



Young Adult Nonfiction

**Addiction: The Brain Disease**

Dale Carlson

Hannah Carlson

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Addiction is a scary, grown-up topic. People obsessed with drugs, alcohol, or gambling can lose their jobs, their homes, or even their lives—and even for adults, that’s terrifying. In *Addiction: The Brain Disease*, authors Dale and Hannah Carlson have written about this very serious subject specifically for young people.

The authors first define addiction, and include not only substance abuse, but also behavioral addictions such as shopping, binge eating, and gambling. A particularly interesting chapter addresses the dangers inherent in an exaggerated sense of self-importance and the drive to obtain and defend resources. This drive is a vestige of a time when scarcity was the norm and can make it difficult, in modern times, to understand the concept of “enough.” A need for more than enough leads to addiction.

A number of self-assessment tools are provided for addiction problems and a variety of psychological conditions that can lead to abusive behavior. Short stories illustrate examples of specific behaviors and their consequences. A series of ink drawings, though simple in design, do a marvelous job of capturing the desperation and fear that surrounds addiction. A dictionary of related terms and lists of resources for help and further reading complete the book.

Dale Carlson has written numerous books for young adults, which have received awards from the American Library Association and *ForeWord Reviews*. Hannah Carlson, educated in developmental and counseling psychology, has written two previous books. In *Addiction*, the two authors share their expertise in a frank and straightforward style. The genetic and chemical aspects of addiction are explained clearly and without condescension. The cultural and social aspects of addiction are discussed with specific consideration for young adults. The authors

write, “The tragedy of addiction begins as an ordinary human hunger for pleasure, an escape from fear and psychological pain, or even a relief from boredom, loneliness, anxiety—it can end, without treatment, only in unimaginable horror.”

Adolescence and young adulthood is a pivotal time in every person’s life—a time when each youth is determining who they will become. This book could be a valuable tool for helping teens make informed, healthy decisions that will lead them to become successful and fulfilled adults.

*Catherine Thureson*