



# Enough Kudzu Already

Reflecting the glow of recovery from Starlight at Tamassee

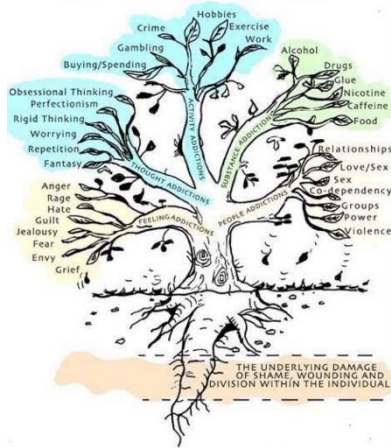
By Jon Holland, CEO of Tamassee DAR School



This stuff just grows and grows and grows and grows! It grows along the roadside overtaking power poles, abandoned homes, and dilapidated cars. It'll race along your backyard fence and consume every flower and shrub in its path. What is this voracious consumer? Kudzu, of course! Native to Asia, this climbing, coiling, and trailing vine has invaded much of North America. Kudzu grows over other plants and trees so quickly it smothers and kills them by blocking the sunlight, and while it is edible, it is considered to be a noxious, harmful weed.

Kudzu is an awful lot like addiction. Everywhere we look, destructive substances and behaviors keep multiplying. They are the substance addictions we readily identify: alcohol, illegal drugs, nicotine, prescription medications, and food. We're also familiar with people driven addictions like codependent relationships, "love" affairs, and various forms sexual brokenness. We can be addicted to feelings like rage and anxiety or thinking patterns like perfectionism and

## THE ADDICTION TREE



obsessive-compulsive tendencies. Then there is the growing list of activity or behavior addictions: gambling, video gaming, shopping and hoarding, over working, crime, and even exercise.

Addiction grows rapidly not only in society but also in individuals' lives. Normally, a person struggling with one addiction has co-occurring addiction issues. Nicotine leads to other drugs. An alcoholic lives in co-dependent relationships. The ragaholic has a secret sex addiction. It just grows and grows and grows. Like kudzu, these addictions smother the light in a person's life and slowly (but sometimes quite suddenly) kill. The more you eat the kudzu of addiction, the more harmful it is.



So how do you get rid of kudzu? You begin by cutting it down to chest height, then look for the main vines. Once you find those, you trace them to the ground and cut them out. Finally, you treat the roots with herbicide. That process sounds a lot like recovery! First, we get abstinent from the "drug" of use. Abstinence clears the way for identifying the main causes of our addictive habits. Then it's time to dig up the roots through 12 Step work, counseling, support groups, spiritual practices and much more. Eventually, we identify the trauma, the survival triggers, the emotional causes of cravings, the thinking and feeling, and what to do about it all. Just like it takes time to get rid of kudzu, addiction isn't addressed overnight. It grows back, and the work must be repeated. But, the ground can be cleared and a beautiful, well-tended garden cultivated in its place.

At Starlight at Tamasee, we believe moms can clear away the kudzu in in their lives and grow their families in vitality and freedom. To learn more about Starlight, visit [www.starlight.tdarschool.org](http://www.starlight.tdarschool.org), or contact us at [starlight@tdarschool.org](mailto:starlight@tdarschool.org) or 864-944-1390. If your church or civic group is interested in a presentation on recovery, contact Jon Holland at [jholland@tdarschool.org](mailto:jholland@tdarschool.org).