



NCSBN GUIDELINES FOR ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS AND DISCIPLINE MONITORING PROGRAMS



NCSBN

National Council of State Boards of Nursing

Acknowledgements

- **NCSBN and Kathy Apple for convening our committee to work on such an important topic**
- **Karen Skinner, Executive Director, DC BON**
- **To the members of the committee here today**
 - **Joan Bainer, South Carolina**
 - **Nancy Darbro, New Mexico**
 - **Valerie Smith, Arizona**



GUIDELINES

- **Developed and written primarily for alternative programs**
- **Applicable to traditional discipline monitoring programs as well**
- **Provide a path to recovery and retain recovering nurses in the workforce**



GUIDELINES (CONT.)

- **Advance the regulation of licensees with substance use disorders**
- **Enhance communication and exchange of information**
- **Provide best practices to guide policy decisions**



Focus of Today's Talk

- **Addiction. Pure and simple.**
- **If you don't understand the process of addiction, you will never know how to:**
 - **Prevent**
 - **Educate**
 - **Intervene**
 - **Treat**
 - **Monitor**
 - **Restore**



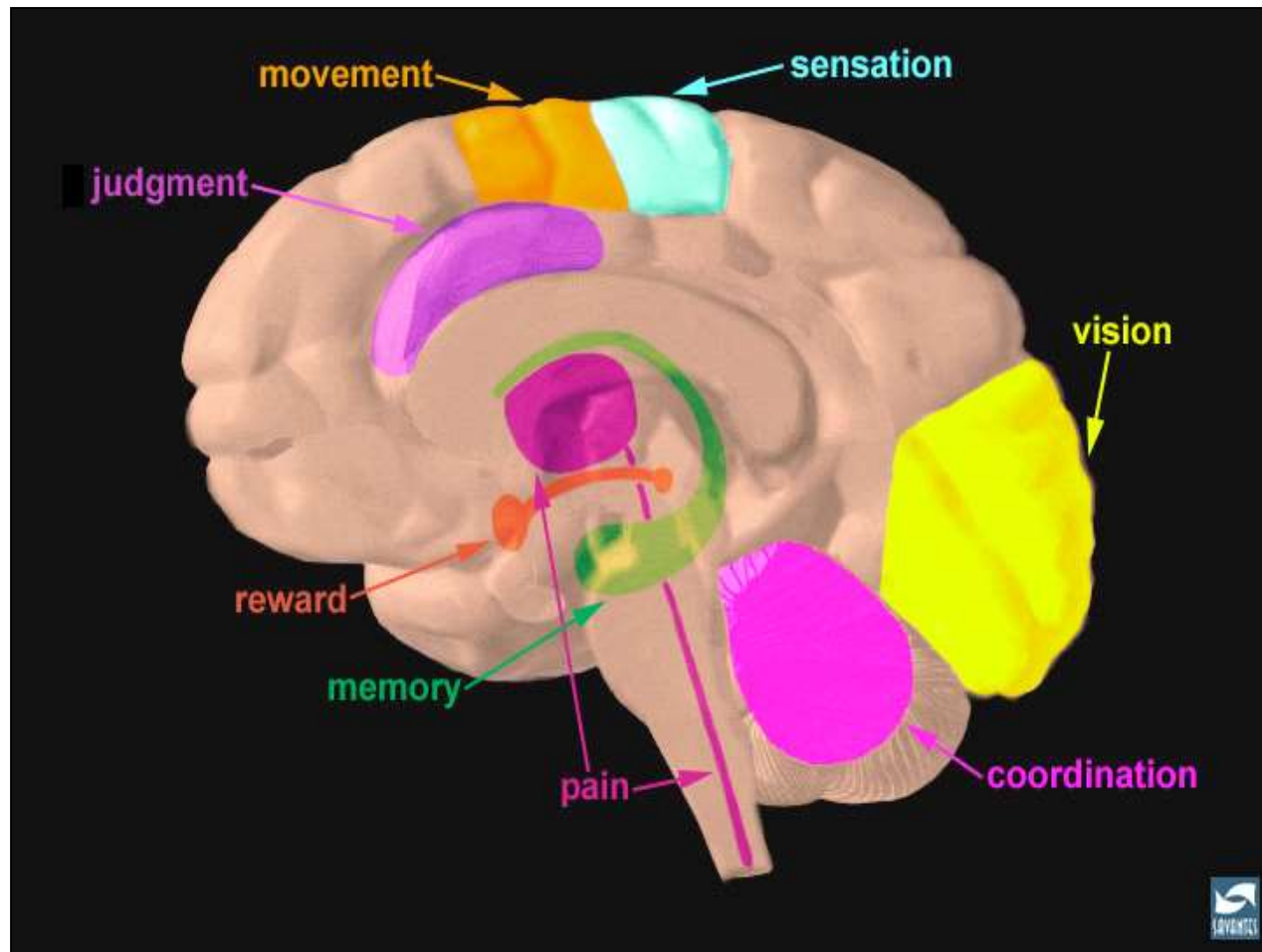
ADDICTION IS A DISEASE

- **It directly and permanently alters the chemistry of the brain**
- **It is not a matter of being weak-willed**
- **It is a progressive disease**
- **If it is left untreated, it is fatal**
- **Addiction manifests itself in behavioral terms**

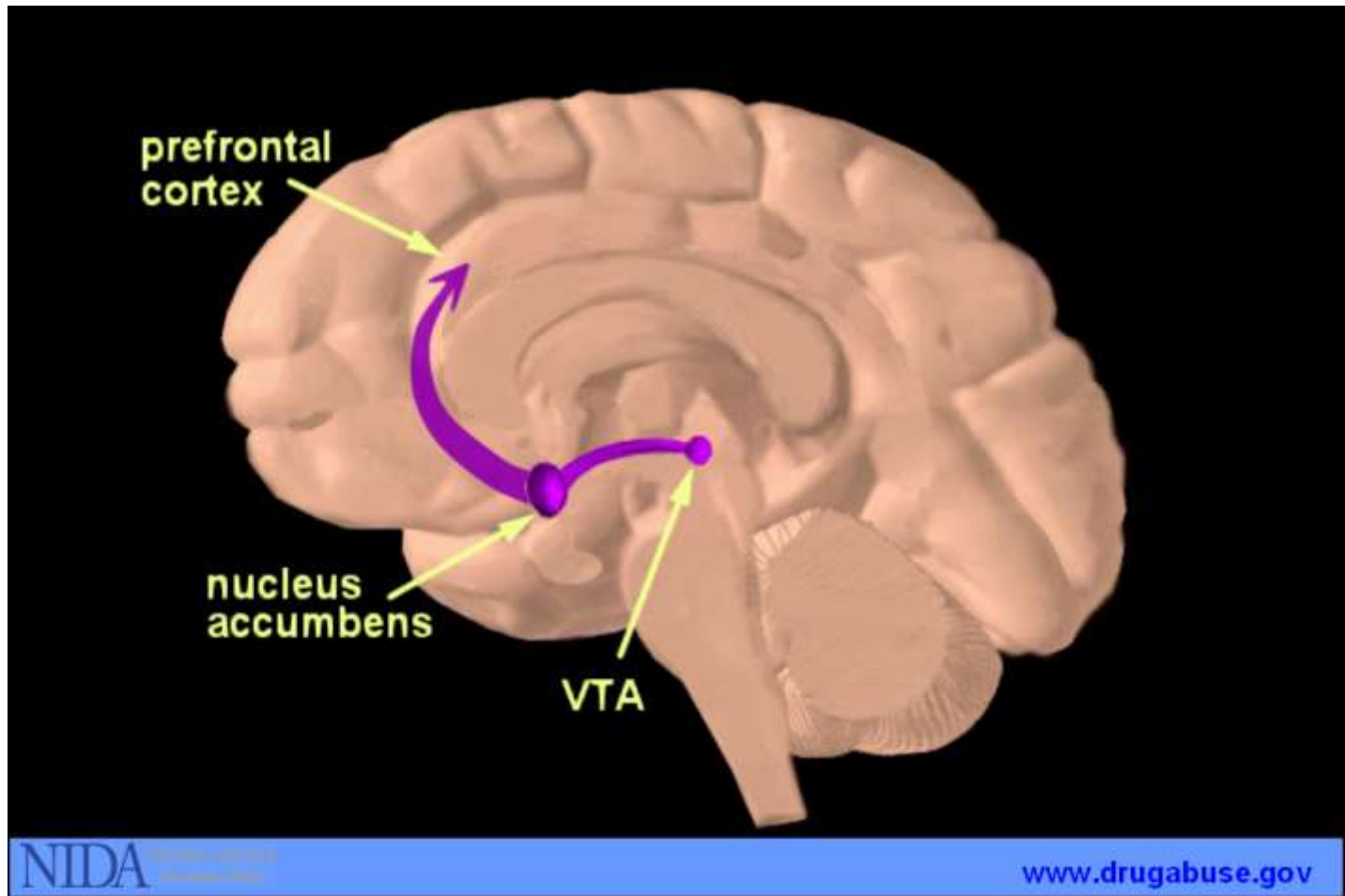
Case Study

- **White middle class woman, mid 40s; married, two children**
- **Works in ER, ICU, CCU, OR**
- **Uses narcotics to help her cope with the stress of the job, home**
- **Creates fictitious recurring ailments that require pain medications**
- **Lies, cheats, steals to get her meds—including sleeping with her pharmacist**
- **Denies any problem**

Brain Regions and Neuronal Pathways



Reward Pathway—Limbic System: Part of the Pre-cerebral Cortex of the Brain



The Progression of the Disease

- **People use drugs/drink alcohol because they feel better when they use**
- **Drugs and alcohol directly affect the limbic system of the brain**
- **The changes in the brain cause changes in behavior**
- **Addicts and alcoholics don't care about their behavior—they only care about their drugs of choice**

Process of Addiction

- **Develop relationship with drug of choice**
- **Go to any lengths to get that drug**
- **See their relationships fail**
- **Watch social systems break down**
- **Experience work deterioration**
- **Demonstrate denial as hallmark of disease**
- **Need for drug escalates as all systems fail**



Incidence and Prevalence

- **Addiction affects only 6 – 8% of health professionals**
- **However, when there is a nurse who is actively using/abusing, it creates chaos in the workplace and affects many more nurses.**
- **When one nurse abuses or uses or diverts substances, there are always more behind that nurse.**

What Do You Need to Do?

- **Develop policies and procedures on the identification, education, intervention, treatment, monitoring, and restoration of nurses with substance use disorder**
- **Support your alternative programs**
- **Utilize the NCSBN Guidelines**
- **Work out the hard issues without rancor**
- **Addiction raises the red flag of negative emotions for everyone**

Stigma of Addiction

- Addicts/alcoholics are viewed in society in a very negative light
- Stigma involves feelings of shame, guilt, remorse, and hopelessness
- Stigma of addiction worse for women
- The only way to deal with stigma is to educate folks about the disease of addiction
- Educate yourself first! Don't pass along your prejudice

What Do you Need to Do Next??

- **Read and utilize the NCSBN Guidelines**
- **Identify experts in your state or nationally who can serve as consultants**
- **Educate yourself and your staff**
- **Promote education among your facilities.**
- **Develop collaborative relationships with other disciplines for:**
 - **Evaluations and interventions**
 - **Education and training**
 - **Monitoring and reporting**

Support Alternative Programs

- **Protect the public while monitoring the nurse with substance use disorders**
- **Identify, act, and report noncompliance to BON**
- **Encourage collaborative communication**
- **Accountable to the BON, the nurse, and patients**
- **Help return recovering nurses to work**

Case Study Revisited

- **White middle class woman, mid 40s; married, two children**
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Substance Use Disorder Guidelines available

<https://www.ncsbn.org/2106.htm>