



# Educator Guide: Addiction Lesson

## **Recommended for Grades:**

6<sup>th</sup>

## **Time:**

9 minutes

## **National Health Education Standards:**

This activity aligns with the following National Health Education Standards:

- Standard 1: Use functional health information to support health and well-being of self and others.
- Standard 7: Demonstrate practices and behaviors to support health and well-being of self and others.

For more information about the National Health Education Standards, visit the SHAPE America website: [shapeamerica.org](http://shapeamerica.org).

## **Learning Objectives:**

After completing this lesson students will be able to:

1. Describe how a person can go from using a drug for the first time to being addicted to that drug.
2. Describe at least two ways prescription drugs can be abused.

## **Lesson Description:**

In this lesson students will learn what addiction is and how a person goes from trying a drug to the point of addiction. Prescription drugs, which are highly addictive, will also be discussed.



## Pre and Post-Test Questions:

Use the following questions with your students in any way that you see fit (on paper, using a survey tool, etc.) You may choose to combine questions from various lessons and activities that your students participate in. Correct answer choices are bolded.

1. When someone uses a drug regularly, they end up needing more of the drug to get the same high they experienced the first time. What is this called?
  - a. **Tolerance**
  - b. Withdrawal
  - c. Stress symptoms
  - d. First use
2. Which of the following is NOT considered a way to abuse prescription drugs?
  - a. Taking too much of a prescribed drug
  - b. Taking someone else's prescription drug
  - c. **Taking the prescribed amount of your own prescription drug**
  - d. Crushing a prescription drug and snorting the powder

## Vocabulary:

Use the following list of vocabulary as a reference for yourself or your students as you complete the Addiction Lesson. You may choose to use this list in any way that fits your needs.

- Abuse – to use improperly, or to misuse
- Addiction – a complex disease where a person's body is so dependent on a drug that it is difficult to stop using the drug, and the person will use that drug despite harmful consequences to themselves or others around them
- Brain – the main organ in the nervous system that controls the body's activities by sending and receiving messages to and from different parts of the body
- Cocaine – a drug made from the dried leaves of the coca plant. It is a stimulant that affects the central nervous system, giving users a quick, intense feeling of power and energy.
- Coma – a state of deep unconsciousness where the person cannot respond to voices, sounds or other activities going on around them
- Consequence – the effect or result of something
- Dose – a specific amount of medicine prescribed to be taken at one time
- Drug – a chemical that changes the way a person's body works
- Drug abuse – misuse of illegal or legal drugs
- Heart – the organ in the body responsible for pumping blood to every other part of the body. The heart is part of the circulatory system.

- Heroin – a drug that comes from the dried milk of the opium poppy, which is also used to create painkillers, such as codeine and morphine. Heroin is extremely addictive and easy to overdose on.
- High – a short period of time when a person feels happy, euphoric or carefree after using drugs
- Illegal – something that is against the law
- Judgement – the ability to make a decision based on careful thought or come to a sensible conclusion
- Legal – something that follows the law
- Opiates – types of drugs that are typically used to relieve pain
- Prescription drugs – medications that a doctor prescribes to a person for a particular illness or condition
- Seizure – a sudden surge of electrical activity in the brain that can cause a person's body to shake or jerk uncontrollably. Drugs, along with many other things, can cause a person to have a seizure.
- Tolerance – occurs when a person uses a drug regularly, and they end up needing more of the drug to get the same high they experienced the first time
- Withdrawal symptoms – a wide range of physical or emotional disorders, including irritability, headaches, insomnia, cravings, etc. that occur when a person addicted to a drug stops using the drug

# Addiction Lesson Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Complete this worksheet as you move through the Addiction Lesson.

1. What is tolerance?

2. What is dependence?

3. What is addiction?

4. List three common withdrawal symptoms.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

5. Name two drugs that are so addictive that a person might only use them once or twice before becoming addicted.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

6. What are prescription drugs?

7. List three ways prescription drugs are sometimes abused.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

8. List three negative health effects of abusing prescription drugs.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is the most common result of abusing prescription drugs?

# Addiction Lesson Worksheet Answer Key

1. What is tolerance?  
Tolerance is when the brain and body get used to a drug, and the person needs to take more and more of the drug to get the same high that they did when they first began using the drug.
2. What is dependence?  
Dependence is when a person needs the drug just to feel ok.
3. What is addiction?  
Addiction is a complex disease where a person will use a drug despite harmful consequences to themselves or others around them.
4. List three common withdrawal symptoms.  
Diarrhea, shaking, vomiting, body aches or generally feeling awful
5. Name two drugs that are so addictive that a person might only use them once or twice before becoming addicted.  
Cocaine and heroin
6. What are prescription drugs?  
Prescription drugs are medications that a doctor prescribes to a person for a particular illness or condition.
7. List three ways prescription drugs are sometimes abused.  
Taking a medication that was prescribed to someone else, taking too much of a prescribed drug and crushing the pills or tablets and snorting or injecting the powder
8. List three negative health effects of abusing prescription drugs.  
Vomiting, mood changes, poor judgement, heart failure, seizures, coma or death
9. What is the most common result of abusing prescription drugs?  
Addiction

# Supplemental Activity: Where Can I Get Help?

## Objectives:

After completing this activity students will be able to:

- Describe situations that may require professional health services.
- Locate valid and reliable health services.
- Access valid health information from home, school and community.

## Materials Needed:

- Where Can I Get Help? Scenarios (included below)
- Paper
- Something to write with

## Time Required:

40 minutes

## Instructions:

Have a discussion with your students about how they will find themselves in many different situations as they get older. It's important for them to be able to determine when outside or professional help is needed and where to find it.

Divide your class into small groups and assign each group a scenario from the Where Can I Get Help? Scenarios. As a group, students should determine if the scenario calls for outside help. If it does, where would they go to get the help that is needed? One person in the group should be designated as the recorder and they should write down the groups answer. Another person should be designated as the reporter. They will share the group's situation and answer with the class.

As a class, have a discussion after each scenario and response is shared. Are there other options that the group did not come up with?

# Where Can I Get Help? Scenarios

1. You are staying overnight at your friend Sarah's house. Sarah's older sister has a couple of friends over too. They were drinking alcohol in her room. It's late and Sarah's mom is already asleep. You and Sarah go into her sister's room and find one of her friends passed out on the floor. It looks like she has thrown up at least once. You are both scared and don't want to get into trouble, but you know she needs help. What do you do?
2. You're a pretty good student, especially when it comes to math and science. Taking tests never used to bother you, as you were always prepared for them. But lately you notice that you are getting really nervous before tests. You're not sleeping much the night before and you seem to be getting more headaches lately. What should you do?
3. You're on the basketball team this year and it's going really well. The coach is great, and your game is really improving. You seem to have a lot more homework this year and you've also been doing some babysitting for the neighbors to earn some extra money. It all started out ok, but lately you've been feeling really overwhelmed. What should you do?
4. You and Nate have been friends since 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Going to middle school has been a big change for both of you. You aren't together as much during the day, but you're still able to hang out at lunch and sometimes after school. You've noticed that lately he's been very quiet during lunch, and he hasn't wanted to hang out as much after school. You know that he was upset about a girl he liked, but you're worried that he just doesn't seem to be the same lately. You've tried talking to him, but all he says is that he just doesn't like himself anymore. What do you do?
5. For as long as you can remember your dad has smoked cigarettes. You've learned about what smoking can do to a person's body and you're worried about him. He's mentioned several times recently that he should really quit, but when he tries to quit it usually doesn't last more than a couple days. What could you do?
6. Your friend Jon has been really stressed out lately. His parents are going through a divorce, and it's been really hard on him. The other day he told you how he took some of his mom's prescription painkillers and it helped him relax. It sounds like he's done it more than once and his mom has no idea. You know that using someone else's prescription drugs is illegal and very dangerous. What do you do?



7. You've been friends with Sami and Jade for years. They're your best friends. Lately though, they've been excluding you from things they're doing on the weekends, and they seem to be avoiding you at school. You're constantly trying to figure out if you did something wrong, but when you ask them, they just shrug it off, as if whatever it is, it's no big deal. It's all you've been thinking about lately. You haven't been sleeping or eating much because of it. What should you do?
8. You and your mom have always been close. But since your grandpa died, she's been really bummed out. She doesn't cook dinner anymore, and sometimes she just stays in her pajamas all day. It's been several months since your grandpa's passing, and you're really starting to worry about your mom. She just seems so depressed. What do you do?
9. You've been really anxious these past couple months. You're not sure exactly what the problem is. Sometimes you can't sit still at school, and most of the time your mind is wandering. One of your teachers has noticed that something's not right and talked to you about it after class yesterday. But you couldn't really give her any answers. You know you need to talk to someone. What do you do?

# Handouts

Included on the following pages are additional resources that you and your students' families may find useful.



# Resources and Services: Alcohol and Other Drug-Use Prevention

- American Lung Association Lung Help Line, 1-800-LUNG-USA (800-586-4872)
- Children's Wisconsin, [www.childrenswi.org](http://www.childrenswi.org)
- KidsHealth, [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)
- LifeStance Health, [www.lifestance.com](http://www.lifestance.com)
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)
- Partnership to End Addiction, [www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)
- Rogers Behavioral Health, [www.rogersbh.org](http://www.rogersbh.org)
- The Tobacco Control Resource Center for Wisconsin, [www.tobwis.org](http://www.tobwis.org)
- United States Government-Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), [www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov](http://www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov)
- Wisconsin Tobacco Quitline, 1-800-QUIT-NOW

# Transcript

## Slide 1

Kwasi: In life, there are always going to be highs and lows. Most of the time we're feeling pretty ok. But let's say we win the lottery! We're going to be feeling great for a while after that. Eventually we'll drop back down to that OK level.

Claire: The opposite happens if you lose your pet or your best friend moves away. We're going to feel sad or depressed for a while. But eventually we'll return back to that OK level. It might take a while, but it'll happen.

Kwasi: Now let's take a look at what drugs do to a person. People who use drugs will often say that they use them to feel good. At first, using a drug will give a person what's called a high. This is the short period of time where they feel good. That high is then followed by a low.

Claire: And, as a person uses drugs more often, it takes more of the drug to give them the same high that they experienced the first time. And each high is usually followed by a deeper low. Eventually the person's body is on a complete roller coaster.

Kwasi: Let's look at an example of how drugs can affect a person.

## Slide 2

Narrator: This is Ralph. This is Ralph's brain. Ralph's brain is in control of his body, his thoughts and his movements.

Ralph: Hi boy, good dog! Go ahead...fetch...go...good dog...atta boy!

Narrator: But watch this. This is Ralph on drugs.

Ralph: Oh man, this is awesome.

Narrator: Ralph seems to like this. Now Ralph wants to do it again...and again...and again. But the drug isn't working quite as well as it was before.

Ralph: Hey what's wrong with this stuff?

Narrator: Ralph's brain and body are getting used to the drug. This is tolerance. Ralph needs to take more and more of the drug to get the same high. But let's see what happens if Ralph doesn't take the drug. Uh oh he looks terrible. Now he needs the drug just to feel ok. This is dependence. After a while the drug actually takes control of Ralph's brain.

Ralph: Not now. Get away from me. More drugs. More drugs.

Narrator: The drug overpowers his body's natural signals. Ralph doesn't know when to eat.

Dad: Ralph sit down and eat. Ralph!

Narrator: Or sleep.

Mom: Ralph, come to bed now. Ralph!

Narrator: At the same time Ralph is getting powerful messages to take more and more of the drug.

Ralph: More drugs! More drugs!

Narrator: Without the drug, Ralph is in a lot of pain. Now Ralph can't stop taking the drug. This is addiction.

## Slide 3

Claire: Well, there you have it. The first time Ralph tried the drug he felt that high. Then he started using it more and more until finally he became addicted to it.

Kwasi: I think we need to take a closer look at addiction.



#### Slide 4

Addiction is a complex disease. A person who's addicted to a drug will use that drug despite harmful consequences to themselves or others around them. They become so used to the drug that they have to have it. Their body becomes dependent on the drug. It builds up a tolerance, so that they need a larger amount of the drug than before to get the same effects. Although the decision to try a drug for the first time is a choice a person makes, after continued use the brain actually changes, which makes quitting very difficult. When someone who is addicted to a drug stops using that drug, they may experience withdrawal symptoms. Common symptoms of withdrawal are diarrhea, shaking, vomiting, body aches and generally feeling awful. Most people who want to quit using a drug will need professional help to do so.

When people think of addiction, sometimes they only think about illegal drugs. But people can get addicted to all sorts of substances, and some drugs are more addictive than others. Drugs like cocaine or heroin are so addictive that they might only be used once or twice before the user loses control and becomes addicted.

#### Slide 5

Prescription drugs are medications that a doctor prescribes to a person for a particular illness or condition. People often think that prescription drugs are safer than illegal drugs, but that's only true when they are taken exactly as prescribed, and only by the person the doctor prescribed them to. When abused, prescription drugs can be very addictive.

#### Slide 6

When someone is prescribed a drug, their doctor has examined them and prescribed the right amount of the drug for their specific medical condition. The doctor has told them exactly how they should take the medication, including things to avoid while taking the drug, like driving or drinking alcohol.

## Slide 7

The main reason people abuse prescription drugs is to get that high. They can be abused in several different ways. One way is taking a medication that has been prescribed to someone else. Because every person is different, it's never safe to take someone else's prescription drug. Despite this, oftentimes people will share their unused pain relievers or other type of prescription drugs with others.

Prescription drugs are also sometimes abused by taking too much of the drug. A doctor will prescribe a specific amount, or dose, of a drug based on the individual person who will be taking the drug.

People may even do things like crush the pills or tablets and snort or inject the powder.

## Slide 8

Many times, people think that prescription drugs are safer to take than other drugs because they are prescribed by a doctor. They mistakenly think that they're not doing anything illegal. But taking drugs without a prescription, or sharing a prescription drug with someone else, is actually breaking the law.

## Slide 9

In addition to being illegal, abusing prescription drugs is very dangerous. People who abuse prescription drugs often have trouble at school, at home, with friends and family and with the law. Depending on the type of medication being abused, these are some of the negative health effects:

- Vomiting
- Mood changes
- Poor judgement
- Heart failure
- Seizures
- Coma
- And even death

## Slide 10

The most common result of prescription drug abuse is addiction. People who abuse medications can become addicted just as easily as if they were taking street drugs. The main reason that many drugs have to be prescribed by a doctor is because they can be so addictive. Doctors won't usually authorize a refill for a prescription without first examining the patient to make sure he or she isn't getting addicted.

## Slide 11

Prescription drugs that are considered opiates, such as Oxycontin and Vicodin, can have effects similar to heroin when taken in higher doses, or in other ways than prescribed. Heroin is a very dangerous, deadly, illegal drug. Most people who use heroin didn't start out using heroin. They first became addicted to prescription drugs, and then began using heroin.

## Slide 12

Claire: If you think you, or a friend or family member, may be addicted to prescription drugs, or any other type of drug, find a trusted adult to talk to, like your doctor, school counselor, teacher or relative.

Kwasi: It's so important to talk to someone. Unfortunately, overcoming addiction isn't easy, but it can be done with the right help.



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