

Nutrition & Recovery

Nourishing the Brain — Participant Handout

Workshop Reference Guide

Why Nutrition Matters in Recovery

Everything we put in our bodies affects how we feel. Recovery is about healing the whole person — mind, body, and spirit.

What Substances Do to the Body

- Strip the body of vitamins & minerals
- Damage the gut & reduce nutrient absorption
- Disrupt appetite & blood sugar
- Cause inflammation in the body
- Alter brain chemicals like serotonin & dopamine
- Lead to depression, anxiety, poor sleep & foggy thinking

How We Educate Our Clients

Common Nutrient Deficiencies by Substance

Substance	Common Deficiencies	Possible Mental Health Effects
Alcohol	Thiamine (B1), Folate (B9), B6, B12, Magnesium, Zinc, Vitamin D	Depression, Anxiety, Confusion, Irritability, Memory Problems
Opioids	Magnesium, Zinc, Vitamin D, Iron, B Vitamins	Fatigue, Low Mood, Muscle Aches
Methamphetamine	Protein, B Vitamins, Vitamin C, Zinc, Magnesium	Depression, Cognitive Impairment, Fatigue
Cocaine	B Vitamins, Vitamin C, Magnesium	Mood Instability, Anxiety
Cannabis	Often poor dietary intake rather than specific deficiencies	Fatigue, Poor Concentration

Scope of Practice

What We CAN Do

- Encourage clients to explore how their eating affects the way they feel
- Provide education about the impact of substances on physical and mental health
- Share general information about nutrient-rich foods and healthy lifestyle habits

What We Need to Avoid

- Recommending or prescribing a specific "diet"
- Recommending or prescribing supplements
- Labeling foods as "good" or "bad"
- Always refer clients to their medical provider for supplements or diet plans

Remember

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You are not a dietitian. Your role is to educate, encourage, and refer — not to prescribe.

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