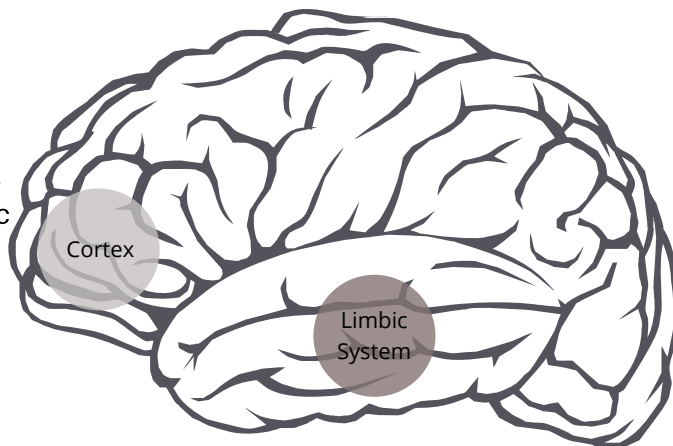


How Addiction Hijacks the Brain



Addiction and the Brain

There are two main parts of the brain affected by drug use: the limbic system and the cortex. The limbic system, located deep within the brain, is responsible for our basic survival instincts. The cortex is where decision making and impulse control live.

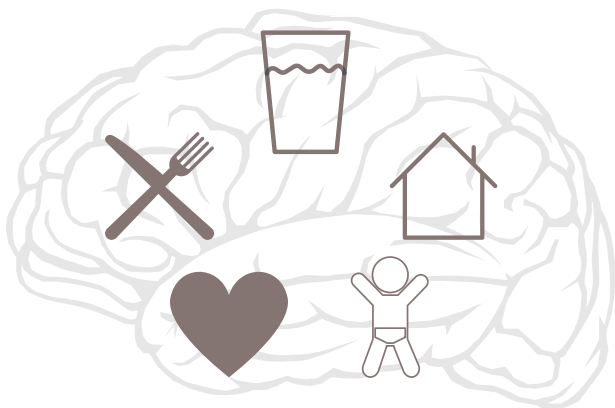


Alcohol and Drug Use

Alcohol and drug use can affect these important areas of the brain.

Our Survival Hardwiring

The limbic system controls our survival instincts.



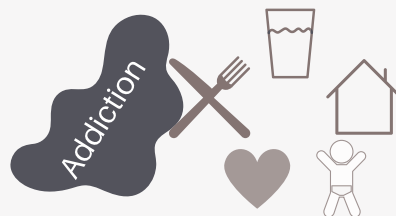
When you do essential things to stay alive, like eat, drink, find shelter, have sex, or care for your young, your brain reinforces behaviors that cause the release of dopamine from this region.

Dopamine is the the feel-good neurotransmitter responsible for feelings of pleasure and satisfaction.

Hardwiring Hijacked

When drugs or alcohol use is repeated, that substance can hijack the survival hardwiring in the brain. This hijacker changes the brain and weakens this system to make it believe that the primary need for survival is the drug.

In hijacking the brain, it can usurp those primary motivations: food, water, shelter, sex and protecting our young.



And the hijacker needs more and more of the substance to activate the same level of reward or feeling of pleasure, causing the brain tissue to become increasingly damaged with continued drug use.

