Introduction to Alcohol and Substance Abuse
Mark Dombeck, PH.D.

Since the beginning of human history and before, people have found ways to alter their bodies and their consciousness by taking substances such as herbs, alcohol, and drugs. Out of this practice has sprung many important contributions to science and culture, prominent among them being the development of modern medicine and the medical profession and the making of fine wines and liquors. Some religions have found uses for mind-altering drugs as a way to aid communion with the divine principle. For all the positives that mind and body altering substances have brought us, one fact is clear. There have always been people who were unable to restrict their use of mind and body altering substances to culturally prescribed limits, and who have fallen into the trap we know today as addiction.

Addiction usually does not happen overnight. Rather, people who become addicted to drugs (such as alcohol, cocaine, heroin, marijuana, etc.) are gradually introduced and desensitized to them over a period of time. They may initially enjoy the use of drugs in a recreational sort of way. For instance, someone might get into the habit of having a beer or some wine after work as a way of releasing the days' stresses. Someone else may use marijuana on an occasional basis as a way to share special time with friends or as an aid to appreciating food, music, or sex. Another person may start using cocaine as a way of staying up late at night to study for exams.

Some people are able to keep using drugs on an occasional basis. Many other people are not so lucky. For these unlucky others, their use of drugs begins (gradually in some cases, abruptly in others) to increase, and the amount of attention they spend thinking about getting high, purchasing drugs, preparing drugs and taking drugs increases until it becomes the center of their lives. Other responsibilities - work, friends and family, and community - fall by the wayside. As their consumption of drugs rises, users may become physically dependent on their drug to the extent that if they do not take it on a particular day, they get sick. As dependence increases, tolerance to the drugs increases as well - meaning that it takes more and more of the drug to get the same 'high' or 'buzz' effect. As most drugs (with the exception of alcohol) are illegal, they may become increasingly involved in criminal activities (buying drugs is a criminal activity, as is driving while intoxicated). If the process continues long enough, it may become impossible for the addict to hold a job - they may lose their relationships, their income and their marriages. They may resort to criminal activity (such as robbery, prostitution and drug dealing) in order to gain continuing access to their drugs. They may also kill or injure other people (through driving and firearm accidents) while intoxicated, and may get and pass along to others infectious diseases (like AIDS and Hepatitis). Ultimately, they may end up killing themselves (through suicide, malnutrition, overdose, or drug related physical degeneration and disease). A grim picture that is all the more tragic because no one who starts out experimenting with a drug ever really believes that they would ever experience any of these awful things.
Recently Hired Staff

Shana Wilson
Mental Health Worker
Pineview

Mary Catherine Turner
Child Therapist
Brewton City Schools

Jamie Leigh Murphy
Children’s Case Manager
Evergreen

Donna Bibbens
Mental Health Worker
Pineview

Welcome to Southwest

The Mission of Southwest Alabama Behavioral Health Care Systems is to promote and provide through respectful, ethical, and resourceful actions…

- Quality behavioral health care that is responsive, accessible and supports and encourages independence and recovery.

- A fulfilling work environment for employees.

- A spirit of shared responsibility with our community.
Recent Gung Ho Recipients

December
- Laramie McCrory
- Katrina Coley

January
- Ruby Bridges

February
- Jenny Corvin
- Wanda Robinson
- Cecelia Pogue
- Janice Jackson
- Dave Durden
- LeBarron Dortch
- Erick Bailey
- Stephanie Brown
- Tim Huie

March
- Rose Cato
- Donna Bibbens
- Darlene Simpson
- Anna Steele
- Wendy Howell

Gung Ho Spirit

Spirit of the Squirrel
- Work has to be understood as important.
- It has to lead to a well-understood and shared goal.
- Values have to guide all plans, decisions, and actions.

Way of the Beaver
- Goals are for the future. Values are now. Goals are set. Values are lived. Goals change. Values are rocks you can count on. Goals get people going. Values sustain the effort.
- Values become real only when you demonstrate them in the way you act and the way you insist others behave.
- In a Gung Ho organization, values are the real boss.

Gift of the Goose
- Active or passive, congratulations must be TRUE.
- Congratulations are affirmations that who people are and what they do matter, and that they are making a valuable contribution toward achieving the shared mission.
- Worthwhile work and being in control of achieving the goal—that’s a mission.
- Cheering each other on brings enthusiasm to work.
I Got This

Instant communication is a wonderful and terrible thing to have. It’s wonderful to be able to instantly communicate with someone WHEN NECESSARY … and it’s terrible when you are working on something and CONSTANTLY BEING INTERRUPTED with instant messages, emails, tweets, texts, or calls. The dictionary defines a DISTRACTION as … something that makes it difficult to think or pay attention to. Some synonyms for distraction would be interruption, disturbance, interference, or hindrance. Distractions will divert or sidetrack your train-of-thought and definitely KILL your ability to FOCUS.

Barnum & Bailey once stated, “When a person’s undivided attention is centered on one object, their mind will constantly be suggesting improvements of value, which would escape them if their brain was occupied by a dozen different subjects at once.” Communication technologies are causing our brains to be constant switching tasks, thus hindering any power we get from focusing on a single task. Epictetus, the ancient Greek philosopher said, “When we blather about trivial things, we ourselves become trivial, for our attention gets taken up with trivialities.”

When your focus is scattered, your effectiveness is diminished. I don’t want my neurosurgeon checking his iPhone during my operation, or my dentist checking the latest tweets when he has a drill in my mouth. I really want their full attention on the task at hand. Well, I feel the same thing holds true in whatever we are doing if we plan on being successful. Just last week I watched a person checking their messages as the President of their company was speaking at their annual conference. They were about 10 feet apart and the man was actually checking his messages; I wonder if his boss made a mental note of that? (I know I would have) I guess what his boss was saying wasn’t really that important. I hear the phrase all the time, “I’m multi-tasking” and just as soon as I hear it, I’m thinking … Nah, they’re not listening.

So, what’s the answer to this dilemma of having to deal with all this “INSTANT COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY?” When you're working on a task, do everything you can to say focused. I would suggest you turn off your email notifications, IM’s and Twitter alert sounds when working on anything important. Set a time to check messages and social media along with processing your emails and phone calls in batches, not as they come in. When you are in a meeting, have EVERYONE turn off any cellular device. Tell them they will be given a time to follow-up on any messages … but you now require and need their FULL UNDIVIDED,UNDISTRACTED, ATTENTION.

English writer and historian Thomas Fuller put it in very simple terms when he said, “If you run after two rabbits, you will catch neither.” It’s hard not to get caught up in the flow of things, quickly switching between tasks. Everything may seem important, but it’s not. Don’t let other people run your day … because you are … if you stop what you are doing to check their message; you just allowed them to derail YOUR train-of-thought, YOUR focus, YOUR effectiveness. If you want to keep your train on the tracks and reach your destination, meet your goals, have a successful day, and also accomplish your tasks faster … then start managing your technology.

Communication Technology is a tool that can either assist you or slow you down ...THE CHOICE IS YOURS...
As a child, I always heard the saying, “April showers bring May flowers”, but after taking a closer look into the happenings of April, I found out that it’s known for more than just having “rainy” days. Several historic events took place in the month of April. Listed below are just a few of the events; see if you remember any of these from your history class:

- Start of the Civil War—April 12, 1861
- Abraham Lincoln Shot—April 14, 1865
- San Francisco Earthquake—April 18, 1906
- Titanic Ship Sinks—April 15, 1912
- Failed Bay of Pigs Invasion—April 20, 1961
- Martin Luther King Jr. Assassinated—April 4, 1968
- Start of Bosnian War—April 4, 1992
- Oklahoma City Bombing—April 19, 1995
- Columbine—April 20, 1999

One of the events mentioned above wasn't familiar to me and that was the “Failed Bay of Pigs Invasion”. I had never heard of this historical event but found it very interesting. According to the online JFK Library, the purpose of the invasion was to overthrow Castro’s communist government by launching a surprise attack. The plan eventually became knowledge among the Cuban exiles in Miami which led to Castro finding out. On April 17, 1961, the Cuban-exile invasion force, landed at the beaches along the Bay of Pigs and immediately came under heavy fire by the Cubans. Almost 1,200 members of Brigade 2056 surrendered and more than 100 were killed. The brigade prisoners remained in captivity for 20 months until Castro eventually exchanged the prisoners for $53 million worth of baby food and medicine (The Bay of Pigs, n.d.).

My name is Elizabeth Ann Bailey and I live south of Frisco City with my granddaughter, Raylynn who is 9 years old. I am very honored to have been chosen Employee of the Month for April. I am an active member of the Frisco City United Methodist Church where I serve on several committees and sing in the church choir. My husband and I traveled extensively in our younger days and I worked at a variety of jobs including selling furniture, selling real estate and construction. It was quite an adventure and I loved traveling and meeting other people and seeing the country. We came home in 2003 and started working for Southwest in June, 2004. I have enjoyed my time at Southwest and feel blessed to have worked with such a good company that’s goal is to help people. I have made some real friends in the last 10 years and will miss you all. My last day of work is 5/28/14 as I am retiring to spend more time with my granddaughter and do some traveling. May God bless Southwest and its employees as they strive to be the best they can be.

Thank you Ms. Ann for all of your hard work and dedication to Southwest!!!

Did you hear the news? LaTonya Burroughs is having a baby boy! A baby shower will be held on May 20th @ 12 p.m. hosted by Brewton Outpatient.

A Retirement Party honoring Mr. Kelly was held on April 9th @ 12 p.m. at Brewton Outpatient.

Our very own, Ms. Ann will be retiring from Southwest on May 28, 2014.