

TEACHER PREPARATION

KEY CONCEPTS

1. The initial reward for drug use quickly disappears even though drug use continues.
2. Drug use often leads to a multitude of negative consequences – physical, emotional, psychological, and social.
3. Repeated drug use quickly leads to a loss of control over daily life due to an obsessive focus on the need for drugs.
4. It is almost impossible to remain a casual drug user and avoid addiction.
5. Eventually, the drug user is focused on presenting to the world a normal life in spite of his habit.

OBJECTIVES

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

1. Understand that the slide toward addiction becomes more and more difficult to prevent.
2. Recognize that the pleasure experienced at the beginning does not last.
3. Recognize that an addict spends his or her life attempting to experience a basic sense of well-being which will never be attained through drug use.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Foundation for a Drug-Free World.
<http://www.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/drugs/basic-facts-about-commonly-abused-drugs.html>
- National Institute on Drug Abuse.
<https://easyread.drugabuse.gov>

MATERIALS / PREPARATION

In the Box: The Grandmothers' Letter.

LESSON

BEGINNING THE LESSON



INTRODUCTION

Review the main elements from the story: the scroll, the rope with knots that represent choices, events, consequences, and circumstances.

In the last lesson, the letter from the grandmothers described how certain events in our lives could become like knots in a rope. We discussed drug addiction and the devastating effect drugs can have on our lives. Today's lesson continues the discussion. Here is the remainder of the letter we began last time.

Tell me what you recall from the letter about Natasha's grandmother.



STORY AND DISCUSSION

ABOUT 12 MINUTES

[Read the following story, "Yelena's Story continues". Ask students what they recall from the letter about Natasha's grandmother.]

The unknotting ceremony was still on each of the three students' minds as they entered the classroom. Who would have thought this whole business of risky behavior regarding drugs, alcohol, and premarital sex was connected to the "knots" in their lives? Dima had actually brought his knotted rope with him.

Tatyana Alexandrovna smiled as she centered the box on her desk. "No ropes, door knobs, or mousetraps today – just a letter, and a rather unusual experiment.

"Natasha, do you think you can handle another letter from your Grandmother Yelena?"

"I suppose so. Still, I can't get over the fact that she used to do drugs!"

"But it's even more surprising that she would admit it to us!" volunteered Sasha.

"Yeah, but she had her reasons," added Dima. "She's telling us pretty embarrassing stuff in hopes of getting through to us."

Tatyana Alexandrovna looked at each one in turn as they settled into their chairs and waited for her to begin.

Dear Ones,

One of the major turning points in the story of my own addiction occurred when I began to treat my patients who were addicted to various drugs. There is nothing like seeing first-hand where drug abuse leads to sober one up!

At first, I thought I could handle it. After all, I didn't think I was addicted. Besides, my own experience might prove helpful to those in my charge. My, how naïve I was back then!

Addicts come in all sizes and shapes, young and old, rich and poor. Some quickly fell into the trap of addiction; for others, it was a slow slide to oblivion. The drug of choice might differ from one person to another, but one thing remained constant – all suffered.

As I listened to their stories, a familiar pattern for addiction began to emerge. I suspect you could come up with most of the stages on your own just using common sense.

Tatyana Alexandrovna looked at the three and said, "What do you think might be the common stages of addiction?"



DISCUSSION

Write the four categories on the board that you see here:

- Experiments.
- Seeks.
- Preoccupied.
- Addicted.

Arrange the class into small groups and have one report from each group after three minutes of discussion.

Before we see what Sasha, Dima, and Natasha came up with, let me show you the common stages of drug addiction.

EXPERIMENTS	SEEKS	PREOCCUPIED	ADDICTED
			X

What do you think might be some evidences that a person is in each of the stages of addiction? In other words, how might they behave, how might they look?

[Responses may include “experiments” (sporadic, socially motivated use), “seeks” (more constant use where various drugs are tried), “preoccupied” (consistent private use), “addicted” (drug takes over life, finances, relationships, and health).]



BACK TO STORY

[Continue reading the story.]

Five minutes later, Natasha, Sasha and Dima finally decided there were three general stages of addiction.

“The first stage is the ‘innocent/naïve’ stage where there’s little danger of becoming addicted,” said Dima.

“The second stage is the ‘knowledgeable, but not concerned’ stage,” added Sasha, “where the danger is present but not in control.”

“And the final stage is the ‘trapped with no way out’ stage where the person can no longer choose not to use,” said Natasha.

“Pretty good!” said Tatyana Alexandrovna after hearing from the three students. “Let’s see what else Yelena has to say on the subject.

Most experts come up with three or four stages of addiction, beginning with an introduction to a particular drug, followed by experimentation with other drugs, and finally preoccupation with a particular drug or family of drugs. A person’s psychological make-up, physical constitution, the type of drug, their age, even their gender – all play important roles in determining one’s passage through the stages.

Some people are addicted after a single use. Others are able to maintain some control and live a somewhat normal-looking life for a rather long time (we call them functional addicts). But how do you know which you would become? And more importantly what “knots” in your rope are causing you to even consider taking the risk? I’m all for taking the right kind of risk but, believe me, drugs isn’t one of them.

Love,

Grandmother Yelena

[End of Story.]



= 12 minutes

EXPLORING THE LESSON



LECTURE AND INTERACTION

ABOUT 16 MINUTES

(4 minutes for each category)

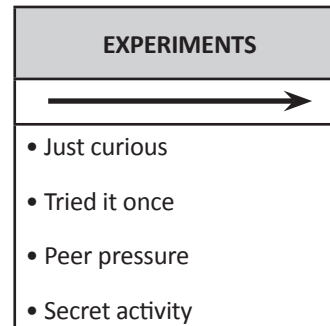
It can be difficult for parents or teachers to detect use at this stage, because there are few behavioral changes, other than efforts to cover up the drug use.

Today, we will focus on how the stages of drug use tend to become a downward spiral toward self-destructive dream breakers. We'll also see how avoiding the use of drugs can help us toward our goals and dreams.

1. **First, let's review the categories we discussed a few minutes ago. What might be some descriptions of "Experimental Use?"**

[Record student responses on the board in the appropriate column – see below.]

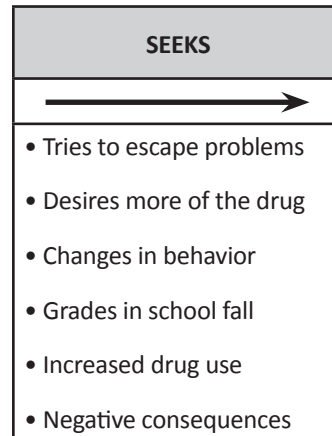
This is the stage where someone experiments with drugs, often in response to pressure from friends. Once they experience drugs, some decide to continue using the drug.



2. **What might be some descriptions of "Actively Seeks Drugs" stage?**

[Record student responses on the board in the appropriate column – see below.]

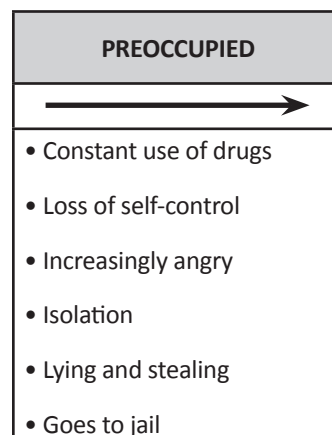
In the "Actively Seeks Drugs" stage, a person needs more drugs to get the same feelings as he or she had in Stage 1. This is called "increased tolerance" and is the beginning of addiction. He or she may also begin using drugs to deal with stress and negative feelings. Someone in this stage may also use drugs daily to get the desired effect and to escape reality. Common signs are deterioration in school performance, lack of motivation, irritability, and dramatic mood swings. A person's group of friends may change as he or she is drawn to others who share the habit.



3. What might be some descriptions of the “Preoccupied with Drugs” stage?

[Record student responses on the board in the appropriate column – see below.]

In the “Preoccupied with Drugs” stage, drug use has become a major focus of the person’s life. He or she has lost control over his or her drug use and may become angry or isolated without the drug. Heavy drug use is costly, and the person may begin paying for a habit with the help of unwitting or disbelieving parents, through theft or dealing drugs, or even by means of an after-school job.




4. What might be some descriptions of someone who is “Addicted to Drugs?”

[Record student responses on the board in the appropriate column – see below.]

In this final “Addicted to Drugs” stage, drugs are necessary for the addict to feel even somewhat normal. The drug is used all day, every day, and the addict cannot function without it. In this stage, drugs often lose the ability to produce the desired effect and are taken just to ward off guilt and depression. At this point,

relationships with the family may have broken down. Sometimes the whole family will have been torn apart.


ADDICTED

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must use drugs to feel “normal” • Use drugs every day • Cannot stop even with very negative consequences • Isolation • Frequent lying and stealing • Repeatedly goes to jail

 = 28 minutes



**REVIEW AND
PERSONAL
JOURNALING**
5 MINUTES

Review all the columns individually and quietly. If you have taken any drugs, decide which column you would fall into. If you have not taken any drugs, reflect on what has kept you from doing so. You have five minutes to reflect and then write a summary of your reflections in your Personal Journal.

EXPERIMENTS	SEEKS	PREOCCUPIED	ADDICTED
			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just curious • Tries it once • Peer pressure • Secret activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tries to escape problems • Desires more of the drug • Changes in behavior • Grades in school fall • Increased drug use • Negative consequences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant use of drugs • Loss of self-control • Increasingly angry • Isolation • Lying and stealing • Goes to jail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must use drugs to feel “normal” • Uses drugs every day • Cannot stop even with very negative consequences • Isolation • Frequent lying and stealing • Repeatedly goes to jail

 = 33 minutes



“CONTINUING TO STAND” SIMULATION

ABOUT 10 MINUTES

Arrange the class into groups of three.

Repeat the sequences of instructions three times so that all group members can experience the activity.

Responses may include:

- Each added instruction required more concentration, more energy, and more physical ability.
- Each added element resembled how increased drug use could affect one’s ability to do physical tasks.

Now, we will do an activity that will help demonstrate the progression of addiction.

One of you will follow my instructions as the other two stand on either side of him or her. Do not touch each other unless you need to catch the person in the middle if he or she begins to fall over.

Here are the rules:

1. Follow the sequence of instructions that I give, but do not rush.
2. Linger at each new position as I count to five.

Keep doing each instruction as I add the next ones.

Here we go. . . :

First, stand up straight on both feet with your arms at your side.

[Count 1 to 5 so that the duration is approximately five seconds.]

Next, raise your right foot off the floor about one-half meter.

[Count 1 to 5 so that the duration is approximately five seconds.]

Next, put both hands into your pockets or hold them crossed over your chest.

[Count 1 to 5 so that the duration is approximately five seconds.]

Next, close one eye.

[Count 1 to 5 so that the duration is approximately five seconds.]

Next, close both eyes.

[Count 1 to 5 so that the duration is approximately five seconds.]

Next, tilt your head back.

[Count 1 to 5 so that the duration is approximately five seconds.]

In your groups of three, take three to five minutes to discuss what you experienced and how the experiences might illustrate the progression of drug use from Recreation to Addiction.

[Ask groups to report to the whole class some of their discussions.]

I appreciate your thinking on this issue. Each of you was able to experience a sense of losing control at some point during the activity. The exercise illustrates the loss of control most users experience as they progress to more frequent usage or move on to other drugs. Also, some of you were able to perform certain things, while others had more difficulty. That illustrates the individual differences in reactions to certain drugs. You may not know for sure how they will affect you until it is too late.



= 43 minutes

ENDING THE LESSON



CONCLUSION

2 MINUTES

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



= 45 minutes

In today's lesson, we saw how the experience of experimentation can lead to a problem difficult to overcome. We showed how drug use can have very negative physical, emotional, psychological, and social consequences.

The activity demonstrated for us how repeated drug use could make us lose control over even basic physical abilities.

The danger is real. Your dreams are too important to risk by using drugs.

RESOURCES

GOING DEEPER

The Jews had a saying: “The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the unfaithful are trapped by evil desires” (Proverbs 11:6). Drug addicts know what it is to be “trapped by evil desires”. Often, they hate what they have become and are ashamed of what they are willing to do to get their drugs. However, they feel they are helpless and unable to change.

Each of the phases of drug use involves being “trapped by evil desires” at a deeper and more serious level. Today, we’re going to do a TV talk show interview with each of the characters your group develops.

FINISH THIS PROVERB ACTIVITY

[Begin by brainstorming with the class four possible characters for a talk show on drug abuse. Each character should represent one of the phases in the downward progression of drug use:

- *Experiments*
- *Seeks*
- *Preoccupied*
- *Addicted*

Lead the class in a brainstorming session to develop a few basic facts about one of the characters (e.g., name, age, family background, etc.). Then develop the character further (e.g., how he or she got started using drugs, how he or she moved from one stage of drug use to the next, career goals that have been set aside, how he or she got trapped, etc.).

After the class has worked together to develop one of the characters, arrange the class into three groups. Each group does the same thing with one of three remaining characters (Experiments, Seeks, Preoccupied, or Addicted). Give each group a time limit to finish developing its character.

As each group develops its character, the group can provide finer details, such as anecdotes (“the time I almost killed my best friend in an accident because I was driving stoned”). Have that character describe what it was like to be “trapped by evil desires” (“I was spending a month’s wages a day on my habit”). Make sure that one of your characters in the Habit or Addiction phase quotes Proverbs 11:6 as part of his or her script.]

As the groups work, you should walk around the room checking in with groups to help them stay on task and keep within the assigned phase of drug addiction.

Have each group appoint a group member who can act out the character as they are being interviewed by the talk-show host. You can serve as interviewer (talk show host). Choose one or two capable students to do all the interviews as host and co-host, or have each group provide both the interviewer and character.

Now choose groups one by one to have their characters interviewed.

If time allows, let the groups develop another character to be interviewed.]

FOCUS POINT

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.

1. **Drug addicts know what it is to be “trapped by evil desires”.**
2. **Often, they hate what they have become and are ashamed of what they are willing to do to get their drugs. However they feel, they are helpless and unable to change.**

PARENT-TEACHER CONNECTION

For Family Discussion:

1. Have your adolescent explain to you the characteristics of the four stages of addiction.
2. Discuss how easy it is for experimenting to lead to more serious stages of addiction.
3. Please discuss with your adolescent how you would feel about him or her if you discovered he or she was experimenting with an illegal drug.

