Biopsychosocial Model

A Theory of Addiction
What is it?

- It’s a model which posits that there is not only an inherited and an induced biological component to addictive disorders but also psychological-behavioural and social-cultural factors that have a role in the cause, course, and outcome of substance dependence.

- Looks at genetic bases and disease processes, seeks to modify attitudes and defenses, and emphasizes the importance of social support and family involvement.
Biopsychosocial Model of Addiction
How it works

- This model assumes that biological, psychological and social factors contribute to addiction.

- Each element contributes but it’s the sum of them all which explains the addiction.

- It takes a holistic view of the person in that it views biological aspects impacting psychological aspects impacting social aspects of the individual in an ongoing, interactive manner.
Biological Factors

- Genetic vulnerability (accounts for 40-60%).
- Birth.
- Adoption.
- Diet and nutrition.
- Mental disorders.
- Disease and illness or other medical disorder.
- Withdrawals and cravings.
Biological Factors

- Biochemical factors.
- Respiratory problems like asthma.
- Fitting/epilepsy.
- D.V.T.
- Blood Borne Viruses (HIV, hepatitis).
- Reinforcing effects of drugs
Biological interventions.

- Medical professionals (doctors, nurses, psychiatrists).
- Medication with substitutes (methadone, subutex) or antagonists (naltrexone, antabuse).
- Mental health system (dual diagnosis, sectioning).
- Aversion therapy.
- Detoxification.
- Nutritionists.
- Acupuncture or other alternative forms of medicine.
Psychological factors

- Childhood influences.
- Attachment.
- Anxiety (fears, cognitive distortions).
- Depression.
- Defence mechanisms (rationalization, denial, projection, etc).
- Psychosis.
- Self awareness.
Psychological interventions

- Counselling.
- Self help groups (AA, NA).
- Humanistic approaches.
- Motivational interviewing.
- Contingency management.
- Cognitive behavioural therapy.
- Psychodynamic therapy.
Psychological interventions

- Relapse prevention.
- Gestalt.
- Family therapy.
- Brief interventions (psycho-educational and motivational techniques).
- Meditation.
- Psychodrama.
Social Factors

- Upbringing/parenting.
- Education.
- Housing
- Urban/rural areas.
- Employment.
- Social and cultural norms.
- Behaviour should be considered in the context from which the person comes.
Social Factors

- Ethnic background.
- Socioeconomic status.
- Law.
- Political situation.
- Social network characteristics.
- Religion.
- Media.
- Environmental factors such as weather or drought.
Social Interventions.

- Social workers.
- Police and other law enforcement.
- Penal system (courts, prison, probation).
- Education system.
- Welfare state (housing, homelessness).
- Employment advisors (Jobcentre).
- Pastoral care.
- Peer/community support.
Advantages

- It accounts for all the complicating, contributing factors of addiction.
- The model encourages a complex yet individualized understanding of the causes of addiction.
- It encourages a broader treatment perspective.
- Treatment may involve addressing more than one problem at a time.
Advantages

- Changes at one level influence the other levels, therefore interventions at one level also influence other levels.
- It is comprehensive.
- It is the model most widely endorsed by treatment researchers because it can most adequately explain the intricate nature of addiction.
Disadvantages

- Emphasis may be placed on one aspect of the model without a solid integration of the three aspects.
- It is difficult to provide interventions on all three aspects at the same time.
- Some factors, such as risk and protective factors, cannot be changed.
- Its eclectic freedom has at times been accused of leading to anarchic thinking.