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Addiction and Hate: Two Competing Interests

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Perspective

In the last 10 years, the American public has witnessed an uptick in hate that has exacerbated discourse professionally and personally. From political leaders to family conversations, the amount of hate towards someone with a different opinion seeps into the consciousness of like-minded people. As with addiction, hate is an inner consequential innate action that some are unable to control. In this article, I parallel the changing dynamics that play on the inner workings of behavior attitudes charged by hate that manifest in trying to understand addictive behavior with competing interests playing for the same subconscious that permeates through aggression and hostility.

Typically, friends are individuals we have freely chosen through childhood or as an adult to associate with socially. Even if you have a friend who is not on the same wavelength, reasons why you still associate with that person can sometimes be perplexing. With any form of addiction, it can cause a consumption in excess that draws some to conclude you are unable to manage the behavior. Without potential consequences, the psyche gets gratification from certain types of actions (i.e., food, drugs, or any other opportunity to indulge in excess). The same sentiments can be attributed to someone who has a hatred towards others or something. Over the last two decades, we have seen a rise in hate in the United States [1]. From politics to dinner table conversations, we are all guilty of indulging in behaviors that are considered addictive, which continue to be pervasive throughout the country.

Children will often explore their surroundings and touch unfamiliar objects. As children get older, their likes and dislikes become apparent and exacerbated based on their tolerance levels. Where it gets tricky is the role parents play in shaping a child's

mind and how it can turn into a form of hate. Teaching hate at an early age can impact a child's perception of others. Therefore, it is harder as years pass for someone's perception to change due to innate traits taught during the formative years of life. For example, children who grow up in an environment where there has been little to no association with individuals of different races are likely to develop a negative connotation of people of the opposite race [2]. Although it may not be evident, parents shape their children's consciousness and studies show that addiction and hatred are formed early on in life after the formative years [3].

When someone is suffering from addiction, it is because they are seeking some form of reinforcement from an object, person, or purpose that can only be fulfilled by relying on something else [4]. Individuals with addictive behaviors seek reinforcement from sources beyond their control; reliance becomes unsustainable without interventions, and a lack of control is not within reach. One way to get people to try and combat their addiction is by offering some type of reward to help them refrain from the urge [5]. Where addiction and hate hold a competing interest lies in the objective of trying to persuade others of actions taken under the guise of inhibited motivation that's only compelling for self-interest. When something goes wrong, the first thought in mind is to divert attention from ourselves and blame others. In the last 15 years, the FBI has reported to Congress about the growing trend of hate and fear of foreigners and others. However, what some fail to realize is the condition that has permeated and cultivated a growing trend that continues to look like it will become unsustainable. Post September 11, 2001, media personalities have discovered a way to draw cultlike followings to channel their message. As blaming others is the ultimate goal of addictive behavior and hate, reinforcing their

behaviors comes at a cost to anyone listening to their message.

The addiction to the breaking news on a TV screen can trigger reactions from friends, family, and even the most secluded. There are two contending interests that trickle into the cache of individuals who believe they are aggrieved by others, and they have one thing in common: addiction and hate. For one to have hatred towards someone or a group of people, there must be a belief taught either at an early age or through some traumatic event. For example, if you were robbed on two separate occasions by someone of the same group, the likelihood that you would develop a distrust of members of that group is high [6]. Where addiction and hate collide ties to the aggressive behavior by both groups when something is perceived as being taken away. The same is said for individuals who have hate or aggression towards people who are not similar.

When two competing interests hold the same to be true, you must question overall motives in disguise. Meaning, hate and addiction have collided in the last 20 years with dueling outcomes and no clear resolution in sight because of interests that garner monetary gains. From terrorists storming the capital on January 6, 2021, to opioids that have swept the suburbs, behaviors have run amuck in this country [7]. When crack hit urban areas in the early 1980s, addiction was seen as a city problem. However, fast-forward 25 years later, and addictive opioid behavior has taken on a new face, which has caused public health officials to clamor for solutions.

You are probably asking yourself what is the solution to help combat hate and addiction. Honestly, you are not going to like the answer. Time, time, and more time. When addictive patients are desensitized, their thresholds for tolerance start to decline [8]. The gradual decline for a sensation happens over time once someone reaches their tolerance level [9]. It is the same for people with xenophobic attitudes towards others. When people are exposed to others, they are not familiar with for a long period of time, their dislike towards a group tends to dissipate if given an opportunity to keep working and associating with them.

As public health officials look to solve the opioid crisis and other forms of addiction, hate groups have increased in the U.S. to an astronomical level [10]. Since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the homeland, hate groups have flourished with the belief that foreigners or outsiders are stains on the fabric

of this country. Without substantial or valid proof, individuals are profiting off home-grown hate and those with addictive tendencies. To help ensure we are not headed down a path of unrest, we can offer patience and time to help those suffering from addiction and hate. Not every issue will be solved in an expedited manner or grandiose fashion. Individuals with hate and addiction hold similar wants and needs that require appropriate actions with special care to ensure they can see there is a light at the end of the tunnel [11].

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Conflict of Interest

Author declare no conflict of interest.

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