

The Process of Addiction

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- students will become aware of the process of addiction
- students will become aware that developing an addiction is a process that happens over time
- students will identify resources in the community

CONTENT AND TIME (40-MINUTE LESSON)

- 1.1 Introduction: The Process of Addiction (15 minutes)
- 1.2 Activity: Levels of Use (15 minutes)
- 1.3 Activity: List of Resources (10 minutes)

REQUIRED MATERIALS

HANDOUT 1.1: Levels of Use

HANDOUT 1.2: List of Resources

1.1 Introduction: The Process of Addiction (15 minutes)

The progression of an addiction reflects movement along a spectrum of substance use or gambling behaviors, meaning that people use substances or gamble for different reasons and at varying levels. People may use different substances or gamble at different levels of the spectrum at different times in their life. It is also important to note that some people choose not to use substances or gamble at all.

No use

There is no use of substances or gambling. People have their own reasons for this, including religious beliefs, their age, or health risks in their family.

Beneficial use

Use that has positive health, social or spiritual effects (e.g., medicines, coffee/tea, ceremonial or sacred use of a substance, gambling for entertainment).

Casual/Non-problematic use

Using substances or gambling occasionally with no negative consequences (e.g., drinking a glass of wine with a meal). For young people, this might include experimental use.

Problematic use

Use that begins to have negative consequences such as health problems, conflict with friends and family or impaired driving charges.

Chronic dependence

Compulsive use of substances or gambling despite negative consequences in major life areas.

Adapted from: BC Ministry of Health (2004). Every door is the right door: A British Columbia planning framework to address problematic substance use and addiction. Retrieved from http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2004/framework_for_substance_use_and_addiction.pdf.

Levels of Use

Check the behaviours you see in yourself then circle the level of use you think you are at:

Level of use Behaviours		Level of use Behaviours	
No use	<input type="checkbox"/> Never use alcohol, other drugs, or gambling	Problematic use (continued)	<input type="checkbox"/> Most friends use drugs or gamble <input type="checkbox"/> Crave drugs or gambling <input type="checkbox"/> Think a lot about getting high or gambling <input type="checkbox"/> Get irritable when drugs not available or when there is no money to gamble <input type="checkbox"/> Feelings of anxiety or depression <input type="checkbox"/> Physical tolerance develops
Casual/Non-problematic use	<input type="checkbox"/> Curiosity <input type="checkbox"/> Risk-taking <input type="checkbox"/> Peer pressure <input type="checkbox"/> Defy parents <input type="checkbox"/> Parties <input type="checkbox"/> Thrill-seeking <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptance by peers		
Problematic use	<input type="checkbox"/> Use drugs or gamble to feel good <input type="checkbox"/> Use drugs or gamble to stop bad feelings <input type="checkbox"/> Bingeing <input type="checkbox"/> Experimenting with different drugs and forms of gambling <input type="checkbox"/> Grades affected <input type="checkbox"/> Activities change <input type="checkbox"/> Use drugs or gamble to relieve boredom or stress <input type="checkbox"/> Escape bad feelings <input type="checkbox"/> More fights with parents <input type="checkbox"/> Use or gamble more often <input type="checkbox"/> Attempts to control use or gambling <input type="checkbox"/> Use drugs or gamble to cope with life	Chronic dependence	<input type="checkbox"/> Preoccupied with using substances or gambling <input type="checkbox"/> Occasional efforts to control use or gambling <input type="checkbox"/> Feel guilty, shameful and hopeless <input type="checkbox"/> Demanding or controlling of others <input type="checkbox"/> Defensive <input type="checkbox"/> Blame others

List of Resources

The Process of Addiction

If you are concerned about your own or somebody else's (a friend or family member's) use of alcohol, other drugs or gambling, it is important to know where to go for help. On your own, or in small groups, identify the places and people in your community that could help you.

Local Addiction Counselling Office

Self-Help Groups (AA, NA, Alanon, etc.)

Counsellors

Crisis Centres

Detox Centres or Hospitals

Doctors

Teachers

Family

Friends

Others
