



# OK Boomers!

## Risk and Protective Factors for Substance Use among Older Adults

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## Objectives

- Identify the risk and protective factors for substance use among older adults.
- Gain an understanding of the use of alcohol, prescription drugs, and other substance problems among older adults.
- Recognize the relationship between substance use and mental illness.

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## Boomers 1946-1964

**76 Million**

Boomer use - rivals younger generations

Boomer drug abuse - is up again

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## By the Numbers

**1950s**


- 8% of the population was over the age of 65.

**2019**

- 16.5 % of the population (54.2 million) are over the age of 65.

**2050**

- 22% of the US population will be over the age of 65.

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## Emerging Boomers Drug Addiction Problem

**19%** of older Americans misuse alcohol or prescription drugs

More older adults die from overdoses than influenza or pneumonia.  
 The rate of accidental overdoses among this generation is higher than that of people between ages 25-44 for the first time in history.

**2013**  
 12,000 Baby Boomer Drug OD Deaths


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## Opioid Overdose in Boomers

In **1999**, there were **518 deaths** related to Opioid overdose in the United States among Boomers.

In **2019**, there were **10,292 deaths** related to Opioid overdose in the United States among Boomers.

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### Possible Explanations for Increased Baby Boomers use for Alcohol & Drugs

- The mindset of *My Generation*
- The massive increase in treating chronic pain with addictive pills; 400% increase in treatment of opioid abuse (1998-2008)
- Women of all ages are drinking more often, and using more drugs than ever before.
- The reality of aging.
- One in four older adults struggles with mental illness.

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### Increased Health Risks Associated with Boomer Substance Abuse

- Health risk becomes greater with age.
- Aging - changes how alcohol affects the body (metabolism)
- Increase in injuries, while under the influence.

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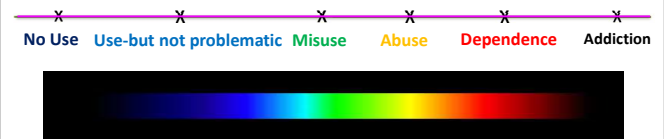
### Treatment Obstacles

- Misdiagnosis
- Overlooked by family & friends

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### The Spectrum of Alcohol Use



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### What is a Substance Use Disorder?

*Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*  
(DSM – 5)

In order to be diagnosed with a *Substance Use Disorder*, an individual must display 2 of the following 11 symptoms within 12 months.

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#### Substance Use Disorder:

1. Taking the substance in larger amounts or for longer period of time than you meant to.
2. Wanted to cut down or stop using the substance but not managing to.
3. Spending a lot of time getting, using, or recovering from use of the substance.
4. Had cravings and urges to use the substance.
5. Unable to manage to do what you should at work, home or school, because of substance use.
6. Continued to use, even when it causes problems in relationships.
7. Gave up important social, occupational or recreational activities because of substance use.
8. Using substances again and again, even when it puts you in danger.
9. Continued to use even when you knew you have a physical or psychological problem that could have been caused or made worse by the substance.
10. Needed more of the substance to get the effect you want (tolerance).
11. Developed withdrawal symptoms, which can be relieved by taking more of the substance.

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## What is an addiction?

*Addiction is a primary, chronic disease of brain reward, motivation, memory and related circuitry.*

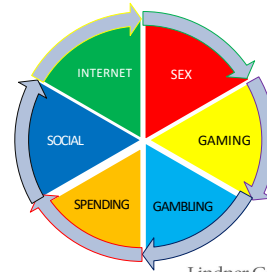
*Dysfunction in these circuits leads to characteristic biological, psychological, social and spiritual manifestations. This is reflected in an individual pathologically pursuing reward and/or relief by substance use and other behaviors.*

ASAM

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## Behavioral Addictions

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## What is an addiction ?

### *The Three C's and a T*

- Loss of **C**ontrol
- **C**ompulsion
- **C**ontinued use despite (-) consequences
- **T**hinking (obsession)

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## Prescription Drug Abuse

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**Do baby boomers have a higher risk of substance use ?**

**What drugs did baby boomers use in the 1960s?**

**How common is substance abuse among people over 65?**

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## Drug Use & Baby Boomers: 5 Prescription Drugs With High Potential For Abuse

- Stimulants
- Antidepressants
- Sedatives/Benzodiazepines/Sleep inducing
- Pain Relievers
- Medical Marijuana

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## Alcohol Abuse

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- Baby Boomers fastest growing segment of the population.
- Also, the group with the most dramatic increase in harmful alcohol use.
- JAMA Psychiatry: "Increases in alcohol use, high risk drinking and alcohol use disorders among adults 65 years and older were substantially higher relative to earlier surveys."
  - The number of 54 years and older who drank has risen higher than the national average by 23%.
  - The average number of adults 65 and older suffering from alcohol abuse had risen by nearly 107%.

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### Correlation between Alcohol Use & Medical Issues

- Alcohol can lead to some forms of cancer, liver damage, immune system disorder and brain damage
- Alcohol can make other health conditions worst: osteoporosis, diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, ulcers, memory loss and mood disorders.
- Alcohol can make some medical problems difficult for physicians to find and treat.
- Alcohol can cause some older adults to be forgetful and confused, these symptoms could be mistaken for signs of Alzheimer's disease.

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## What can cause a reliance on a substance?

## How is substance use related to mental illness?

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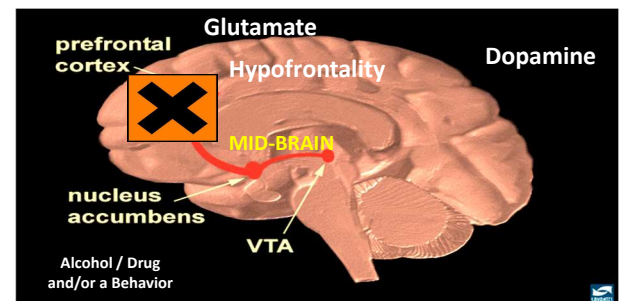
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## CUBIS

- **C**hemical Issues
- **U**nresolved Issue(s)
- **B**elief (which is distorted)
- **I**nability to Cope
- **S**timulus-Response Relationship

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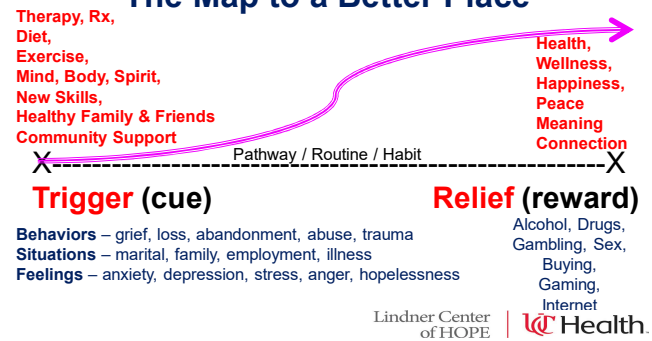
## CUBIS TREATMENT

- Chemical Issues - **Medication management**
- Unresolved Issue(s) - **Psychotherapy**
- Belief (which is distorted) – **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**
- Inability to Cope – **New Skills**
- Stimulus-Response Relationship – **Education**

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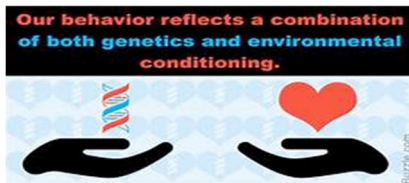
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## The Map to a Better Place



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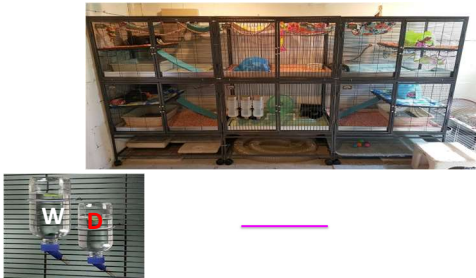
## Nature vs. Nurture



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Maybe the opposite of addiction is not only sobriety.  
Maybe the opposite of addiction is also connection.

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## Why is Substance Abuse especially dangerous for Baby Boomers?

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## What's driving this Increase?

- Chronic pain
- Mind Set
- Mental illness

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## Isolation & Disconnection



Social isolation affects nearly **1 in 5** older adults.

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## Isolation & Loneliness

- **Isolation** - involves quantifiable measurements, such as the size of one's social network (and the frequency of engagement with it), availability of transportation, and ability to access resources and information.
- **Loneliness** - denotes how people perceive their experience and whether or not they feel isolated.

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## Isolation is a health issue.

Research shows that the negative health effects of chronic isolation and loneliness, while harmful at any age, are especially dangerous for people over 50. Social isolation and loneliness are associated with:

- Higher blood pressure
- Increased susceptibility to the flu
- Greater risk of heart disease
- Earlier onset of dementia



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### Baby Boomers and Mental Health

- It's just as important for an older person with symptoms of depression to seek treatment as it is for someone younger.
- **Depression** can complicate the treatment of these conditions, including making it more difficult for someone to care for themselves and to seek treatment when needed.
- Suicide - steady increase in the past 10 years

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### Warning Signs

- Noticeable changes in mood, energy level, or appetite
- Feeling flat or having trouble feeling positive emotions
  - Difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much
- Difficulty concentrating, feeling restless, or on edge
  - Increased worry or feeling stressed
  - Anger, irritability or aggressiveness
- Ongoing headaches, digestive issues, or pain
  - A need for alcohol or drugs
  - Sadness or hopelessness
  - Suicidal thoughts
- Obsessive thinking or compulsive behavior
  - Engaging in high-risk activities
- Unusual thinking or behaviors that concern other people
- Thoughts or behaviors that interfere with work, family, or social life

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### Boomer Barriers to Getting Help and Treatment

- Never get diagnosed with substance abuse
- Symptoms attributed to another condition
- Addiction goes unnoticed
- Boomers not concerned about substance abuse
- Boomers don't seek help
- Boomers feel ashamed to ask for help

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### Protective Factors

- Mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being.
- Mental health is more than the absence of a mental illness—it's essential to a person overall health, well being and quality of life.
- Self Care

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### Seeking Help

Assessment

Level of Care

Treatment

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### Seeking Help

#### Assessment

Substance use assessment  
MAST, CAGE, DSM

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## CAGE

1. Have you ever felt you needed to **C**ut down on your drinking?
2. Have people **A**nnoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
3. Have you ever felt **G**uilty about drinking?
4. Have you ever felt you needed a drink first thing in the morning (**E**ye-opener) to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover?

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## Seeking Help

### Assessment

### DSM-5 Criteria for Substance Use Disorder

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## Seeking Help

### Level of Care

Outpatient  
Intensive Outpatient  
Residential Care

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## Seeking Help

### Treatment

Individual counseling  
Group counseling  
Community support groups  
Couples Counseling  
Medication Assisted Treatment

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### SELF CARE SKILLS

Get regular exercise  
Eat healthy, regular meals and stay hydrated  
Make sleep a priority  
Try a relaxing activity  
Set goals and priorities  
Practice gratitude  
Focus on positivity  
Stay CONNECTED

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### What can you do if you suspect your loved one has a substance use problem?

- Prepare yourself
- Confront the issue
- Stand your ground
- Support them
- Find professional help

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### Tuell Time Tools

**Safe Place, Safe Person, Safe Word**  
**Imagery/Visualization**  
**Bilateral Stimulation**  
**Diaphragmatic Breathing**  
**Ice, Boxed Breathing, Swirling**

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### The Analogy of the Moth



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Peace  
Thank You!

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