

Addiction affliction

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES

Identify personal boundaries and recognize that boundaries vary depending on the nature of relationship, situation and culture

Affirm personal skill development

Analyze factors that affect the planning and attaining of goals

- understand that addiction involves physical and/or psychological dependence
- consider how unhealthy choices can have negative consequences
- identify important life areas and what is valued in relation to these

CONTENT AND TIME (45-MINUTE LESSON)

4.1 Opening activity: Gambling grief (5 minutes)

4.2 All about addiction (10 minutes)

4.3 Verifying values (15 minutes)

4.4 Review: Voyage without values (15 minutes)

REQUIRED MATERIALS

HANDOUT 4.1: Gambling grief

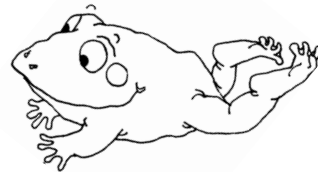
HANDOUT 4.2: All About addiction

HANDOUT 4.3: Verifying values

HANDOUT 4.4: Voyage without values

Chart paper

Notebooks



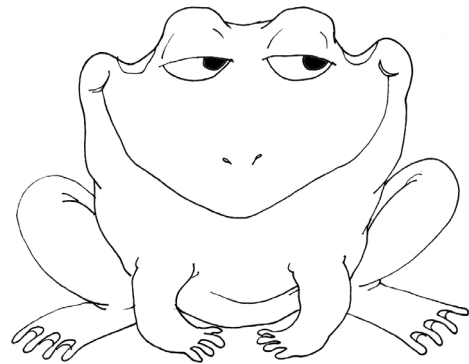
4.1 Opening activity: Gambling grief

(5 minutes)

Review the definition of gambling from the last lesson. As a large group, read the scenario provided on HANDOUT 4.1: Gambling grief. Discuss the question asked and record responses on chart paper. Title this list Important Life Areas and draw the following examples from the class:

Important Life Areas

- Health (mental, physical, spiritual)
- Family
- Friends
- Recreation
- School
- Job
- Responsibilities
- Personal Beliefs
- Money



Display this chart on the class bulletin board.

4.2 All About Addiction

(10 minutes)

Refer to the top half of HANDOUT 4.2: All About Addiction. Discuss the definition of addiction, which is as follows:

An addiction is when people depend so strongly on a drug (such as alcohol) or an activity (such as gambling), that they continue the behaviour, even though they may be hurting themselves or others.

Read through the bulleted items, which are characteristic of an addiction. Discuss the examples provided below and ask the class to identify how each point also relates to Natalie's situation.

- The body and/or mind depend on the drug or activity
Example: people who smoke tobacco become dependent on nicotine, which is the addictive drug in cigarettes; they feel normal when they smoke because they are getting the drug their bodies have come to expect

- There is a feeling of urgency or desperation
Example: when people who smoke tobacco stop smoking, they experience a strong craving for the nicotine, which may cause mood changes, irritability or anxiousness
- The person seeks to indulge the addiction, no matter what the cost
Example: many people continue to smoke, even though they are aware of the serious health risks involved; even some people who have lost their voice boxes due to cancer continue to smoke

Explain that an addiction does not only affect the individual, but his or her family as well. Family members are parts of a unit; when part of the unit changes, this alters the functioning of the unit as a whole. A change in one person's behaviour often evokes change in other family members.

Discuss how this is a difficult concept to understand, especially for people who have not experienced problems themselves, or have not known someone experiencing an addiction. Oftentimes, people minimize what an addiction is by expressing their desire for a type of food or activity they enjoy. Refer to the bottom half of HANDOUT 4.2, which lists the following examples of minimizing:

- "I am addicted to sweets"
- "I'd go crazy without my daily walk"
- "Life would be awful without T.V."





An addiction is more than craving a particular food or wishing to engage in a daily habit. An addiction can overpower an individual and become the most important part of his or her life. The individual seeks to indulge the addiction, despite the consequences. There is a feeling of urgency or desperation because the body and/or the mind have come to depend on the substance or the behaviour.

Many organizations provide help for individuals experiencing addiction and their family members. If the students require further assistance, refer them to community resources such as Alberta Health Services offices, Public Health Centres, Community Youth Workers, School Counsellors and 12-Step Programs (Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, Alateen, Gambler's Anonymous, Gam-Anon, Narcotics Anonymous and Nar-Anon).

4.3 Verifying values

(15 minutes)

Ask the class if Natalie's gambling addiction happened instantly. The answer is no. At first, she did not experience many problems. If she had, she probably would have stopped. But as time went by and her behaviour continued, she began to focus more and more on gambling and less on other important areas of her life, such as family, friends, responsibilities and interests. By the time she saw problems happening, she strongly depended on gambling to feel happy.

An effective way of avoiding addiction is to consider what is important in your life and how you might destroy this by experimenting with alcohol, drugs or gambling. Refer back to the chart created during the opening activity. Explain that everybody has values that affect each of the important life areas listed.

Have volunteers talk about something they value and how this relates to one or more important life area. For example:

- I value being a good basketball player, which relates to physical health and recreation
- I value saving money to buy a car someday, which relates to money and responsibilities
- I value doctors and I want to be one someday, which relates to job, school and responsibilities

Distribute HANDOUT 4.3: Verifying values. Discuss the two examples provided. In the remaining space, have the students independently write about what they value, how these values influence them and how an addiction might become a barrier to each value. Encourage the students to make use of the Important Life Areas chart as they consider what they value. Challenge them to think of values that relate to different life areas, rather than focusing on one or two.

4.4 Review: Voyage without values (15 minutes)

The review activity is a story that you will read aloud to the class, provided on HANDOUT 4.4: Voyage without values. It is designed to have the students consider what is important in their lives and the negative consequences of losing this. The students will need their notebooks for this activity.

To begin, ask the students to imagine that they have been selected to go on a voyage around the world. They will be sailing on a ship for one year.

All of their food, clothing and personal hygiene items will be supplied; and they will be given \$1000.00 to spend on souvenirs at stops along the way. The students will be allowed to take two people and three items with them; however, they will be given guidelines about who and what they can bring along. Read the following descriptors and have the students record responses in their notebooks:

1. Bring one family member
2. Bring one friend
3. Bring one hobby (magazine, basketball, camera)

4. Bring one learning tool from school (art scrapbook, math book, novel)
5. Bring one item of material value (necklace, Game Boy, radio)

Once the students have recorded their selections, you may begin the story. Upon completion, discuss the questions written at the bottom of HANDOUT 4.4.

Check the class envelope and respond to any questions asked.



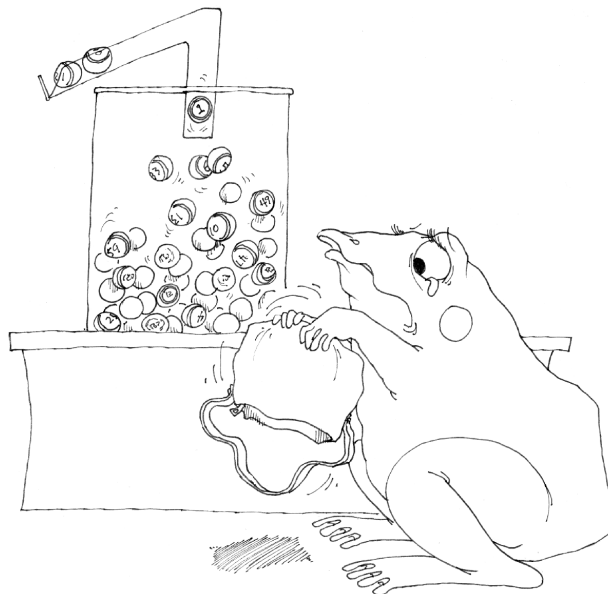
Gambling grief

Natalie began gambling out of curiosity. She used to play bingo with her friends once a week for entertainment. Slowly, over time, she started gambling more often and spending less time with her friends. Soon it was twice a week, and then three times a week, and then four times a week, and now she plays bingo five or six times a week.

Natalie spends most of her money, she gambles alone and she knows that this has become a problem for her. She needs to stop once and for all, but it's hard for her. When she stays home she feels nervous, depressed, agitated and anxious. She experiences a strong need to gamble again.

Natalie thinks that gambling will help her win back money she has lost. She also thinks that gambling will help her feel better, because when she gambles, she forgets about her everyday problems and feels relaxed.

What else, besides gambling, is an important part of Natalie's life?



All about addiction

Addiction

An addiction is when people **depend so strongly** on a **drug** (such as alcohol) or an activity (such as gambling), that they continue the behaviour, even though they may be hurting themselves or others.

- The body and/or mind **depend** on the substance or activity
- There is a feeling of **urgency** or **desperation**
- The person seeks to indulge the addiction, no matter what the **cost**

An addiction does not only affect the individual, but his or her family members as well.

Minimizing

Oftentimes, people **minimize** what an addiction is, by expressing their desire for something:

- "I am addicted to sweets"
- "I'd go crazy without my daily walk"
- "Life would be awful without T.V."



Verifying values

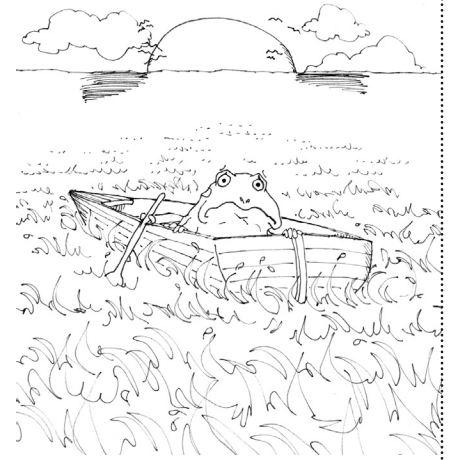
WHAT DO I VALUE IN MY LIFE?	HOW DOES THIS VALUE INFLUENCE ME?	HOW MIGHT AN ADDICTION BECOME A BARRIER TO THIS VALUE?
Doing well in school	I learn about new things	It could stop me from learning
Being a good listener for my friends	I am there for my friends when they need to talk to someone	I could lose interest in my friends

HANDOUT 4.4a

Voyage without values

You are preparing to depart for your voyage by sea around the world. You have been anxiously awaiting this moment for weeks. Everyone is excited about this once in a lifetime opportunity.

Just as the captain is pulling up anchor, he realizes that the ship is not equipped for the voyage. The trip is delayed for a few more weeks...and that's not the worst part! Everyone will have to give up \$1000.00 for repairs to the ship. You will have all your necessities provided, but no spending money for souvenirs along the way.



Although disappointed, you realize that this is not the worst possible thing that could happen. The trip is postponed, not cancelled; you still have your family member and your friend with you; and you have the items you brought from home.

The weeks pass by slowly. At last, the day for departure has arrived! You and the other passengers board the ship with anticipation. Everyone cheers as the ship sails off. The weather is beautiful, the sea is calm and your trip has finally begun. It is even better than you imagined. The sites, the people and the activities are incredible. You just know that this will be the greatest experience of your life.

After a few days of an outstanding voyage, the captain realizes that there is a serious problem. He announces that although he has made repairs to the ship, it simply cannot hold the weight of all passengers and belongings. Unfortunately, there is no time to waste. You and everyone else must immediately throw one of the items you brought overboard.

Ask the students to scratch off an item from their list (you may wish to emphasize that throwing a person overboard is not an option).

Once everyone has tossed an item away, the mood on the ship changes drastically. All passengers are saddened because of this loss and their mood remains discouraged for a few days, but eventually,

HANDOUT 4.4b

everyone forgets about this misfortune and begins to take pleasure in the trip once again.

You spend long days of fun in the sun, enjoying the company of those around you. You are beginning to tire-out from all the action. One night you decide to go to bed early. You'll get a good night's rest and start partying again in the morning. Before retiring for the night, the captain requests that all passengers leave their two items on the deck. The bunking quarters have been too crowded and there is just simply not enough room. Unfortunately, there is a terrible storm that night. Due to severe winds and heavy rainfall, one of the items you left on deck is washed away at sea.

Ask the students to scratch off a second item (not person) from their list.

You are very frustrated by this latest mishap. You have only been gone for a few weeks and already you have lost two of the items you brought. Fortunately, your last remaining item was not washed away! You walk over to put it in safe keeping, when you realize that it was destroyed in a fire caused by a kerosene lamp that fell over during the storm.

Ask the students to scratch off their third and last item (not person) from their list.

Now you are down right depressed. You have lost all of your items, the weather is lousy and everyone is miserable. You're tired, you're cranky and you need something to lift your spirits. Amidst your gloom, you realize that you still have your friend and family member with you to enjoy the experience. You begin to look on the bright side of all these unlucky events.

The weeks pass by slowly. The voyage has taken a turn for the worse. It is no longer fun, and you wonder why you ever agreed to participate. One day, the captain announces a stop at port. Everyone cheers! All passengers are ready for a break from sailing. The captain docks the boat and you set off to see the sites.

You spend the day on a beautiful tropical island and you realize that this trip is not a complete disaster. However, your happiness comes to an abrupt end as you approach the dock.

HANDOUT 4.4c

The captain reports that the rough seas have damaged the ship. As a result, everyone must leave one person behind.

Ask the students to scratch off a person from their list.

After you have said good-bye, you board the ship with hesitation. You wonder if you too should stay behind. You question what else is in store for you during this voyage. But before you have a chance to turn back, the ship's engine starts and you are off.

Months pass by. You are grateful for the companionship of the person who is with you. It is nice to have someone with whom to share the experience. You try to tell yourself that the trip is not so bad, but you know you're only lying to yourself. Everyone on the ship is bored to tears, fed up and grouchy.

The captain announces a second stop in just a few days. You're not exactly ecstatic, but you're happier than before. You say to yourself, "finally, a break from the monotony of this ship!" The hours pass by very slowly. As the ship approaches the dock, your heart fills with delight. You are more excited than you thought about this change. You can't understand why your companion does not share your enthusiasm. You realize that he or she has come down with terrible seasickness and can no longer continue the voyage. Your companion must get off at the next port and return home immediately.

Ask the students to scratch off the last person from their list.

Questions to consider:

- Do you get off at the next port and return home as well? Was the trip fun?
- Think about the timeline of this trip. Did all of your problems happen instantly or over time?
- Consider how this experience had an impact on important life areas.
- How might you compare some events of this story to the experiences of an individual experiencing addiction?