




Addiction:

Is it a choice or a disease?

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Criteria

- Affects how an organ functions
 - Has symptoms
 - Has an etiology
 - Is predictable
 - Is chronic
 - Is progressive
 - Is recurring
 - There is treatment
- 

“It’s a choice. Why don’t they just stop?”

One of the most stigmatizing sentences related to substance use disorder is, “Why don’t you just stop?”





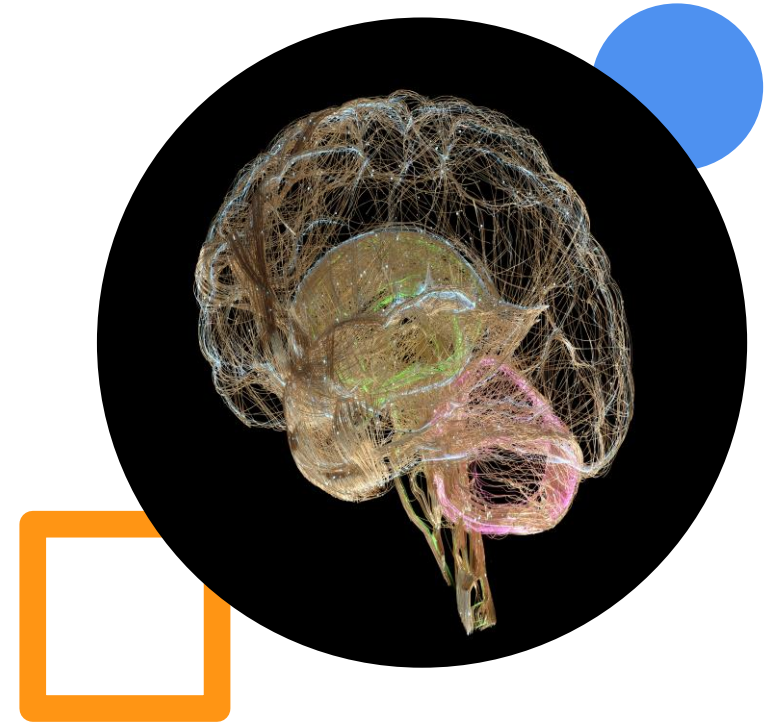
Substance Use Disorder

SUD is a diagnosable illness according
to DSM5 criteria.

THE BRAIN:

SUD affects arguably the most powerful organ in the human body, the brain.

SUD alters the brain's reward system.



Symptoms of SUD

1

Cravings, urges and preoccupation to use.

2

Wanting to cut down or stop but being unable to do so and needing more and more to get the desired effect.

3

Continuing to use despite negative consequences, putting oneself in dangerous situations to use, and using instead of taking care of responsibilities.

4

Using more, longer, or more often than intended or spending increasingly more time acquiring, engaging in, or recovering from the use of substances.

5

Continuing to use even though you know that you have a problem and developing withdrawal symptoms.

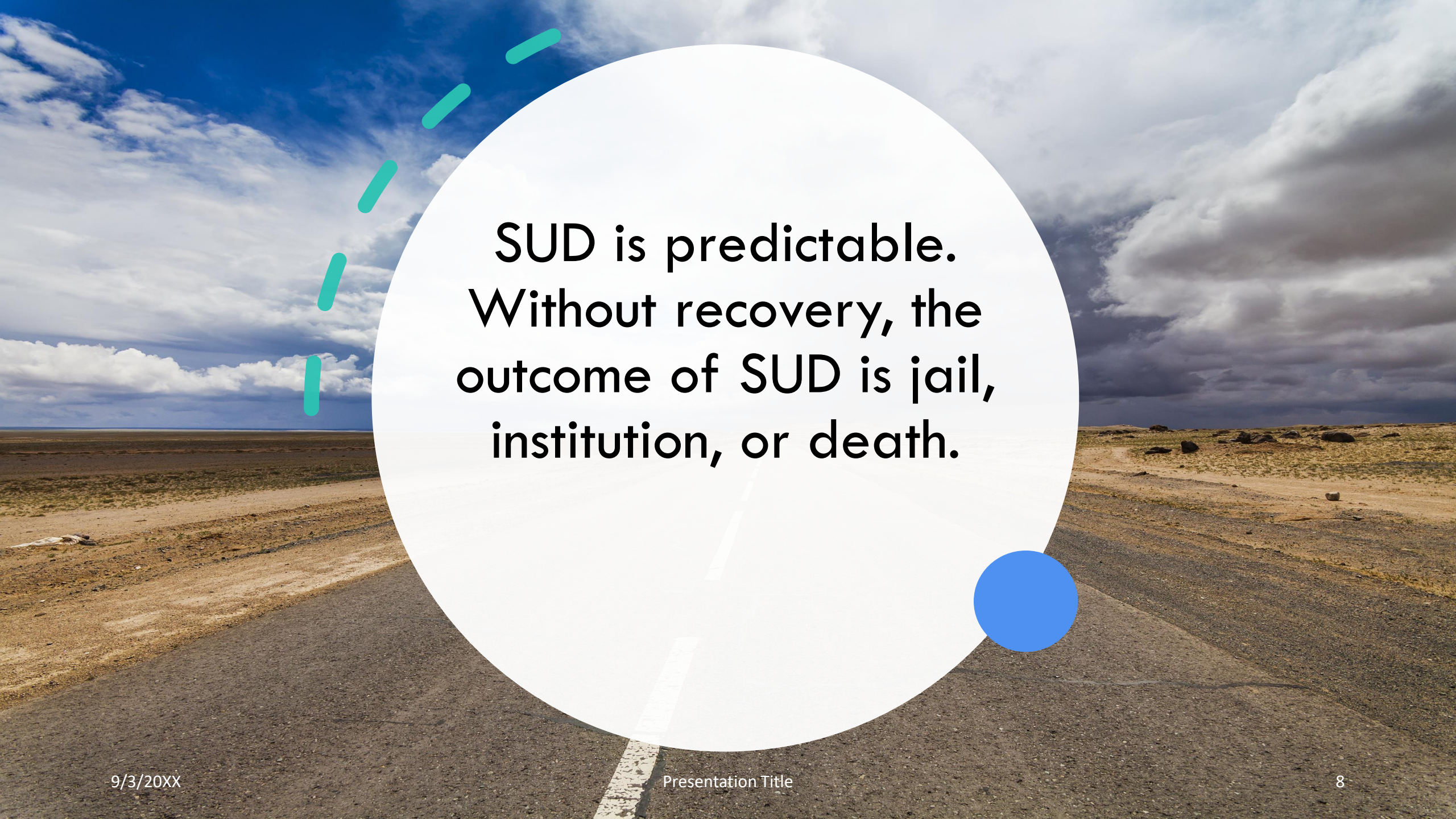
Etiology

Risk factors that can lead to SUD

- Genetics
- Age of first use
- Trauma
- Environment
- Brain & Body

Protective factors that can prevent SUD

- Support system
- Positive relationships
- Self Esteem
- Self Control
- Resilience
- Setting goals
- Connection to Community



**SUD is predictable.
Without recovery, the
outcome of SUD is jail,
institution, or death.**

Chronic, Progressive, and Recurring:

Chronic

- There is no magic cure for SUD.
- SUD is long-lasting.

Progressive

- Untreated SUD results in using larger quantities and using more often in order to achieve the same result over time.
- The consequences and negative effects of an untreated SUD continue to become more severe over time.

Recurring

- Recurrence of use can happen during any stage of treatment and recovery.



TREATMENT

SUD is an illness for which there is treatment.

There are many different types of treatment and many different pathways to recovery.

Substance Use Disorder is a disease.

SUD meets all criteria necessary to classify it as a disease.

Although SUD may begin with a poor decision, it is a diagnosable disease for which there is **TREATMENT**.

Individuals in recovery from a substance use disorder have the potential to live a successful and fulfilling life with little to no negative effects provided they are dedicated to their treatment program and respective pathway to recovery.





THE END

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