](#) (raising healthy kids in a culture of dependence)
- www.recoveryanswers.org (Stigmatizing vs proper use of terms)
- Recovery Ally Training, VCU Rams in Recovery
- Northstar/Rams in Recovery Family Education Program (virtual/free)
- “The Neuroscience of Addiction”, Judith Grisel and Teri Gross (“Fresh Air” podcast on NPR aired 2/12/19)