

A NEXUS CONNECTION BETWEEN ADDICTION AND REALITY

BY GLADYS CHENTULO.

In a world of addiction where victims have fallen prey to being irrational, their minds have been held captive, and the body craves pleasure despite knowing that it will eventually lead to despair. Many people have travelled this path, driven by dopamine's promise of pleasure and control, whether they are victims of addictions such as substance, sex, internet, gambling, dependency, or any other kind of addiction.

According to Dr. Gabon Mate, "Addiction is a compulsive repetition of an activity or substance, despite harmful consequences." It is mostly caused by the desire to escape from pain, trauma, or even the challenges of everyday life can lead individuals down the treacherous path of dependency as addiction begins with hope that something "out there" can instantly fill up the emptiness inside. Addiction can keep victims bound by its chain and one can only escape when they confront their struggles, take responsibility and seek help to break through.

The relationship between mental health and addiction must be understood to provide effective treatment, support and compassion to those who suffer from its grasp. Addiction is linked to feelings like depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder as it rarely exists in isolation. Addiction can cause profound changes in the structure and function of the brain's rewarding system, control, and motivation and additionally disrupt the delicate balance of neurotransmitters-chemical messengers crucial for emotional well-being leading to heightened states of anxiety, depression or mania.

The widespread stigma associated with addiction is one of the biggest challenges facing those who struggle with it as addiction is frequently seen by society as a character flaw or a lack of willpower, which reinforces guilt and blame resulting in people becoming more alone, imprisoned and unable to ask for assistance. Hence it is critical that stigma attached to addiction is eliminated and addiction is acknowledged as a disease that affects people's physical, emotional and mental health.

As a friend, family member, or concerned individual, your support and understanding can make a profound difference in someone's journey towards healing. Understand that addiction is a chronic illness, not a moral failing so that you approach the individual with empathy and compassion rather than judgement

or stigma. Encourage the individual to seek professional help while offering practical assistance, for example offering your company while they have therapy sessions. But most of all educate yourself and create a supportive environment.

Society needs to adopt a compassionate and understanding approach to addiction. By promoting empathy, awareness and effective interventions, we can strive to reduce the stigma surrounding addiction, provide better support for those affected, and ultimately improve public health outcomes.