

# INTERVENTION WEBINAR

**Should Alcoholism and Addiction  
Be Treated as a Mental Health  
Disorder?**

 Starting Soon



**Mike Loverde, MHS, CIP**

President & Founder,  
Family First Intervention

Mike has an extensive history of helping families treat addiction. He is an authority in addiction treatment and remains dedicated to providing hands-on expertise at our clinic.

# Should Alcoholism and Addiction Be Treated as a Mental Health Disorder?

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# The Central Question

- Addiction is classified clinically
  - Families experience it behaviorally
  - Treatment systems manage it diagnostically
  - Recovery requires **more than a label**
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# The Short Answer

- Yes, addiction can be treated as a mental health disorder
  - But it should not be reduced to a diagnosis
  - Classification should create access to care
  - It should not remove accountability
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# Why the Label Matters



- Labels shape expectations
  - Labels influence family response
  - Labels affect insurance and treatment access
  - Labels can either clarify or excuse behavior
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# Substance Use Disorder in the DSM

- Alcohol and drug addiction fall under substance use disorders
  - DSM classification legitimizes treatment
  - It moves the issue beyond moral judgment
  - It does not fully explain cause, behavior, or recovery
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# The Risk of Over-Identification

- “I have a disorder” can become “I am a victim”
  - Victimhood can weaken ownership
  - Families may confuse compassion with tolerance
  - Diagnosis should never excuse ongoing destruction
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# Disease Model: Value and Limitations



- Recognizes progression, tolerance, withdrawal, and loss of control
  - Supports medical treatment and insurance coverage
  - Can unintentionally imply permanence and helplessness
  - The problem is often the message, not the model itself
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# Mental Health Model: Value and Limitations

- Helps identify co-occurring symptoms
  - Supports integrated behavioral health care
  - Can lead to premature diagnosis
  - Can overemphasize medication before stabilization
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# Addiction and Mental Health Overlap



- Substance use can mimic mental illness
  - Depression, anxiety, paranoia, mania, and psychosis may be substance-induced
  - Active use complicates diagnosis
  - Stabilization must come before certainty
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# Diagnosis Requires Timing



- Intoxication distorts presentation
  - Withdrawal distorts presentation
  - Early recovery distorts presentation
  - Accurate diagnosis requires observation, abstinence, and context
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# Behavior Matters



- A diagnosis explains part of the picture
  - It does not erase impact
  - Families are harmed by behavior, not labels
  - Recovery requires behavioral change
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# The Family System



- Families often respond from fear and anxiety
  - Enabling can look like compassion
  - Control becomes an illusion
  - Family recovery changes the environment
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# A Balanced Position



- Treat addiction as clinically serious
  - Use diagnosis to access care
  - Avoid labels that create helplessness
  - Pair compassion with accountability
  - Address the family system, not just the patient
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# Stop Accepting Excuses and Start Getting Help

**Questions? The Floor Is Yours!**

Prefer to talk in private? Get in touch below:

**Call Us:** 1 (888) 291-8514

**Chat with us:** [family-intervention.com](https://family-intervention.com)

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