

Exploring Addiction

AIM

To increase awareness of the causes and nature of addiction in the context of social and economic inequities and the impact of these factors on healthy living

OBJECTIVES

At the end of the session, students will be able to:

A

- Examine the relationship between addiction and social and economic inequity.
- Compare genetic causes of addiction with social determinants.
- Explore reasons people make unhealthy choices.

B

- Interpret a short passage.
- Infer new vocabulary.
- Learn that a verb plus an infinitive and a verb plus a gerund may mean different things.

TARGET GROUP

For the purposes of this lesson, the target group is low and middle intermediate learners, levels 4 and 5. (The target group levels range from 1 through 8, with the following guidelines: 1 = beginning, 5 = intermediate, 8 = advanced.) Lessons can also be adapted for 8th-through 12th-grade students on health and health education programs.

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students learn about the nature of drug and alcohol addiction and explore the issues in a broader social context.

ACTIVITIES

Warm-up: Instructor brings in a cup of coffee, tea and/or hot chocolate and explains to the class, “I have to have a cup of coffee in the morning (tea, hot chocolate) before I do anything else. I’m addicted to coffee and caffeine.” or “If I don’t have coffee, I get a headache (feel sleepy, etc.).”

The teacher can ask, “Do you need to drink coffee in the morning? What happens if you don’t?”

1. Vocabulary Preview

Ask the students to read the following two paragraphs and choose the probable meaning of the underlined words.

My Uncle Tony was addicted to cigarettes for 18 years and then one day he decided to quit. His cigarette addiction was causing him to lose time at work because he had to stop to smoke during work hours.

He was able to quit smoking for two days, but he relapsed during the next day at work. He felt bad about smoking again, but he didn’t give up and tried to quit again. This time he was successful. It took one week for the feelings of withdrawal to disappear, but after that he stopped feeling nervous and anxious, and he stopped missing cigarettes.

(original text by Amy Parker)

1. addicted probably means:

- a. being physically and/or emotionally dependent on drugs or alcohol
- b. being able to buy drugs or alcohol

2. addiction probably means:

- a. the state of being dependent on a substance
- b. the state of being drunk or “high”

3. relapse probably means:

- a. never to smoke or drink again
- b. to repeat or start the behavior again

4. withdrawal probably means:

- a. continuing to feel good
- b. being without the addictive substance and feeling discomfort and/or pain as a result

LENGTH

One 90-minute class

MATERIALS

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

www.niaaa.nih.gov

American Diversity Report

www.americandiversityreport.com

Health Dialogues

www.kqed.org/healthdialogues

2. Grammar

Tell students that verbs like *stop* and *forget* can take a gerund or an infinitive after them, but the meaning changes. Have them look at the chart. Ask them to read the five sentences below and circle the correct form in parentheses.

stop + verb-ing = quit doing something

stop + to verb = stop in order to do something

forget + verb-ing = do something but forget that you did it

forget + to verb = forget to do something, not do something

1. In the United States, many smokers stop (to smoke/smoking) before they go into movie theaters and restaurants because smoking is not allowed inside many buildings.
2. Drug addicts may forget (to take care/taking care) of their family responsibilities. As a result, their children may not get the attention they need.
3. People may experience withdrawal if they stop (to take/taking) an addictive substance.
4. Someone who forgets (to take/taking) medication may take too much by mistake
5. People who stop (to smoke/smoking) often gain weight.

3. Reading

Ask students what they know about alcohol addiction, alcoholism, by choosing whether the statements are true or false. Then tell them to read the passage and check their answers.

- a. T F An alcoholic drinks because he/she is a bad person.
- b. T F Only poor people or minorities are alcoholics.
- c. T F Alcoholics are usually homeless and don't have jobs.
- d. T F Alcoholism is a disease.
- c. T F Alcoholism can be passed down from parents to children genetically.
- e. T F A person's lifestyle can sometimes lead to alcoholism.
- f. T F There is a cure for alcoholism.

- a. Read the following passage about alcoholism and check your answers.

Alcoholism is a disease that changes a person's brain chemistry and behavior. An alcoholic is a person who is physically dependent on drinking and cannot stop. The pain of withdrawal can make it difficult for a person to stop drinking. This person is not a bad person, but is someone who is sick. The disease of alcoholism can run in families. That means if a family member has a problem with alcohol addiction, that person's children could become addicted to alcohol too.

However, where a person lives, how much stress a person has and other factors also may determine if a person becomes an alcoholic, so a person's environment and lifestyle are also important. One of the myths of addiction is that poor people and minorities are more likely to be addicts. However, anyone can become an alcoholic. Alcoholics are rich, poor, male and female. Some have successful careers and jobs, and some don't. Alcoholism affects people of all races and nationalities. Addiction is color-blind.

Is there a cure for alcoholism? No. However, getting help or treatment for the addiction can help a person stop drinking and start recovering. Recovery may not be easy. Very often people relapse, but this is normal and for some people part of the recovery process. Many people control this disease and lead happy, healthy lives.

(original text by Amy Parker)

- b. Compare the passage above with the following paragraph from ***Unnatural Causes*** and look again at your answers.

The choices we make are shaped by the choices we have. Individual behaviors — smoking, diet, drinking and exercise — do matter for health. But making good choices isn't just about self-discipline. Some neighborhoods have easy access to fresh, affordable produce; others have only fast food, liquor joints and convenience stores. Some have nice homes, clean parks, safe places to exercise and play, and well-financed schools offering gym, art, music and after-school programs; others don't. What government and corporate practices can better ensure healthy spaces and places for everyone?

*(From **Unnatural Causes** Discussion Guide, page 6)*

4. Discussion

Ask the students if they were surprised by anything in the articles. Have them discuss the following questions with a partner or in small groups and compare the two paragraphs.

- a) If you answered “T” to 3b or 3c, why was that your answer?
- b) What substances do you know of that are addictive?
nicotine (cigarettes), alcohol ...
- c) Do you know anyone who is addicted to drugs or alcohol?
- d) Is drug and alcohol addiction a problem in your country?
- e) If you smoke, have you ever tried to stop smoking? What happened?
- f) How can people who live in neighborhoods that have easy access to fast-food restaurants and liquor stores try to change this situation?
- g) How does addiction hurt a community? What is the cost of addiction to the public?

5. Homework

Ask students to research the answers to the following questions and have them bring their answers to class.

- a) What are the signs that someone is addicted to drugs or alcohol?
- b) What kinds of treatment are recommended for alcoholism?
For addiction to prescription drugs?
- c) What resources are available in your community for people to get help with addiction problems?

DEVELOPED BY **AMY PARKER**, ESL INSTRUCTOR AT ACADEMY OF ART UNIVERSITY