

THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG:
UNDERSTANDING AND TREATING
SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND ADDICTION AS A
MALADAPTIVE COPING MECHANISM

Presented by:

Carol Venter





OVERVIEW OF SESSION:

- **THE REALITY**
- **WHAT IS ADDICTION**
- **POSSIBLE INDICATORS**
- **WHY**
- **A CASE STUDY**
- **CONSIDERATIONS FOR TREATMENT AND INTERVENTION**
- **Q & A**

A REALITY FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN WORKPLACE



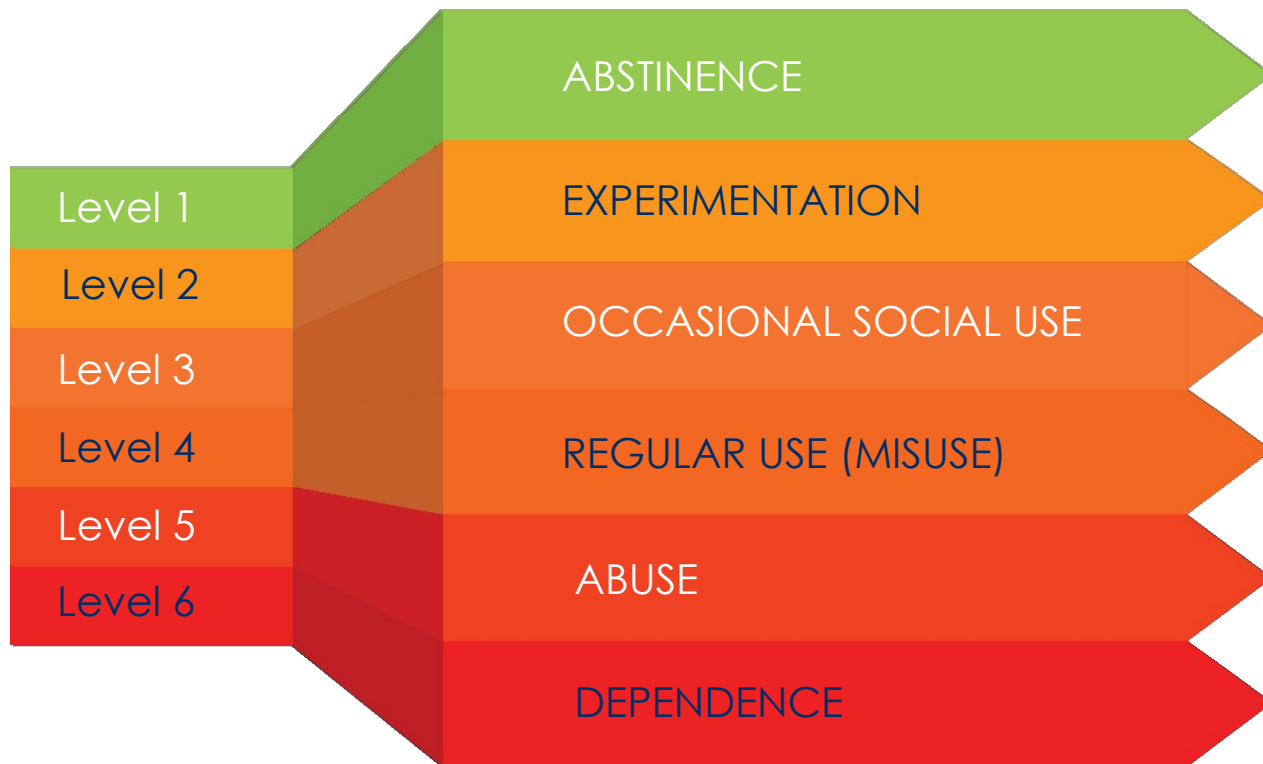
- Alcohol and cannabis (MRC)
- Cocaine, Cat and prescription medications such as Urbanol (Venter, 2019)
- Absenteeism of employees with alcohol and drug problems was three times higher than for other employees.
- Employees with chemical dependence problems claimed sick benefits three times more than other employees and also made compensation claims five times more than other employees,
- 20% to 25% of injuries in the workplace involved employees under the influence of alcohol.
- Drugs and alcohol supplied at work amounts to 15% to 30% of all accidents at work.

(Reference: ILO)

But, it doesn't stop at substances or chemicals.....



THE PROCESS OF ADDICTION





A DEFINITION OF ADDICTION

Addiction is a treatable, chronic medical disease involving complex interactions among brain circuits, genetics, the environment, and an individual's life experiences. People with addiction use substances or engage in behaviors that become compulsive and often continue despite harmful consequences.

(American Society of Addiction Medication)



THE 4 C'S OF ADDICTION

1. Compulsion

2. Cravings

3. Control

4. Consequences

Criteria for Substance Use Disorder



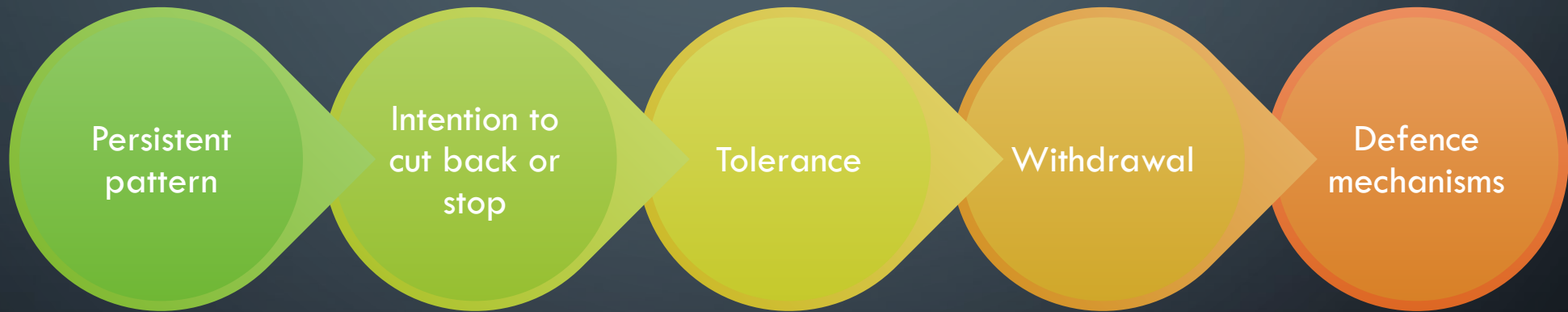
A patient only qualifies by meeting two or more of these substance use disorder criteria.

If you or a loved one are suffering from substance use disorder, don't wait. Get in contact with Gateway today!

DSM 5

- 2 or more criteria for Substance Use Disorder
- According to DSM-5, a **substance use disorder** (SUD) involves patterns of symptoms caused by using a substance that an individual continues taking despite its negative effects.
- These criteria fall under four basic categories: impaired control, physical dependence, social problems and risky use.

KEY CONCEPTS





POSSIBLE INDICATORS

- The smell of alcohol on the breath of an employee,
- Bloodshot eyes, slurred speech;
- Unsteady on his/her feet;
- aggressive or confrontational behaviour;
- turning his/her face away whilst being spoken to;
- shielding the mouth with a hand when speaking;
- unusually dishevelled appearance;
- Lying, dishonesty, distancing or isolating themselves
- Absenteeism (Monday, Friday, payday)
- Deterioration in output, quality and quantity of work
- Excessive use of sick leave
- Unexplained absences from workstation, excuses for non-attendance

WHY – CAUSATIVE OR DRIVING FACTORS

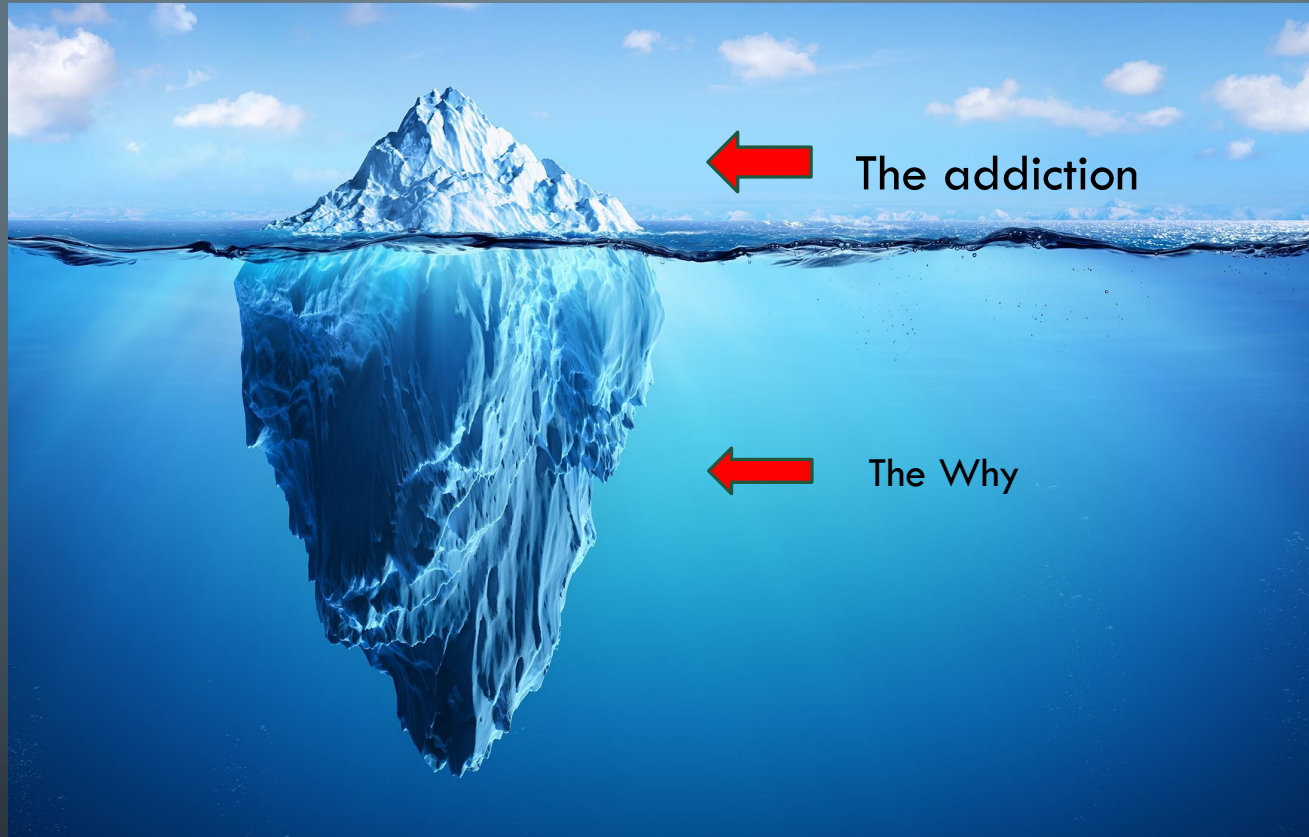
The reason one person will abuse a substance or develop an addiction over another is complex.

Bio-psychosocial model of addiction:

- **Socialization** and our environment – how we are socialized and what we are exposed to (peer pressure, family situation,
- The **brain**/ neuroplasticity: how our brain is wired to seek reward and pleasure
- **Pharmacology**: the substance and chemical itself (dopamine – morphine – heroin)
- Genetics



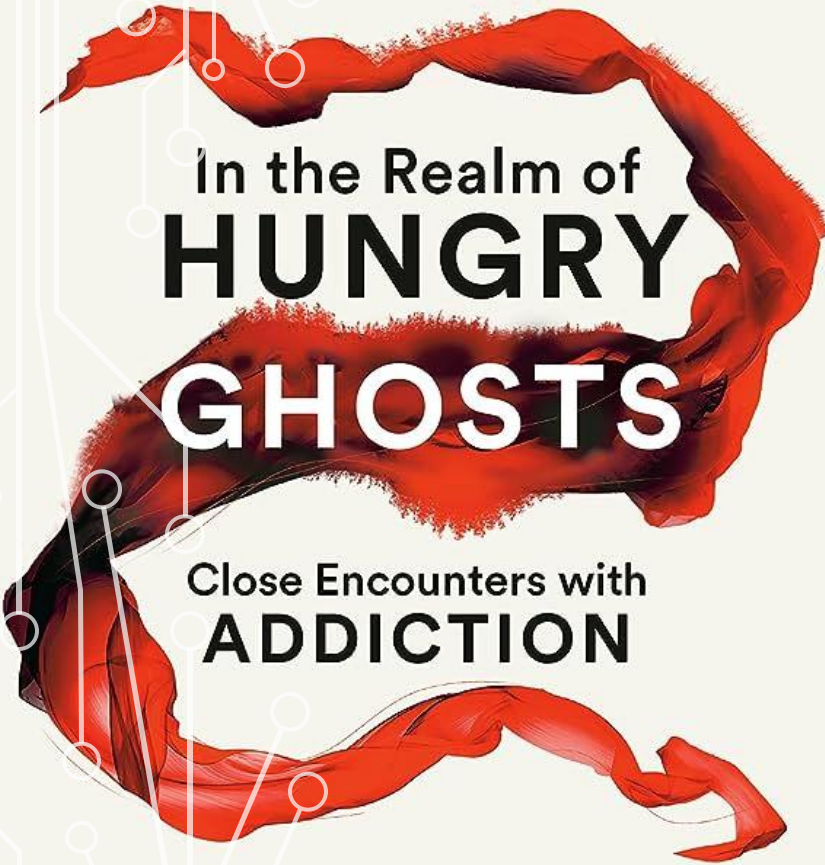
THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG....





#1 INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER

GABOR MATÉ, MD



In the Realm of
**HUNGRY
GHOSTS**

Close Encounters with
ADDICTION

“A healer to be
cherished.”

NAOMI KLEIN

“Everyone should read
this profound book.”

JOHANN HARI

DR GABOR MATE'S DEFINITION OF ADDICTION

“My definition of addiction is any behavior that gives you temporary relief, temporary pleasure, but in the long term causes harm, has some negative consequences and you can't give it up, despite those negative consequences. And from that perspective, you can understand that there are many, many addictions”

“Addiction is only a symptom, it's not the fundamental problem”

UNHEALTHY COPING MECHANISMS

A basic instinct: as humans we are wired for pleasure and to avoid discomfort and pain.

We will seek to self-soothe and self-medicate

We will seek to escape

This may mean adopting maladaptive coping mechanisms for:

- Stress
- Mental health issues
- Unresolved Trauma
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)



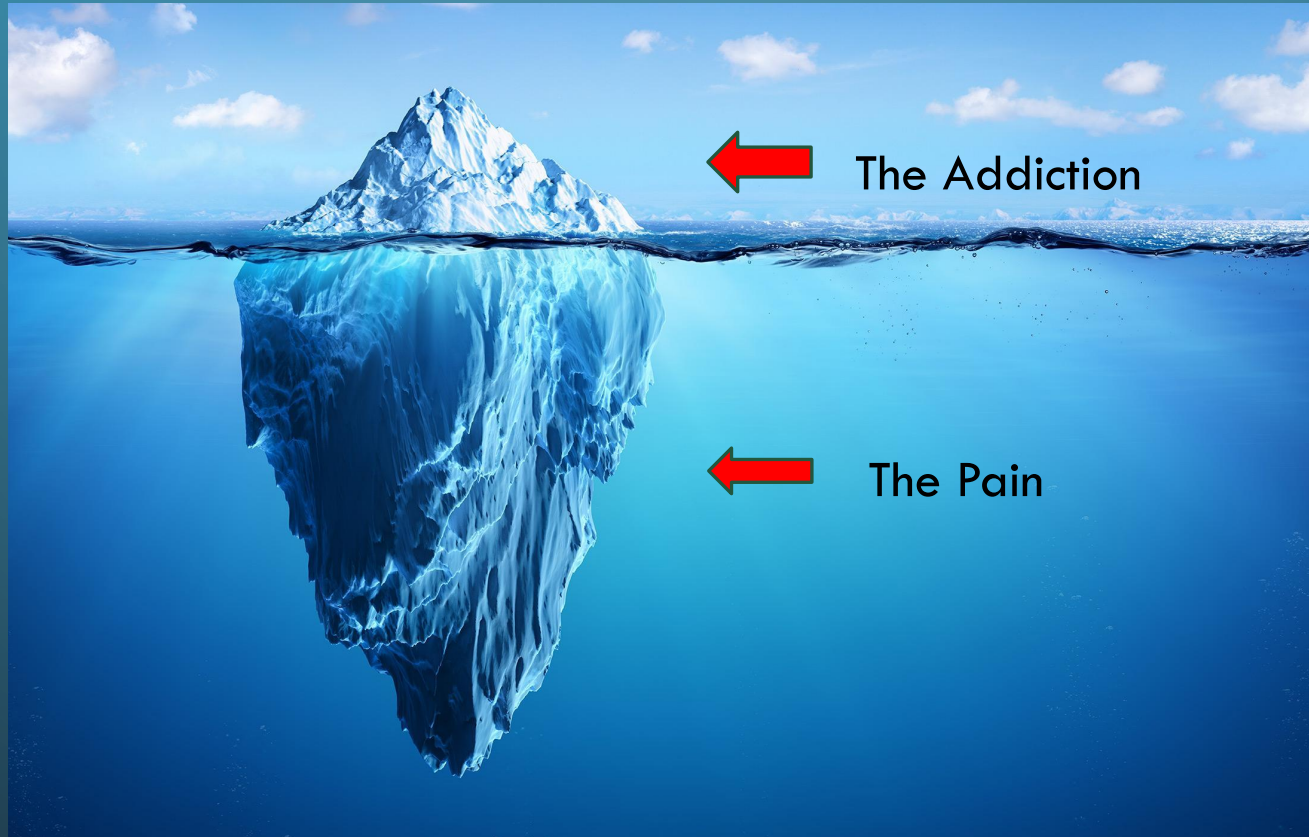
GARY: A CASE STUDY

- Sent to Noupoot at age 15 after a physical fight with his stepfather (cigarettes and occasional weed)
- Never knew biological father – in prison for attempted murder
- Mother emotionally absent – favoured younger son
- Ran away from Noupoot after 2 years – relationship with older woman
- Parents would not take him back – lived with his cousin
- Finished schooling – sponsored by his friend's mother who he was in a relationship with
- Started working in restaurant industry – introduced to cocaine
- Went back to Noupoot for 15 months
- Back into restaurant industry, relationship with an elder woman, excessive drinking resulting in alcoholism
- Quits on his own while working overseas for 2 years
- After 4 years of sobriety, relapses at work one day with his colleague after an unexpected visit from his parents.
- Currently 1 week sober



**CONSIDERATIONS FOR
TREATMENT AND INTERVENTION**

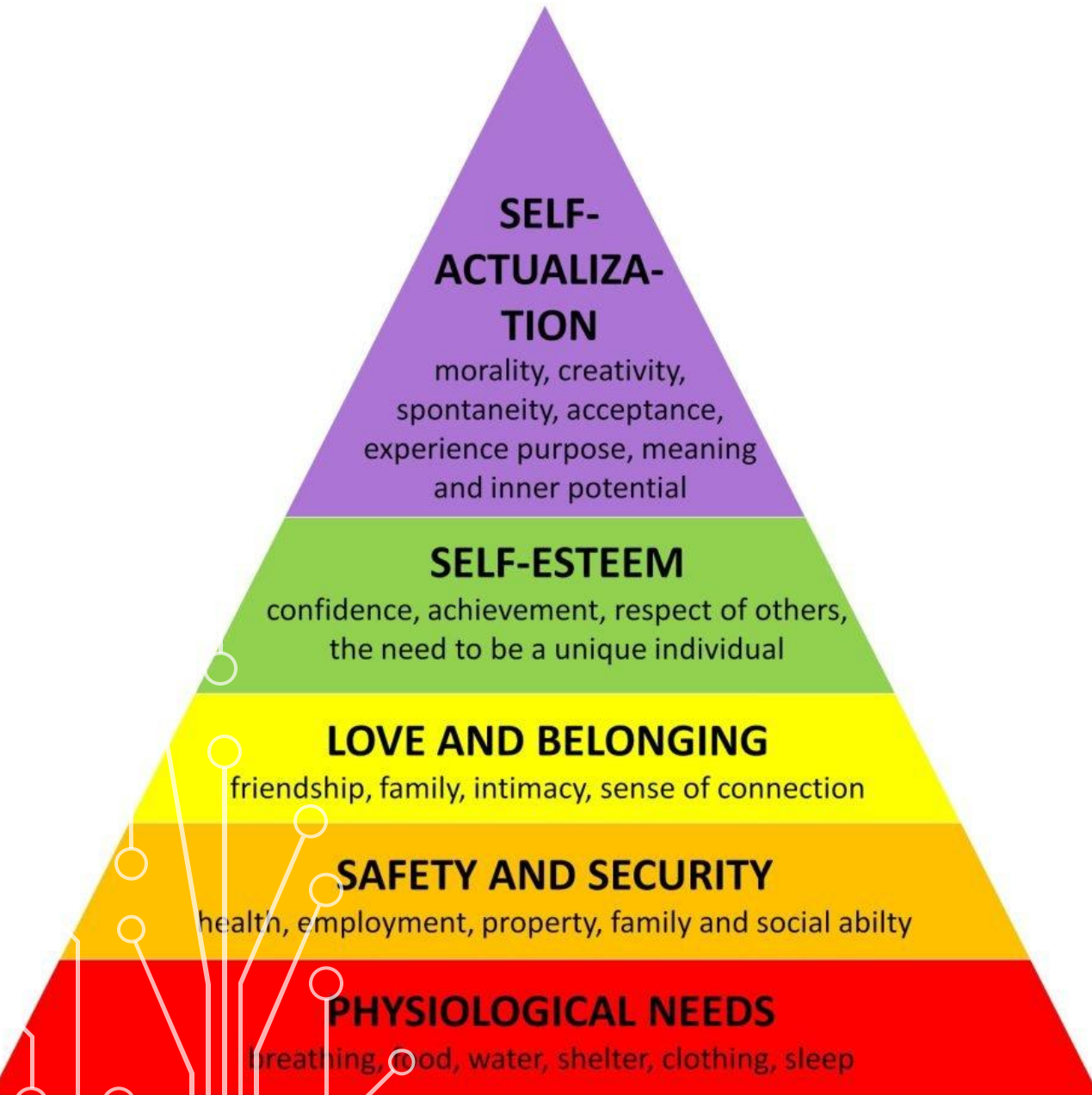
THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG....



TREATMENT AND INTERVENTION:

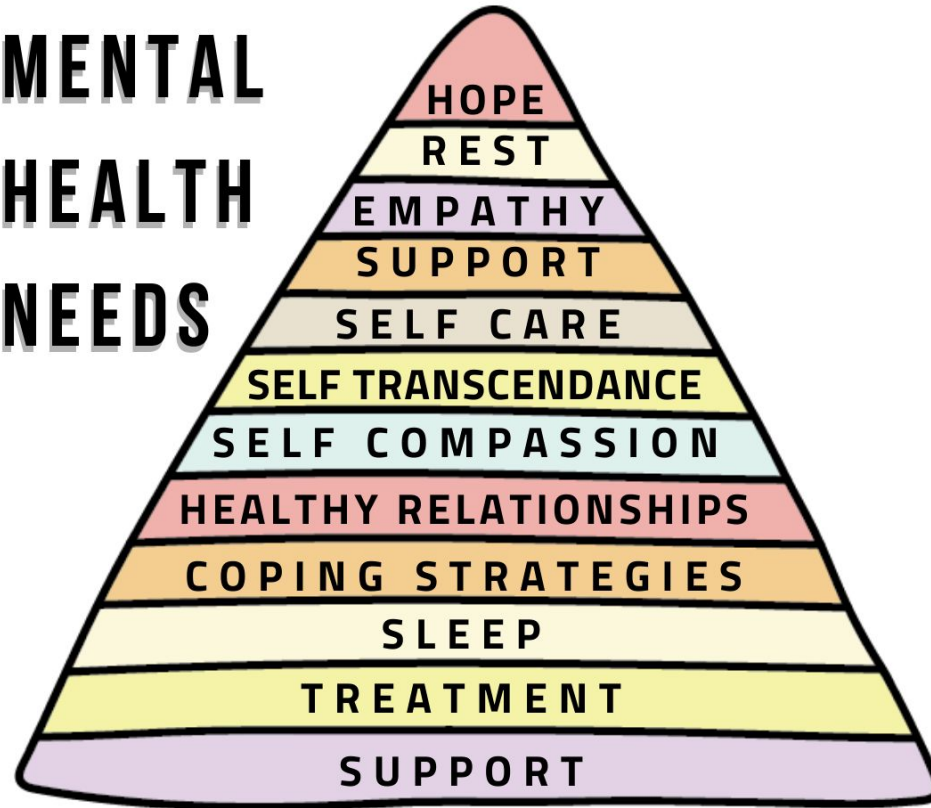


- Psychosocial:
 - ✓ 12 Step Approaches
 - ✓ Motivational Therapy
 - ✓ CBT
 - ✓ Relapse Prevention models (abstinence, high risk situations / triggers, lifestyle changes)
- Pharmacological:
 - ✓ Treatment for co-morbidity: Anxiety, mood stabilizers, sleeping tablets and anti-depressants
 - ✓ Naltrexone (alcohol & opioid – gambling)



MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

HIERARCHY OF MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS



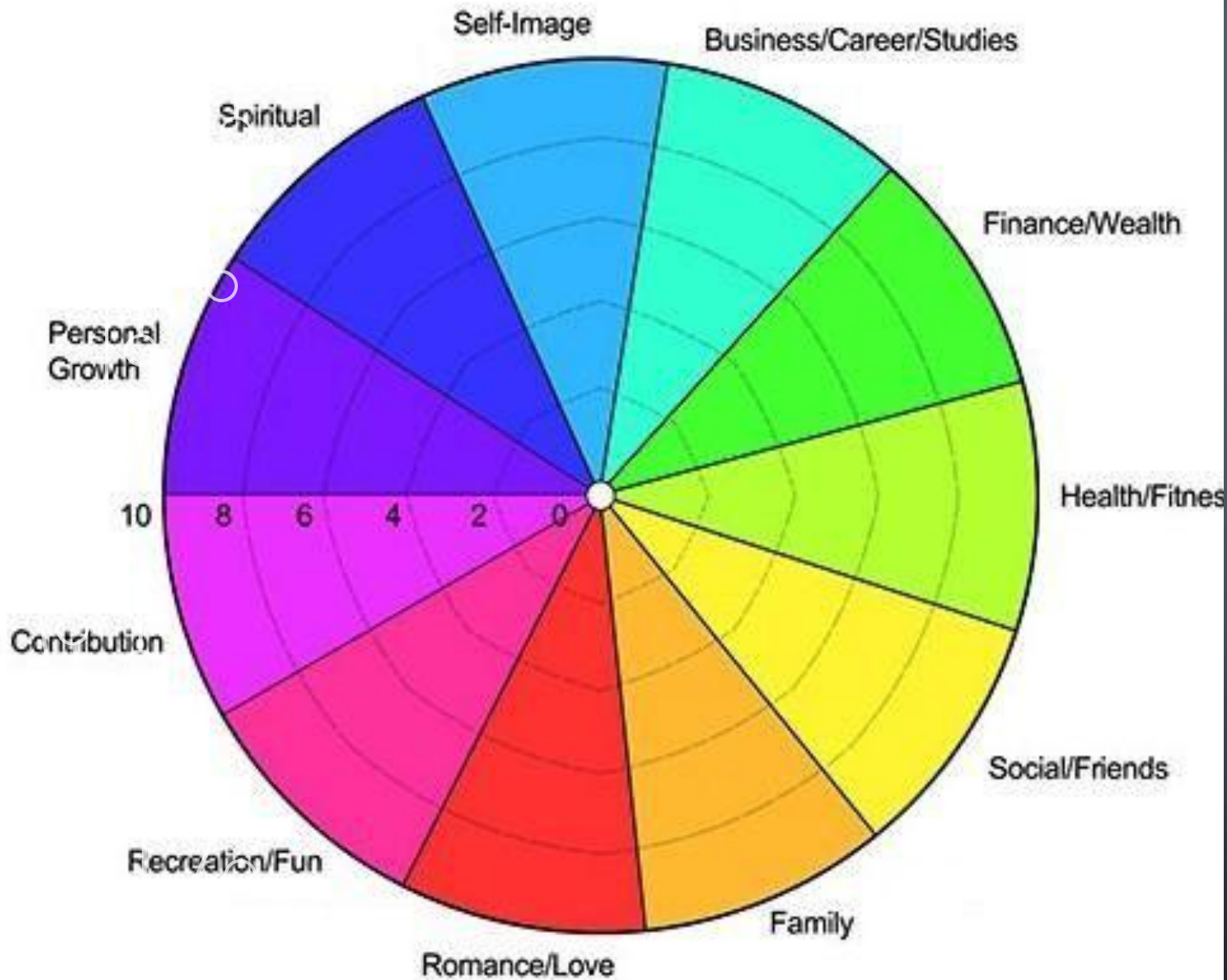
A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

Not just the tip of the iceberg...

“What purpose does your addiction serve for you?”

Healthy coping for:

- Stress
- Negative emotions
- Trauma



A USEFUL TOOL: LIFE WHEEL

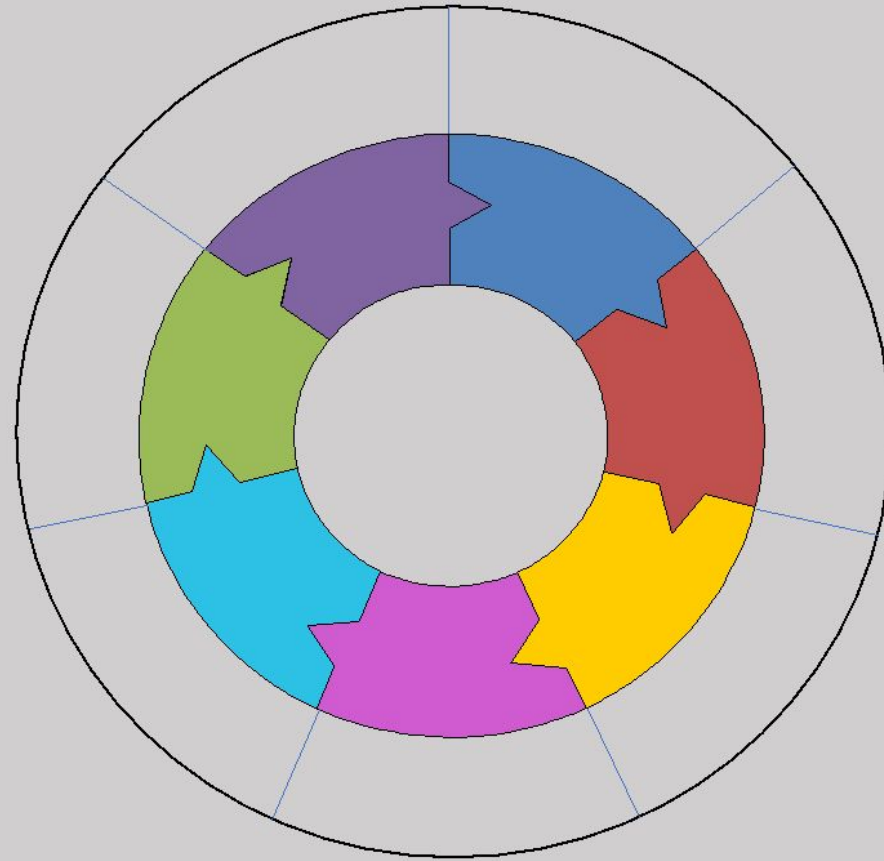
- Goalsetting
- Routine
- time management
- a sense of empowerment and mastery
- **Connecting**



Taking back control

= Sheehan: Social, Home Responsibilities and Work – weekly scaling

RESTEPP HOLISTIC INTERVENTION MODEL



THANK YOU!

