

DEALING WITH ADDICTION

Includes
worksheets
with exercises
and
activities



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Introduction

This resource pack aims to give young people the facts about drinking, smoking and drugs as well as other addictions such as gambling, shopping, food, social media and video gaming. These can be difficult subjects to discuss and patience is needed. Some sessions work smoothly while others can deteriorate into a bragging match—‘Do you know how many pints I downed last night!’ This is what you need to avoid. The purpose is to present the facts about a variety of addictions and the way they can impact on the life of an individual. Look at the problems each addiction can cause—on an individual, family, community, academic and health level. Explain the help that is available and highlight the tools this pack provides.

Remember that new drugs appear from time to time and you will need to provide information on these as and when appropriate. It is not possible to provide information on every drug available in this publication, but the important message is the same whatever the drug.

The pack contains photocopiable **WORKSHEETS** with activities and topics for class discussion.

These are issues that all young people will have to face some day and the only protection is to provide them with sufficient knowledge to enable them to make informed decisions. Teachers and youth workers can adapt this publication to suit their requirements.

Show the **INFOSHEETS** and flipchart/whiteboard the results as and when indicated in the book. Feel free to adapt as you see fit. If you have the ebook, it is a good idea to show the **INFOSHEETS** on a screen via a computer so all the students can view them. Alternatively, you can print out a number of copies and hand them out to students.

The Effects of Drugs and Alcohol

We all react differently to alcohol and drugs, and our reaction to a mixture of alcohol *and* drugs is even more unpredictable—no two people react the same way.

Alcohol depresses the central nervous system (CNS) which means your motor coordination decreases (motor coordination is the way the brain controls your bones, muscles and limbs which controls how your body moves, reacts, interacts with your surroundings etc) and your breathing and digestive system slow down. If alcohol is mixed with a variety of drugs including prescription drugs, the effect can be very dangerous. If alcohol (a CNS depressant) is mixed with another CNS depressant such as heroin, morphine, opium, and barbiturates, it can cause the body to completely shut down. In other words, the effects can be fatal!

Give out **WORKSHEET 5** and explain why our reactions are different.

Explain how it is vital that we get all the facts before we take any of the substances mentioned. It is extremely important to get across the point that many factors are involved in our reaction to drugs and alcohol, particularly when we mix them.

We cannot assume that we will react the same as someone else who took a similar level of drink and drugs. It is also true that our own bodies will react differently to the same substances for a variety of reasons depending on how we feel at the time, or what we have been eating, or whether or not we feel tired or ill.

The bottom line is—we just don't know what will happen when we mix alcohol with drugs—we are basically taking our life in our hands and the consequences can be disastrous! Even an expert such as a doctor cannot say for certain what the effects of mixing alcohol with drugs will be.

Give out **WORKSHEET 19** which explains the different classes of drugs and the various penalties for possessing or supplying them to others. Ask the group what they think about the various penalties? Do they feel they are too severe or not severe enough? Do they think it is fair that a person's personal circumstances are taken into consideration when dealing with a drink or drug-related offence? What circumstances should be considered? Should a person's background have an effect on the decision to treat them harshly or leniently? Do they all agree on this issue? Does anybody feel that the penalties should be the same for everyone regardless of personal circumstances? Have a vote on this issue and collate the results. Perhaps the group can produce a table of results which can be used to prompt a longer discussion.

Cravings

When someone stops using drink or drugs, they may experience cravings which are strong urges to take drink or drugs again. Remind the group that this is a normal part of withdrawal and is to be expected. The brain and body need time to adjust to coping without alcohol or drugs flowing through the system. Give out **WORKSHEET 20** and read out the following:

- Cravings are a common symptom of withdrawal
- Having cravings does not mean a person is lacking in willpower
- Cravings will come and go and usually do not last long
- As time passes, the time between cravings will get longer and they will get fewer and less intense
- Eventually the cravings will go altogether—this will signal freedom from the power of the addiction—as long as they are not tempted to take ‘just one drink’ or ‘just one drug’...

WORKSHEET 12

Types of Drugs

Drugs can be divided into the following:

Opiates

Derivatives of opium including heroin, morphine and codeine.

Stimulants

Used to give user a 'lift' including ecstasy, cocaine, amphetamines (or 'uppers').

Inhalants

Inhaled or sniffed in the form of fumes or gases to give a quick high including glue, aerosols, butane, solvents, spray paint, deodorants.

Barbiturates

Sedatives and tranquillisers including Valium — these are depressants (like alcohol). They are highly addictive.

Hallucinogens

Used to produce hallucinations including LSD & magic mushrooms.

Steroids

Used to increase muscle mass and strength in conjunction with a high-protein, high calorie diet and a lot of 'working-out'.

Before taking any drug it is important to look at all the facts.

- Do you know what you are taking?
- Do you know how the drug will affect you?
- Do you know that drug dealers sometimes mix their drugs with harmful substances such as rat poison, brick dust and bleach?
- Do you really know where your drug-taking will lead?

WORKSHEET 17

Replace Drink/Drugs with What?

Write down a list below of the things you enjoyed before you started using drugs, or things you have always been interested in doing but haven't tried yet.

Remember, drink/drugs have been a big part of your life and it will be easier for you to stay off them if you fill your life with interesting things. Divide your list into two — things you have always enjoyed but haven't had time for lately, and another list with things you intend to do now you have the chance.

PREVIOUS ACTIVITIES	ACTIVITIES I WANT TO TRY