

TEACHER PREPARATION

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Everyone experiences events that can cause failure, pain or injury, fear, unresolved questions about life, or broken vows.
2. Addiction occurs when there is a physical or psychological reliance on a drug and the drug becomes more important than other things previously valued.
3. Although different drugs vary in their physical and psychological effects, all can lead to addiction.
4. Each type of potentially addictive drug is addictive in different ways.
5. The rate at which addiction occurs is affected by the drug and a person's genetic makeup and predisposition toward addiction.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Realize that drug use will almost certainly cause them to become reliant on the drug for daily existence and that it will become an all-consuming priority.
2. Understand that, while drugs vary in the nature and rate of addiction, all drugs can lead to some form of addiction.
3. Realize that some people will become addicted after only one or several uses of drugs and that there is no way to know in advance.
4. Identify the gateway drugs that make them more susceptible to addiction.

KEY TERMS

Addiction is a state of physiological or psychological dependence on a drug which is liable to have a damaging effect.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Although the ill effects of drugs have not been entirely defined, there is sufficient evidence to determine that their use is not compatible with a healthy lifestyle. Nevertheless, there is an increasing tendency toward

“recreational” drug use during adolescence when drugs become part of a social setting just as alcohol does.

Although not everyone who tries recreational drugs becomes a regular user, the progression to drug abuse usually follows the same pattern. When people are first addicted, most do not realize they are addicted. Often it is only after considerable damage has occurred that many realize and acknowledge that they are addicts.

Many researchers have found three stages of dependence on drugs. There are several models of stages of addiction; most are quite similar. We chose four stages to communicate easily to the students. (Note: These stages are discussed in Lesson 9, but are included here for your preparation.)

The following descriptions were originally adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics. A similar description can be found at the website of Casa Palmera, a drug rehabilitation center in California.

<https://casapalmera.com/the-four-stages-of-drug-addiction>

Stage 1: Experiments With Drugs. In this stage, adolescents try drugs in search of fun, often in response to strong peer pressure. Once they experience the high, many teens decide to continue using the drug for enjoyment. It can be difficult for parents or teachers to detect use at this stage because there are few behavioral changes other than the effort to cover up the drug use.

Stage 2: Actively Seeks Drugs. In this stage, an adolescent needs more drugs to get the same thrill as he or she did in Stage 1. This is called “tolerance” and is the beginning of addiction. He or she may also begin using drugs to deal with stress and negative feelings. An adolescent in this stage may also use drugs daily to get “high” and to escape reality. Common signs are deterioration in school performance, lack of motivation, irritability, and dramatic mood swings. The adolescent’s group of friends may change as he or she is drawn to others who share the habit.

Stage 3: Preoccupied With Drugs. In this stage, drug use has become a major focus of the adolescent’s life. He or she has lost control over their drug use and may become angry or isolated without the drug. Heavy drug use is costly, and the adolescent may begin paying for a habit with the help of unwitting or disbelieving parents, through theft, dealing drugs, or even an after-school job.

Stage 4: Addicted to Drugs. In this final stage, drugs are necessary for the addict to feel even somewhat normal. Drugs are used all day, every day, and the addict cannot function without them. In this stage, drugs often lose the ability to produce euphoria and are taken just to ward off guilt and depression. At this point, relationships with the family and even the family unit itself may have broken down completely.

An often-overlooked contributing factor to adolescent drug abuse is the underdeveloped value system of people in this age group. Adolescents are often incapable of the sort of moral judgment that could be a strong deterrent to peer pressure. Thus, parents who shrug off their children’s experimenting with drugs because “all” adolescents do it are failing to help their children develop good judgment. Often, adolescents become addicted to combinations of drugs, frequently adding alcohol to their drug addiction without realizing what is happening to them.

In this unit, a cord is used as a visual aid. When you come to the section of the cord activity, you may want to pay close attention to any underlying needs that may surface in a student’s life. You, the teacher, may not feel qualified to handle some of these issues. At this point, you may want to refer the student to the school psychologist or school nurse.

MATERIALS / PREPARATION

In the Box: The Grandmothers' Letter and three cords half a meter (about 20 inches) in length.

- Write the definition of “addiction” on the board:
“Addiction is when your mind, body, or emotions crave and depend on a harmful drug.”
- If possible, a rope or cord about one-half meter in length for each student in your class. If not possible, enough cords for every two or three students.
- Cut a sheet of paper into small pieces, one for each person in the class. For the number of people in the class who make up ten percent of the total class, write an “X” on the piece of paper. Crush the paper into balls and bring them to class in a container.
- The Gateway Drugs and Rates of Addiction activities are based on a class size of 30 to 35 students. If your class is smaller, you will need to think through the activity and adjust the numbers proportionately.

LESSON

BEGINNING THE LESSON

**STORY**
ABOUT 3 MINUTES

[Read the following story, “*The Unknotting Ceremony*”.]

Tatyana Alexandrovna’s classroom was normally bright and cheery with the overhead light defusing any would-be shadows into insignificance. Today was different.

The three students entered a room more in keeping with a secret ceremony than a school. The blinds were drawn, and a single candle served as the only light source. Shadows played on the walls as the flame danced to music playing only in the imagination.

“Oooooo,” moaned Sasha.

“I do believe the ghost of my old neighbor, Romano, would be right at home here!” Dima remarked.

“Welllll-commme!” said the teacher in a low voice, obviously enjoying the response to the dark and foreboding atmosphere she had attempted to create.

Natasha scrunched her mouth to the left side of her face, raised one eyebrow and said, “Is there an even darker side to drugs that our grandmothers want to warn us about?”

“Yes and no,” said Tatyana Alexandrovna. “Our past couple of lessons have laid the groundwork on how dangerous drugs can be. But your grandmothers don’t think that merely knowing the dangers is likely to keep you safe.”

“So, are they going to try to scare us?” smirked Sasha.

“No, not exactly. Fear cuts both ways when it comes to drugs,” replied Tatyana Alexandrovna.

“Huh?” said Natasha and Dima at the same time.

“I think I’ll let the grandmothers tell you in their own words,” interjected Tatyana Alexandrovna.

Tatyana Alexandrovna handed Dima a scroll consisting of a single sheet of paper tied with string. With a nod of her head, she indicated that he should open the scroll.

Dima pushed the loop of string over the end of the scroll and looked at the words that unrolled before his eyes. He nodded to himself after a long moment and rolled the paper back into a scroll. With uncharacteristic restraint, Sasha just sat there looking at Dima while Natasha looked as if she were trying to divine what was written on the paper.

Without looking at the scroll, Dima quoted, “What lies beneath the surface shipwrecks more lives than any surface storm or reef.”

The words hung in the air like an ominous warning. “What lies beneath the surface . . .” The sound of the phrase kept repeating itself in their heads as the ever-changing shadows of the candlelight danced around the room.

“Your grandmothers have instructed me to introduce you to the life-long ritual they call ‘the unknotting ceremony,’” said Tatyana Alexandrovna, breaking the silence.

She squared her shoulders, reached into the box, and pulled out three cords, each about one-half meter long. Each cord had several knots tied in it at various places along its length. She carefully placed a cord in front of each student with these words, "This is your life. Its length is determined; its use is yet to be seen." Three times she repeated the same words as each student received a cord: "This is your life . . ."

None of the three touched the ropes before them, waiting to see what was next.

"You may add or subtract, tighten or loosen; but you must name each knot before the candle burns another half inch," instructed Tatyana Alexandrovna.

"I'm sorry," said Dima, breaking his silence. "But add or subtract what?"

"The knots, of course," replied Tatyana Alexandrovna. "Each knot represents something broken, or bent, or out of place in your life – an unkind word that falsely defines who you are and has taken up residence in your heart, an unhealed wound that makes you vulnerable to something you would otherwise walk away from, or perhaps a vow you have made long ago that has put needless barriers and limitations in your life."

"Some of these 'knots' were placed there by others. Some came into being through a turn of events in your life. And others are of your own creation. The challenge before you is to name and face your knots because every danger your grandmothers hope to help you avoid enters your life through one of the knots represented in your rope."

Natasha was quickly lost in thought as she fingered each knot in her rope. It reminded Tatyana Alexandrovna of her friend who fingered her prayer beads in the same way.

Sasha began to pick at one of the knots, but soon discovered that the one he'd chosen was so tight that he couldn't find a spot to get started to pull it apart.

Dima began to loosen one knot only to maneuver it a bit farther down his rope before pulling it tight again. His fingers worked and reworked the same knot, a visible picture of his mental calculations. Tatyana Alexandrovna was reminded of when she was a small girl watching an ancient shopkeeper who used to figure his sums on an abacus.

Perhaps the grandmothers were onto something, she thought.

"You may recall from the previous letter that Natasha's grandmother, Yelena, revealed some problems she struggled with from using certain drugs," Tatyana Alexandrovna interrupted their thinking. "In that lesson, we talked about the effects on one's mind and body from different drugs. Today, we will talk about how drugs can cause people to become dependent on them – to become addicted."

"Everyone has 'knots' in his or her life. These knots can represent anything from painful disappointments and unmet expectations, to promises we have made to ourselves to never let someone ever hurt us again. Some are forced on us; others are the result of our own choosing."



= 3 minutes

EXPLORING THE LESSON



EXPLORATION AND LISTING

ABOUT 7 MINUTES

Teacher's Guide:

- The cord represents "your life".
- The knots represent something broken or bent out of place in your life:
 1. An unhealed wound.
 2. Painful disappointments.
 3. Unmet expectations.
 4. Some forced on us by others.
 5. Some are of our own choosing.

Give your students about two minutes to list some "knots" in their notebooks.

What might be some examples of both types of knots (disappointments and unmet expectations) an adolescent like Natasha, Sasha, or Dima might possess?

[Ask for several students to share some ideas. Affirm that some knots may seem to be bigger than others; they may be the result of an injury while playing a sport, bad choices, circumstances outside of our control, or from disobedience.]

I want each of you to take about three minutes to think about some of the knots in your own life and list them in your notebook.

Now, write a "1" to the left of whichever knot you listed as the oldest of your knots, the one you experienced first. Then, place a "2" next to your second oldest knot, etc., until you have numbered all your knots.



= 10 minutes



CORD METAPHOR CONSTRUCTION

ABOUT 6 MINUTES

Provide about three minutes to complete the task.

[Distribute a rope or cord to each student.]

I want you to think of the length of the cord as representing the length of your life from birth until today. Start at one end of the rope that will represent your birth and tie a knot for each item you listed in your notebook.

What were some of the things you thought about or noticed while you were tying your knots?

[Discuss the responses, which may include: some people have more or fewer knots than others, some parts of the cord have more knots than others, the measured length of the rope becomes shorter with the tying of each knot, etc.]



= 16 minutes



RETURN TO THE STORY

ABOUT 1 MINUTE

Let me return to the story I was reading to you before you began listing knots. There is a connection between knots and fear. See whether you can discover it.

Tatyana Aleksandrovna then turned to Sasha, Natasha, and Dima and said, "Here's what your grandmothers hoped you would learn from this exercise."

Dear Ones,

When we first began the “unknotting ceremony”, we were quite young. Our knots were “young drugs”. Yelena’s tightest knot was the conviction that she would be punished for the least little thing; she lost the freedom to fail. Ludmilla’s biggest knot was shame – the abiding sense that if anyone ever found out who she really was they would shun her or publicly ridicule her. And Olga’s worst knot was the fear of being left out.

All of us were married before we realized that many of our knots determined what we did or didn’t fear, and that had a lot to say about how mature we were. As children, we were afraid of the dark but not afraid of playing in the street. As adults, those fears reversed. The street represented a real danger, while the dark in itself held nothing worth fearing.

You are old enough now to see how your knots make you vulnerable to the very real dangers of drugs, alcohol, and premarital sex. Of course, it is even more complicated than that, for you are also greatly influenced by your friends’ knots.

Seeing your own knots is the first step in unraveling their influence over your life. And seeing how other people’s knots cause them to push or participate in drugs, alcohol, or premarital sex can spare you much of the misery associated with those twisted pursuits.

Your Grandmothers

 = 17 minutes



DEMONSTRATION

ABOUT 5 MINUTES

Note: Be sure to choose a desk or table that the student could normally have lifted alone.

Note: For ease of reference throughout this lesson, “drug user” is written in the masculine.

[Choose two students to come to the front of the class. Student No. 1 will represent a “drug user”; Student No. 2 will represent the effects of addiction. Hand Student No. 2 a piece of rope a half meter in length and ask him to use it to tie one of Student No. 1’s wrists closely to his belt so that his arm cannot be used. Then have Student No. 1 walk around the room.

Ask the “drug user”: “Are you having any trouble walking?” He should say, “No.” Then ask the “user” to lift a desk or a table entirely off the floor. He won’t be able to do it by himself. Tell Student No. 2 to take the other end of the desk or table. Now, the two of them will be able to lift the object.

Now have Student No. 2 untie the rope and retie it so that both of the “drug user’s” wrists are tied closely to his belt. Ask the “drug user” to walk around and note that he can still walk around on his own. Then ask him to untie and re-tie his shoes without any help. After he struggles for a little while, allow Student No. 2 to assist in untying and re-tying the “drug user’s” shoes.

Finally, have Student No. 2 tie the “drug user’s” legs together at the ankles so that he cannot move without help, using the second shoestring or cord if necessary. Ask him to walk. When he cannot, have Student No. 2 assist him in shuffling along. Provide him with help so that he can sit down but leave his shoes tied.]

 = 22 minutes



DISCUSSION

ABOUT 3 MINUTES

Refer to the definition of “Addiction” on the board:

“Addiction is when your mind, body, or emotions crave and depend on a harmful drug.”

[Ask one student to read again the definition of “addiction” written on the board.]

The rope represents the effects of drug addiction. What impact did the “drug” have on the “user”?

[Have the class share ideas and then explain what the scenarios tell them about drug addiction. Try to draw out from the class some of the ideas below.]

There are things in a drug user’s life that he can’t do for himself once he has started taking drugs. He needs help to do certain activities, just as our “user” needed help. Often that help is the drug itself – you need more of it, more often. He comes to rely on the drug for daily life. We call that “drug addiction”.

The effects were different in each scenario. In the first scenario, the “user” was able to do a lot of things, but not others. That’s because:

1. Different drugs have different effects.
2. As you continue to take drugs, you need more of the drugs to perform basic activities.

He could still do some things by himself in the first scenario, but in the last scenario he was not able to do simple things without assistance.

[Point to the “drug user”:]

How do you feel being bound all the time I have been speaking? Do you feel in control of your life? What does it feel like to need help all the time?

[You can have the student remove the cord from his feet.]

That’s what drug addiction is like. When you are addicted to drugs, you are increasingly consumed by the desire to take another dose. Thoughts of the next dose continually fill your mind and drive out thoughts of anything else.



= 25 minutes



SIMULATION — GATEWAY DRUGS

ABOUT 8 MINUTES

Select 12 students to move to the front of the room and explain to the class that they are those who started drinking alcohol regularly and smoking cigarettes.

Select five students to go to the back of the room and inform them that they have started using marijuana.

Select three students to move to the side of the room and inform them that they have started using inhalants.

INFORMATION FOR TEACHER:

In some countries, it is reported that nearly 20 percent of adolescents report using inhalants at least once in their lives. Current use is highest among eighth-graders.

There have been many studies that indicate drug use among youths throughout our country is a serious problem.

Now, we will illustrate what current statistics indicate about the likelihood of people getting addicted to drugs once they start taking them.

In the next lesson, we will investigate this idea in more detail, but for today I want you to get the general concept. Let's assume that everyone in this class has decided to take drugs.

I want everyone to stand. Statistics on addiction indicate that nearly half of the people who misuse drugs begin by regularly using alcohol and tobacco. Also, there does appear to be a link of some kind between nicotine dependence and alcohol dependence.

So, out of our whole class, I will select 12 of you to represent young people who began taking drugs by regularly using alcohol and tobacco.

Marijuana users are also more vulnerable to going on to harder, addictive drugs.

Inhalants are also a gateway to drugs.

Oh, by the way . . . one of you died in the first two weeks.

[Tell one of the three to sit down.]

Another one of you who used inhalants has severe brain damage and cannot function normally.

[Tell another one of the three to sit down.]

Nearly all of you who are standing around the room have used what are called "gateway drugs".

[Tell all the students they can now return to their seats, but should remain standing.]

They are called "gateway drugs" because most of you used them as your first experiment with taking drugs. Once you have taken a gateway drug, your resistance is lower; therefore, it is much easier to move to the next, more dangerous level of taking drugs. Some of you will already be addicted to these more dangerous drugs before you move on to the next level of drugs. It became much easier for you to get into these later drugs because you started with the gateway drugs.

About ten percent of you who didn't use gateway drugs decided, for some reason, to jump right in to the hardcore drugs.



= 33 minutes



RATES OF ADDICTION SIMULATION

ABOUT 8 MINUTES

The percentage used here is not based on specific data from research. The fact of predisposition is well-established. The percentages are not.

Select seven students to represent marijuana users.

Select five students who are still standing.

Select eight students who are still standing.

Select all but three of the students who are still standing.

[Pass out the paper balls to all the students and tell them not to read them.]

Now, everyone stand next to your desks. For this illustration, the entire class represents “drug users”. Open your piece of folded paper. If your paper has an “X” on it, sit down. You are addicted. You are one of those people who have as part of your biological or psychological makeup something that causes you to become addicted the first time you take the drug. It may be because of a predisposition you inherited from your parents and grandparents.

The addiction was triggered as soon as you took your first dose. You had no idea that you had this trigger in you, and there was no way to find out if you would become immediately addicted until you took your first dose.

You are already using marijuana and haven’t moved to some of the other drugs. You like the effect of the drug and want more and more because you like the feeling it gives you for the few hours it lasts. It is gradually causing damage to your brain, but you are not aware of it yet. Over several months, your desire for the drug has increased because you want to experience the pleasurable times more often. You are now addicted. Please sit down.

You began with alcohol but have moved on to taking a depressant like heroin. You have found heroin to be pleasurable while it lasts, but in the early weeks you noticed that you feel nauseous when you are not taking it. However, when you take a dose of heroin, the nausea goes away. In order not to feel nauseous, you take heroin more frequently. The nausea has now turned to vomiting and stomach cramps when you are not taking heroin. After a dose of heroin, you feel better. You are now addicted. Please sit down.

You have been taking marijuana but felt the need for something stronger. So you started taking cocaine.

For some reason, you began to crave another dose after the first or second dose. You are addicted.

Cocaine causes anxiety, fatigue, and depression. These feelings can come quickly and, like the other drugs, the symptoms go away while you are under the influence of the drug. This causes the cravings for the drug to begin. Your cravings began after three or four doses. Please sit down.

Except for these three who are standing, all of you are addicted

If the students do not bring them out, review the points listed on the right that you previously covered:

to drugs. You no longer are able to stop the all-consuming desire for drugs. It has taken over your life.

Why do you think these three people are still standing?

That's right; they are not addicted — YET!

Do you think they will eventually become addicted?

[Student responses should include “yes”, and some may describe a person they know who takes drugs but does not seem to have suffered any negative effects. Be sure to affirm the response but not the conclusion.]

That is right; it is very unlikely that any of these three, if they continue to take drugs, will avoid becoming addicted. So, you three need to sit down too.

It is important to consider the likelihood that you may know someone who takes drugs now, or has taken drugs in the past, and who seems to be free of any negative consequences. From the information that we have discussed during the past few lessons, how might we answer this possible contradiction?

- 1. Taking drugs develops behavior patterns that are likely to cause destructive or antisocial problems in the future (hiding activities, lying, etc.).**
- 2. Drug addicts develop coping skills to hide their addiction and its effects on them, even from their closest friends and family.**
- 3. Gateway drugs like cigarettes and alcohol may not be immediately destructive, but open the door to harder, more dangerous drugs. And these drugs present short-term dangers of their own whether or not they lead to harder drugs.**

If people keep using drugs it is just a matter of time before they're trapped, and they've killed their dreams.

 = 41 minutes

ENDING THE LESSON



CONCLUSION: REVISE GOALS

ABOUT 4 MINUTES

Before dismissing your students, remember to dictate the Parent-Teacher questions to them.



= 45 minutes

You have seen in this lesson that drug use leads to addiction. When addicted, you come to rely on drugs all the time and you tend to lose interest in friends, family, or school.

RESOURCES

GOING DEEPER

	<p>The Jewish proverb has it this way: “Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control” (Proverbs 25:28). Ancient cities were protected by walls. A city with no wall had no way to protect itself against attack. In the same way, a drug addict loses control of his or her life and has no defense against forces that can destroy his or her dreams.</p>
<p>FINISH THIS PROVERB ACTIVITY</p>	<p>In our day of fighter jets and missiles, we know that walls are little protection for a city. So the wall image doesn’t work as well for us. What image would work in our day?</p> <p>Now, in groups of two or three, I want you to write your own proverb describing the devastating effects of the addict’s lack of self-control. One idea might be, “A person without self-control is like a car without brakes.”</p> <p><i>[After the groups have come up with several good ways to finish the sentence, let several share their ideas with the whole class. If you have time, put the students back into groups and have them illustrate their contemporary proverb with a skit or a poster.]</i></p>
<p>FOCUS POINT</p> <p>Be sure to leave time for discussion at the end of the learning activity so your students can discuss the connection between the learning activity and the lesson. Listen to see whether they seemed to understand the key points listed. If you sense that one or more of these points may have been lost, be sure to guide the discussion to make sure they get these main ideas.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A drug addict loses control of his or her life and has no defense against forces that can destroy his or her life. 2. Anyone who wants to maintain control over his or her life must avoid drug use altogether. No one who experiments with drugs can be sure he or she can maintain control over their powerful influence.

PARENT-TEACHER CONNECTION

For Family Discussion:

1. Talk with your adolescent about people whom either of you know who are or were addicted to drugs and how drugs have affected their lives.
2. Discuss how drugs might affect your adolescent's ability to reach his or her dreams.