Alcohol and drug use can affect these important areas of the brain.

When you do essential things to stay alive, like eat, drink, find shelter, have sex, or care for your young, your brain reinforces behaviors that cause the release of dopamine from this region. Dopamine is the feel-good neurotransmitter responsible for feelings of pleasure and satisfaction.

Our Survival Hardwiring

The limbic system controls our survival instincts. In hijacking the brain, it can usurp those primary motivations: food, water, shelter, sex and protecting our young.

Hardwiring Hijacked

When drugs or alcohol use is repeated, that substance can hijack the survival hardwiring in the brain. This hijacker changes the brain and weakens this system to make it believe that the primary need for survival is the drug.

And the hijacker needs more and more of the substance to activate the same level of reward or feeling of pleasure, causing the brain tissue to become increasingly damaged with continued drug use.