


## Systems Thinking & Relapse Prevention


vision



The successful person has the habit of doing things failures don't like to do, they don't like doing them either necessarily. But their disliking is subordinated to the strength of their purpose.

*E.M. Gray*


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## Systems Approach

- Is a way of thinking about complex problems and a methodology for developing optimal solutions to those problems.
- Involves a particular kind of thinking – often referred to as Systems Thinking


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## Systems Thinking

- Special kind of thinking that utilizes numerous tools to gain powerful insights into the nature of problems.
- Does this by examining the system in which a problem occurs, identifying core parts of the system, and how they work together to manifest the attributes of the system.

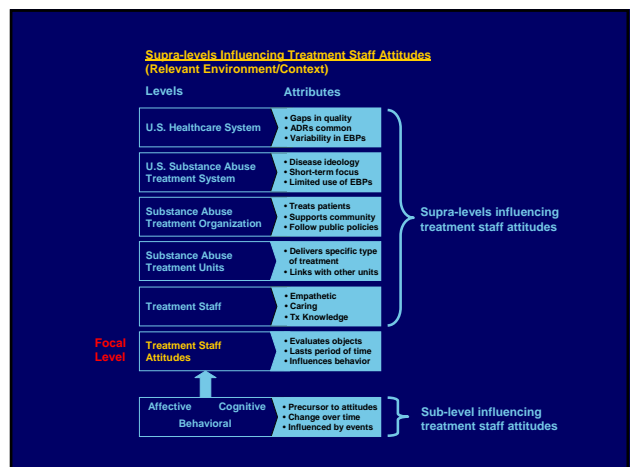
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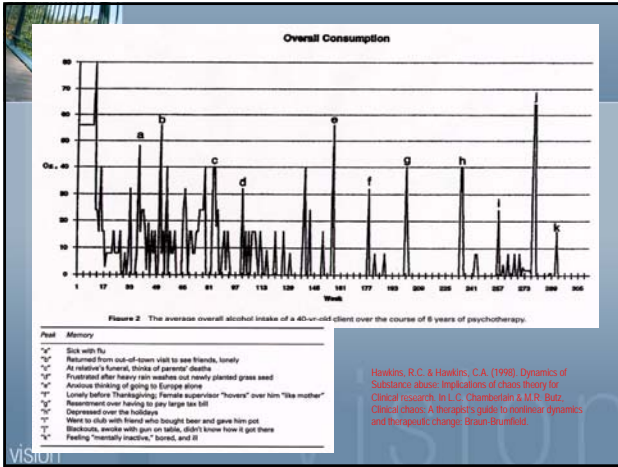


## What is a System?

- As unit with certain attributes perceived relative to its external environment, and the unit contains within it subunits that operate together to manifest the perceived attributes of the unit (Lendaris)
- Observer-dependent
- Multiple perspectives

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## Cusp Catastrophe

**FEATURES**

- Divergence
- Bimodality
- Unpredictability
- Inaccessibility
- Sudden jumps ("crosses")
- Hysteresis

**CUSP CATASTROPHE**  
Either - Or - Not

NEUTRAL SPACE

"YES" WING

DOUBLE BIND SPACE

"NO" WING

## Virtual crack house reveals cues

- Barbara Rothbaum built a virtual crack house to study cues that trigger drug use in addicts
- Dangerous and unethical to expose addicts to real cues
- Use virtual reality headgear – enter crack house and are exposed to variety of cues
- Rate urges – examine brain changes
- Test medications and treatment interventions

## Learned Optimism

**LEARNED OPTIMISM**  
HOW TO CHANGE YOUR MIND AND YOUR LIFE

MARTIN E.P. SELIGMAN, PH.D.

## Optimism

- Optimistic Explanatory style:** habitual belief that the causes of bad events are temporary, are not one's own fault, and are confined to present circumstances.
- Three qualities:
  - Permanence** – bad events long-lasting
  - Pervasiveness** – failure in one area leads to failure in other areas
  - Personalization** – bad events are one's own fault rather than due to circumstances

## Overcoming Pessimism

- Distraction
- Disputation – scientifically question the accuracy of pessimistic beliefs
- Distancing – realize negative thoughts can be unfounded
- Evidence
- Alternatives
- Decatastrophizing – what if the negative belief is correct? Not the end of the world