

Personality characteristics of illicit drug users

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The number of illicit drug users has been increasing, and they therefore become ever more often clients of public institutions. Staff who comes in contact with addicts frequently expresses negative attitudes towards them, sometimes even overtly refusing to work with them. The causes for that can be attributed to prejudices, stereotypes, ignorance of the nature of drug dependence and the difficulties with which drug users are confronted; on the other hand, staff may actually have had specific negative experiences with such clients. This contribution attempts to present the characteristics of drug dependence, the most common personality characteristics of drug users and some of the contemporary, in particular psychoanalytic explanations of the beginning of drug addiction. It is only by sufficient knowledge of drug dependence and good qualification for work with persons with this kind of difficulties that work with them will be better and less stressful, no matter whether it concerns the area of health services, the school system, social work, the judiciary or the police.

Keywords: drugs, drug dependence, personality, personality characteristics, behaviour disorders, developmental psychoanalytical theory

UDC: 178.8-056.8, 159.23