

Hooked: The Addiction Trap

Grades 9-12

Running Times:

Part One: 25 minutes

Part Two: 28 minutes

Part Three: 27 minutes

INTRODUCTION

The problem of addiction, whether to substances or behaviors, is widespread in this country. Millions of Americans are hooked - on gambling, on smoking, on food, on shopping, on television, on alcohol, on drugs - on countless ways to escape their everyday reality.

The term addiction comes from a Latin verb meaning "to devote oneself," "to give oneself over." Loss of control of the use of a substance or behavior is what defines addiction. And with that loss of control comes a variety of serious consequences which can damage a person's relationships, financial situation, work or school life, health and freedom.

Often, addictions arise as coping mechanisms for other life problems, which, over time, become destructive patterns that are very hard to break. And, far too often, these destructive habits start young, when children and adolescents are just learning how to deal with problems, and, if not addressed early enough, can have a negative effect for life.

Consider these statistics:

* Between 30% and 40% of high school students reported initiating drug related behaviors before age 13 (Centers for Disease Control 1995 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System).

* Every day, 3000 young people in America smoke their first cigarette.

* Nineteen percent of high school seniors surveyed smoked cigarettes daily (NIH Publication no. 93-3597, 1993); seventy-five percent of them were still smoking five years after being surveyed (NIH Publication no. 93-3598, 1993).

* Fifty-three percent of high school students reported gambling in the previous 12 months; seven percent reported that gambling caused problems with their family and friends (from a study by Children's Hospital, Harvard Medical School, published by the American Academy of Pediatrics, 1998).

* One-third of all prison inmates are compulsive gamblers (National Council on Problem Gambling).

* In the graduating class of 1996, 50% had used an illicit drug by their senior year (NIDA, 1997).

In this program and accompanying guide, we will explore the increasingly serious problem of addiction in all its many forms and with all its devastating consequences.

The model for addiction which the program **Hooked: The Addiction Trap** presents is the biopsychosocial habit model which looks at addiction as being determined by a combination of biological, social, and psychological factors (Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students: A Harm Reduction Approach; Linda A. Dimeff, John S. Baer, Daniel R. Kivlahan and G. Alan Marlatt; 1999, The Guilford Press).

The approach we are taking emphasizes the idea that, while the factors determining a person being at risk for addiction are not wholly under their control, the ability to change,

with guidance and assistance, can be. As addiction is seen to be, in many ways, a learned behavior, so are positive coping skills which can help a person avoid or escape an addictive pattern. Learning positive ways to deal with life's challenges is seen as key to living a life free from addictive behaviors.

By presenting accurate and up to date information on chemical and behavioral addictions, emphasizing the risks and negative consequences of all addictions, and providing a variety of coping strategies and life skills that help young viewers follow a path free from addictions, this video and guide offer a comprehensive resource for school, community, and institutional prevention programs.

SUMMARY OF THE VIDEO

Hooked: The Addiction Trap explores the multi-faceted subject of addiction in a three-video format:

Part One: What is Addiction? - 25 minutes

Part Two: The Consequences of Addiction - 28 minutes

Part Three: Alternatives to Addiction - 27 minutes

The video uses the testimony of young addicts, as well as resilient youth, who have developed good coping skills, and the information of experts in the field of addiction research and counseling to provide an in-depth look at the biological, psychological, and social factors that contribute to addictions both to substances and behaviors, and the life skills necessary to avoid or escape an addictive pattern.

Part One offers a definition of addiction, both to substances and behaviors and presents experts discussing some of the most recent research on addiction and the brain. The factors that contribute to a person becoming addicted to a substance or behavior are explored and the progression of addiction is vividly illustrated by addicts and addiction counselors.

In Part Two, participants in the video, including those with substance abuse and smoking problems as well as gambling, Internet pornography, and other addictions, discuss the heavy toll addiction has taken on their health, relationships with family and friends, school life, finances and freedom. Experts provide supporting evidence of the physical and psychological consequences, and the legal implications of addiction.

In Part Three, resilient youth who have found other avenues to deal with difficulties in their lives offer alternatives to addiction. A model for change, which includes advice on Getting Help, Recognizing Warning Signs, Dealing with Feelings, Understanding that Feeling Pain is a Part of Living, Urge Surfing, and Not Giving Up, is presented for youth who may already have developed negative patterns which could lead to addiction.

TEACHER/FACILITATOR PREPARATION

It is strongly suggested that you view the video and study the accompanying materials before presenting them to the group. Certain aspects of the activities presented in the guide may need to be amended or tailored to your group, and we recommend that you do so.

Review the Blackline Masters provided with this guide and duplicate any you wish to distribute.

We have included a handout on Resources for help with different addiction problems. Some viewers may be experiencing difficulties with their own or their family or friend's addictions. Be prepared to provide referrals to those who may need help.

PART ONE

STUDENT/VIEWER OBJECTIVES

After viewing and discussion of Part One:What is Addiction, students/viewers should be able to:

- * define "addiction";
- * identify the different forms of addiction;
- * demonstrate a working knowledge of how addiction affects the brain;
- * identify the stages that lead to addiction;
- * identify the risk factors that contribute to a person becoming addicted.

SURVEY - PART ONE

Blackline Master #6: Survey - Part One is a diagnostic tool, based on the Objectives for Part One, designed to help you identify participants' knowledge of addiction, as well as their own coping mechanisms, before and/or after the presentation of Part One. You may use this survey for information or as evaluation; it may be administered anonymously.

DISCUSSION TOPICS BEFORE VIEWING PART ONE

Below are a list of discussion topics/activities to introduce before viewing Part One of the video:

1. Addiction means different things to different people. How do you understand addiction - to substances, to certain activities or behaviors? Give examples of the different forms addiction can take.
2. Make a list on the board, flipchart, or overhead of definitions of addiction offered by students/viewers.
3. Discuss any strong impressions you may have of addiction from newspapers, books, magazines, television, the Internet, or films.

VIEW THE VIDEO

Hooked - Part One: What Is Addiction?

Viewing time: 25 minutes

DISCUSSION AFTER VIEWING PART ONE

1. What is the difference between use/abuse of a substance or behavior versus dependence and addiction? How much control do we have over our behavior and lives prior to addiction? And how much after that?
2. What does the word "stress" mean to you? Give examples of stress in your own life. How and why do you think stress leads some people into addiction?
3. Sometimes the word "fix" is used to describe the use of a substance (as in "Get my fix.") What is it that an addict is trying to fix?
4. Discuss the notion of "chasing the first high." How does this contribute to getting "hooked"? How does this concept work when the addiction is to a behavior or activity?
5. Addicts and experts agree that (1) continued use of a substance or behavior is never as good as the "first high," and, (2) "chasing the first high" leads to substance abuse and addiction - with less and less reward. This process is called "tolerance" - the need to use more and more of a substance to achieve the same effect. Discuss how tolerance works when the addiction is to a behavior instead of a substance.
6. Gambling addicts and experts describe the phases of compulsive gambling as: The Introduction, The Winning Phase, The Losing Phase, The Desperation Phase, the Bottom (see **Blackline Master #4: Phases of Adolescent Gambling**). How do these phases relate to the stages of a substance addiction?

7. Discuss why the reality of tolerance is a very good reason not to look to the use of substances or habitual behaviors as a dependable source of pleasure or relief from pain.
8. Once the excessive use of substances or behaviors chemically changes your brain, it is very difficult to break free of them. We have heard how addicts continue with their addictions to avoid physical and mental discomfort. Discuss the role of discomfort in changing any - even the most simple - habitual behaviors. Give examples from your own experience; this could include giving up chocolate, taking up exercise, breaking up with a boyfriend/girlfriend etc.
9. Discuss the various theories and first-person accounts in the video that relate to the factors that contribute to a person developing an addictive problem (include genetics, chemical changes, peer pressure, family life, wanting to numb painful feelings, etc.).
10. One phrase that is used to describe addiction is "a process of altering your mood so you don't have to experience your feelings." What does that mean? Are there examples in the video that relate to that idea? Are there examples from your own experience that relate to that idea?
11. There are many different types of addictions discussed in the video. Make a list on the board of the ones mentioned. Ask students/viewers to add to the list. Do you think a person can be addicted to feeling badly? How would that work? Can you be addicted to perfection? How would that work, and why would it be a problem?
12. One theory of addiction is that people most at risk for addiction are "thrill or novelty seekers." Which of the people in the video do you think have that trait? Why? Brainstorm other, less dangerous outlets for thrill-seeking.
10. What is the difference between a habit and an addiction?
11. Discuss the phrase " We are all creatures of habit." In light of the information in the video, what does that mean? Have students discuss whether their own experience supports that idea.
12. Another adjective sometimes used to describe addiction is " self-soothing." What do you think it means? Use examples from the video to illustrate the concept of "self -oothing."

PART TWO

STUDENT/VIEWER OBJECTIVES

After viewing and discussion of Part Two: The Consequences of Addiction, students/viewers should be able to:

- * Identify the consequences and risks of addiction;
- * Identify the five areas of a person's life damaged by addiction;
- * Demonstrate how violence and addiction can go hand in hand.

SURVEY - PART TWO

Blackline Master #7: Survey - Part Two is a diagnostic tool, based on the Objectives for Part Two, designed to help you identify participants' knowledge of addiction, as well as their own coping mechanisms, before and/or after the presentation of Part Two. You may use this survey for information or as evaluation; it may be administered anonymously.

DISCUSSION TOPICS BEFORE VIEWING PART TWO

1. Brainstorm with viewers and make a list on the board, flipchart, or overhead of things that you would not want to happen to you, such as illness; loss of teeth, hearing, bodily functions; irreparable brain damage; insanity; impotence; incarceration; loss of family and friends; homelessness. These are all possible consequences of addiction. Discuss this in light of these statements from Part One: " I'd die without it," "It's the only thing 'there' for me," "I don't

have anything else in my life," "It's the only thing I know to do," "I started using to be free, to be my own person." Discuss consequences of addiction that the viewers know from personal experience, or that they have read about or seen in the media.

VIEW THE VIDEO

Hooked Part Two - The Consequences of Addiction

Viewing Time: 28 minutes

DISCUSSION AFTER VIEWING PART TWO

1. Addiction is sometimes described as a "process of loss." Discuss that statement as it relates to the stories told in the video. What did each addict lose? What other losses are possible when you are addicted to drugs, alcohol, or to any activity or behavior?

2. Gambling and its consequences are serious problems among five to seven percent of teenagers. This percentage goes up to 10- 14% if you include teens at-risk or in transition to a gambling addiction. Discuss your experience or knowledge of gambling addiction - its causes and consequences. Distribute **Blackline Master #4: Phases of Adolescent Gambling** as an aid to discussion.

3. In the video, the connection between addiction and violence is introduced. Discuss this connection and its possible causes. In the video, one participant talks of being raped while sleeping off a long run of methamphetamine use. Discuss the connection between the abuse of alcohol and drugs and date rape.

4. The five areas of a person's life that are most affected by an addiction problem are presented in the video. They are:

- * Health
- * Relationships with family and friends
- * School life
- * Money
- * Legal

List them on the board and discuss them in relation to information provided in the video as well as personal insights and experiences that the group may offer.

5. Addiction can have serious legal and financial consequences. Discuss the societal costs of addiction. Brainstorm and make a list of all the possible ways in which everyone pays for addiction (i.e., insurance, taxes to support prisons and the war on drugs, etc.). Discuss other ways this money could better be spent.

6. The connection between drinking and driving and serious health consequences is introduced by Dr. Gerard Chapman. In a 1996 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, it was found that within a 12-month period, an estimated 28 percent of drivers in the U.S. used alcohol or drugs or both within two hours before driving. Drug use prior to driving was more common (13%) among respondents 16-21 years old. The most common —reasons were "no other way to get there" and "not high enough to cause a crash." Discuss these findings and the reasons given for driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs. Ask viewers to describe any incidents involving drinking and/or drug use and driving they may know about.

7. In the video, the participant with a pornography addiction describes how his addiction escalated from viewing pornography on the Internet to assaulting a young child. Dr. Victor Cline of the University of Utah (Pornographic Effects: Empirical and Clinical Evidence, University of Utah Department of Psychology, 1988) describes the four stages of a pornography addiction after the initial viewing as:

Addiction - the desire and need to see more.

Escalation - need for more explicit images.

Desensitizing - material once considered shocking, is now acceptable.

Acting Out - the tendency to perform the behaviors viewed.