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Guidelines for Age-Appropriate Use of Activities

When using the same activities in the curriculum with different age groups, consider these helpful guidelines.

Elementary School Students

- Keep things simple.
- Stay with basic, concrete activities and examples.
- Because these children typically take less time in the discussion phase, plan on doing two activities, plus openings and closings. Remember, some children are very active, especially those with attention deficit disorder or hyperactivity, so you may need to change activities more frequently.

Middle School Students

- Balance the time spent doing activities and processing the information learned during the discussion phase.
- Help them enjoy the activities.
- Balance between concrete and abstract learning experiences.

High School Students

- Allow ample time for the discussion phase as teens need the time to discuss, process, and integrate the material presented.
- Let teens help guide the flow of the group as they often bring problems, issues, and feelings to discuss.
- Encourage them to enjoy the group and have fun with the activities.

Note: *It is not wise or safe to attempt to meet the needs of elementary, middle, and high school students all in one group, considering their varying developmental levels and specific needs.*

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Curriculum Activities

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Addiction Game

Treatment and Recovery Session: Elementary, Middle, and High School

This exercise helps young people come to a new understanding of addiction. Using both a visual and kinesthetic format, this activity enables young people to differentiate between the person they love and care about and the disease that consumes and overtakes that person. An extremely powerful exercise, it demonstrates that addiction is not the children's fault and that they are powerless to make it all better.

Description

The facilitator asks for a child to role play the addicted person in this game. The facilitator role plays the disease of addiction. Starting with alcohol and drugs, the disease makes all kinds of promises to the addicted person if only that person would drink or use a little. Addiction makes promises such as "I'll make all your problems go away. I'll get rid of all your uncomfortable feelings. I'll make you more popular, funny, strong, and better looking." The addicted person gradually gives in and begins using the chemicals. At first it appears that the disease really is becoming a good friend to the addicted person.

After a short while the disease sneaks up on the person and quickly grabs him or her by the arms. Despite repeated struggling and pleading, the person is hooked and the disease simply won't let go. A discussion ensues about how the disease is now totally in charge of the person's life. The group talks about how none of the promises ever come true, how the person is trapped, and how problems and uncomfortable feelings accumulate instead of going away. The addicted person shares how he/she feels to be so stuck. Typical responses range from scared and hopeless to angry and totally helpless. Repeat this exercise until all the children have had an opportunity to kinesthetically experience how it feels to be addicted.

An option here is to invite other children to try to free the "stuck family member." Children struggle physically, beg and plead, make empty threats, and try all sorts of means to get the dependent unstuck, all to no avail. Through this added activity, children understand that the addiction is not their fault and they can't make it better. Perhaps for the first time they can separate the person they love from the disease they've come to despise and hate.

Materials Needed

- None

Addiction Illustrated

Addiction Session: Middle School

This exercise helps young people to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the disease of addiction. Working in small groups to complete this task, the youth not only learn from one another in a cooperative fashion but also further develop their socialization skills in the process. They learn that it is okay to talk about family addiction with people who understand. They learn that all their feelings are okay and that they can help to take good care of themselves by sharing problems with people they trust.

Description

The facilitator puts the young people in groups of three or more. Giving each group the Addiction worksheet, a pencil, and nontoxic markers, the facilitator challenges the youth to remember all they've learned about addiction and to use it in this activity. The facilitator then writes the word *addiction* vertically on a chalkboard/flipchart, letter by letter. The young people are instructed to do the same on their group worksheets.

The facilitator then asks each group to brainstorm describing this disease using a word or group of words starting with each letter in *addiction*. For example, the *A* could stand for "always thinking about the disease," one *D* could stand for "denial," and so on. By working in small groups, young people can learn from one another. The facilitator circulates around the room and offers support, suggestions, and encouragement.

When finished, each group may share its creation with the larger group. With the participants' permission, tape their creations to the walls for future reference or bring them back to use with the review of addiction at the start of the next session. These posters can serve as powerful visual reminders that addiction is not the children's fault and that they can't make it better.

Materials Needed

- Copies of worksheet (on next page)
- Paper
- Pencils
- Nontoxic markers
- Chalkboard/flipchart

The Addiction Worksheet

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Anger Intensity

Problem Solving Session: High School

Helps young people to identify situations that stimulate angry feelings and healthy ways to deal with them.

Description

Anger is a very natural and normal feeling. People experience anger frequently during any given day. This may include feeling annoyed when your little brother messes with your prized possessions, irritated when a friend tells others something you told him in confidence, or really, really mad when you realize how much addiction has hurt you and your family. It's okay to feel angry; it's what you do with it that matters the most.

There are both helpful and hurtful ways to express anger. Let's start with the harmful because it's the most obvious. There are three harmful ways to express anger (list on chalkboard/flipchart):

1. Hurt others.
 2. Hurt yourself.
 3. Destroy property.
- We can hurt others by hitting, kicking, and making fun of them. Often it's the mean words we say that bother people the most.
 - We can hurt ourselves by put-downs and not treating ourselves well.
 - It's just not okay to destroy or deface property.

You are probably asking yourself "So what can I do when I get angry?" There are three important guidelines to remember when sharing anger (list on chalkboard/flipchart):

1. Respect others.
 2. Respect yourself.
 3. Respect property.
- You can tell someone you are angry without hurting them or others. It's often a good idea to take a time-out to calm down. You may settle down and then speak to them without yelling or name-calling. It often helps to share your feelings with one or two other people first. It may be scary to tell a parent, teacher, or counselor you are angry. You could write the person a note about your feelings and discuss it at a later time.
 - People often get mad at themselves when they make mistakes or hurt others. Please be gentle with yourself. You can learn and grow from your mistakes.
 - Even though you might get so mad that you really want to, it's never a good choice to destroy property in any way.

Use the "Anger Intensity" exercise on the following page to help you identify situations that can make you angry and to think about helpful ways to deal with angry feelings.

Materials Needed

- Anger Intensity worksheet (on next page)
- Pencils
- Chalkboard/Flipchart

Anger Intensity

Identify situations, in the course of the day or week, where you distinguish the different intensities of your anger.

Use one of these key words to describe your anger:

1. Annoyed

4. Disgusted

7. Angry

2. Irritated

5. Aggravated

8. Furious

3. Frustrated

6. Mad

9. Enraged

<i>Situation or event</i>	<i>Degree of anger</i>	<i>Healthy ways to deal with this</i>
<i>Example:</i> <i>My mom got drunk and embarrassed me.</i>	<i>Disgusted</i>	

Bag o' Feelings

Feelings Session: High School

Helps young people to develop the skills of expressing and taking responsibility for their feelings. It stresses that everyone has many different feelings every day and that all feelings are okay.

Description

With the group sitting on the floor in a circle, the facilitator puts a brown paper bag in the middle. Before the group session the facilitator filled the bag with an assortment of index cards, each with a feeling and a face depicting that particular feeling (see Feelings List for suggestions). Facilitators can use the sample list provided and add any feelings they think appropriate for their group. Draw a feeling face on each card next to the feeling so that the young people who have trouble reading can still benefit from this experience. The facilitator explains that every day people have lots of different feelings and that the key is learning how to deal with them in healthy ways.

The facilitator shakes the bag, picks an index card, identifies the feeling, and shares a time he/she has felt that way. Other group members can then describe a time when they had that same feeling. After everyone has shared, the next person shakes the bag, pulls a card, and shares an occasion when he or she experienced that feeling. The game continues around the circle and everyone has an opportunity to participate. A discussion follows about the importance of sharing feelings with people you trust.

If time allows, do two or three revolutions around the group to give participants the opportunity to share a variety of feelings. Remember to stress that all feelings are okay and that talking about them with safe people is an important way for young people to take care of themselves.

Materials Needed

- Brown paper bag
- Index cards, each with a feeling and a corresponding feeling face
- Feelings List (on next page)

Feelings List

Afraid	Happy	Proud
Angry	Hopeless	Quiet
Anxious	Hurt	Queasy
Bored	Ignored	Resentful
Brave	Important	Restless
Calm	Joy	Sad
Caring	Jealous	Scared
Confused	Jumpy	Shame
Curious	Kind	Surprised
Different	Lonely	Tired
Dumb	Loved	Terrible
Disappointed	Mad	Unloved
Excited	Mean	Uncomfortable
Embarrassed	Mixed Up	Vicious
Exhausted	Nice	Violent
Funny	Nerdy	Warm
Frightened	Overwhelmed	Worried
Guilty	Outrageous	Yucky
Glad	Playful	Zany

Basic Steps in Problem Solving and Decision Making

Problem Solving Session: High School

Helps young people learn the basic steps in problem solving and decision making.

Description

The facilitator explains to the group that when people are faced with a problem, they often become confused. If a person accepts this state of confusion and wanders around thinking about the problem, the confusion increases and the person falls back on old ways of solving problems. Ask group members for examples of how people sometimes repeat behaviors unless they stop and look at the problems they are facing. The facilitator explains that there are some key steps young people can use to solve problems without falling back into old behaviors.

The first step is to recognize and accept the need for change. Sometimes this does not come easily. Teens who are doing poorly may believe that that's the way children from their family perform; it has always been that way and always will be that way. They may believe there is no need to change. Addicted people may believe this too. They may think that their lives are going fine, or they may know that their lives are terrible but think that that's the way it was for their parents and it will always be that way for them. However, with some information and a dose of reality from our friends, we usually do see and accept the need for change.

The second step is to determine what can be changed. Sometimes people have difficulty solving problems because they think of only one or two distasteful solutions. Usually this involves a "win/lose" situation in which some-

body must lose for someone else to win. Those who can think of entirely new alternatives do best in problem solving. Brainstorming can help us come up with new solutions to old problems. Here are some things to consider that may help you come up with a new solution:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| People | Think of some person who could help you solve the problem. |
| Models for Change | Think of anyone you know who has faced similar situations and how that person dealt with this type of problem. |
| Organizations | Think of what organizations could help solve the problem. |
| Programs | Think of what special programs, whether they are within an organization (such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Alateen) or not, could help solve the problem. |

The third step is to narrow down your options and the fourth step is to consider the consequences of each of the remaining options. The fifth and final step is to state the actual goal you would like to attain. Then, list the steps you must take to achieve the goal: daily, weekly, monthly, and/or long-term. It is important to state some observable, time-limited criteria for taking each step.

Materials Needed

- Copies of Basic Steps in Problem Solving and Decision Making worksheet (on next page)
- Pencils

Basic Steps in Problem Solving and Decision Making Worksheet

1. Recognize and accept the need for change.

2. Determine what can be changed.

3. Narrow your options.

4. Consider the consequences of the remaining options.

5. State the actual goal you would like to attain and when you hope to attain it.

Goal: _____

When: _____

Bicycle

Addiction Session: Elementary School

This simulation activity represents what it is like to be addicted and/or live in a family with addiction.

Description

The facilitator begins the activity by telling the children that they are going to take a ride on an octocycle (assuming there are eight children and eight chairs). Each child represents a family member, with the alcoholic/addict steering at the front. An invisible bar connects each seat to emphasize the rigidity and enmeshment of the disease. Children sit in their chairs and make the circular motion of bicycle pedals with their arms and hands. By reading a story (see Bicycle Ride Narrative), the facilitator takes the children for a ride. An initially peaceful, joyful journey gradually turns into a rainstorm on a

steep downhill grade. Suddenly, no brakes! Crash! After the crash, the facilitator asks the children questions about the experience.

The exercise provides children with a hands-on experiential process that not only captures their imaginations but also focuses on the reality of the disease of addiction. Children see and feel how the bicycle ride symbolizes addiction and a loss of control. They gain a fundamental understanding of this family disease and have fun while doing so. The exercise also helps children bring the disease to conscious reality by talking about their feelings. Children learn that, even if they must go on the addiction ride, they can get help and make choices to stay safe.

Materials Needed

- Bicycle Ride Narrative and Questions (on next page)
- Chairs

Bicycle Ride Narrative and Questions

“Okay, everybody in position.

“We are going for a nice ride through the country. It’s a beautiful day. The sun is shining and the grass is green. There’s no wind, just a gentle, warm breeze. We are pedaling slowly, breathing evenly, enjoying the scenery, and chatting and laughing with one another. We put on the brakes slowly as a dog wags his way across our path.

“As we gather speed, a few dark clouds begin to appear over the horizon, the breeze becomes a little stiffer, and the smooth pavement turns into a dirt road. We begin to pedal a little harder and grab the handlebars a little tighter. The clouds are becoming darker and some light rain begins to fall. The dirt road is getting slippery and bumpy. We keep putting on the brakes but continue moving. We have to lean forward and pedal harder to go up a

hill. Our legs and stomachs are sore, and our hands grab the handlebars even tighter. The rain is coming down faster and at times the bike almost tips over.

“We reach the top of the hill exhausted, but it is raining so hard we have to keep moving. We start pedaling faster as we go down the other side of the hill. The rain is slapping harder onto our faces. The bike is sliding back and forth across the road. Loud sounds of thunder can be heard. Lightning strikes a tree near us. We are pedaling faster and faster, and holding on tighter and tighter. Our feet keep slipping and we try the brakes. The brakes don’t hold; they no longer work. We’re losing control. The pedals are spinning at full speed. The road is much steeper and bumpier as we go even faster, trying the brakes (still no brakes) and holding on for dear life. CRASH, the bike tips over!”

Questions

1. What was the ride like for you?
2. How was this ride like alcoholism/addiction?
3. How was this ride like what you experience in your own home?
4. Was everyone affected?
5. When you fell down, whom did you have to help first?
6. What would you do if the addicted person wanted to get back on the bike and continue down the hill?
7. Whose fault is it?
8. Where can you go to get help?

Bubblegum Family

Addiction Session: Middle and High School

In a simple yet powerful way, this activity helps young people understand what happens to everyone in a family with addiction.

Feelings Session: Middle School

Allows children to process feelings and discuss how this exercise is similar to their own family experiences.

Description

The facilitator explains that the group is going to do an activity called the Bubblegum Family and begins a discussion with the children about the fact that almost everyone has had some experience chewing bubblegum. Ask the children, "What's your favorite brand?" Remind the children how sticky gum becomes if they take it out of their mouth after about 30 seconds or a few quick chews. Yuck! Have they ever had the pleasure of getting a great wad stuck on the bottom of their shoe? Explain to the children that in this game everyone imagines that there are 9,997 pieces of slightly chewed bubblegum in a circle on the floor.

The group can pretend that they have stayed up the past 24 hours and chewed piece after piece of bubblegum for about 30 seconds each.

Children volunteer to role-play an addicted parent, the spouse, and several children. Give children the opportunity to role-play various family members so they can see how everyone becomes stuck in the same way. Remember to transform the children into specific characters (roles) for the activity, and to transform them back to their original selves after the activity. Using a narrative, the facilitator orchestrates a scenario in which everyone in the family gets stuck in the addiction (bubblegum).

First, the addicted parent gets stuck by using alcohol or drugs. Then the spouse and children get stuck in their attempts to help the addicted parent. Once stuck in the gum, everyone has a hard time moving around. They lose their choices in what they think and do. Only by taking good care of themselves first can family members get unstuck. Different strategies for taking good care of self and the progression of the disease are stressed.

Materials Needed

- Bubblegum Family Narrative (on next page)

Bubblegum Family Narrative

Here we have a family. Miss, please come up. I want you to meet Tammy. She is 35 years old, a mother of three, a wonderful mom. She has a full-time job and is just an incredible lady. Ever since she's been a young adult, Tammy has been going out each weekend and drinking with her friends, but it doesn't seem to be a problem. All of a sudden as Tammy is going through life, she steps right in the bubblegum. All of a sudden she's stuck. Try to move, Tammy.

"Well, I'm trying, but I can't really move too much."

That's right, you can't move too much. That's addiction. People get stuck. Watch Tammy. She can sway from side to side. She really thinks she's not stuck, that she can get out of that quickly, but she can't.

What happens as time goes on is that Tammy becomes more and more preoccupied with the gum while she's stuck in it. She can't do as good a job at work. She's out sick a lot. She can't be as productive because she's preoccupied with the gum. It's really starting to slow her down. She doesn't have freedom of choice anymore. When it comes to her kids, she can't take care of them like she used to. She's trapped in that gum. She's stuck! She's not spending as much time with her kids. She prepares dinner and just goes off on her own.

Tammy has a husband named Fred. Young man, please come up. Fred loves his wife very much. Fred's been very concerned about Tammy. Haven't you, Fred?


"Why, yes."

Fred has been concerned because he notices his wife is stuck in the gum. She's on probation at work because she has been

absent so many days. Her last review wasn't very good. Fred has noticed over the past few months that he has had to take on more and more of the responsibilities at home. He's starting to prepare dinner. Fred is also spending time helping the kids with their homework and their projects on the weekends. He's very concerned about his wife. He doesn't get to spend much time with her alone because she seems preoccupied and distant. She's just stuck in that gum. Because Fred cares about and loves his wife, what do you suppose he tries to do? He tries to free his wife from the bubblegum. So go ahead, Fred, go try to help your wife.

As Fred tries to help his wife, all of a sudden he gets stuck in the bubblegum. Now Fred is stuck. Try to move around, Fred. Notice he thinks he can move around and he thinks he's free, but he's really stuck. Remember that addiction is a progressive disease. When Tammy first got stuck, the gum only went up to her calf. Now when Fred is stuck in it with her, it comes all the way up to just above her knees! So how does this affect Fred? He's preoccupied at work. He's thinking about having to come home and prepare meals. He wonders if she's going to be drunk or sober. Will she embarrass him at the family dinner next week? He can't be as productive at work. He thinks more and more about her. He's not available to his kids on a consistent basis anymore. He's not always helping them with their homework. Fred is even beginning to drink with her sometimes. So all of a sudden he's stuck too.

We then have the oldest child, Jimmy. Young man, please come up. Jimmy's very concerned because not only is Mom stuck, but Dad is too. Neither one is there for him on a consistent basis. Out of love and concern, he



tries to help them get unstuck. As Jimmy goes and tries to get his parents unstuck, look at what happens. In an attempt to help, he gets stuck in the gum too. How does this affect Jimmy? His life isn't as free.

How does this happen? Jimmy has a hard time concentrating in school. He thinks about having to go home to take care of a younger brother and sister. He's thinking about whether or not he should bring friends home. He might get embarrassed about what's happening at home. He's really concerned. Jimmy doesn't have very many opportunities to play anymore because he's taking care of his younger brother and sister. When he does have a chance to play, he's often worried about Mom and Dad. He might be yelled at for something he didn't do.

As younger brother and sister attempt to help Mom, Dad, and older brother get unstuck from the bubblegum, they will get stuck too. Young man and miss, please come up. The entire family gets stuck. That's the Bubblegum Family. Why do the kids get stuck? This is really important to know. Why do kids get stuck in the bubblegum? They get stuck because they try to help their parents first. So if the reason why kids get stuck is because they try to help, how do kids get unstuck? Kids get unstuck when they stop trying to take care of other people in their family, like Mom,

Dad, brothers, or sisters. They can begin by trying to take good care of themselves. That's how kids get unstuck from the bubblegum.

What does it mean to take care of yourself? What different ways can children take good care of themselves? Go out and play. Talk to a teacher. Ask a counselor for help. Go to a neighbor's house. Call Grandma if there's a mess at the house and you don't want to be there. These are some of the different ways children can help to take care of themselves.

Notice how everyone attempted to help Mom. They were all around her. Everyone got stuck in the bubblegum. Even if Mom wanted to get unstuck, she couldn't! There's no room for her to get out. The family has blocked her path to recovery. Children need to help themselves.

We have to remember that recovery takes time. There might be a time when Jimmy gets unstuck and starts to take good care of himself, but two weeks from now there will be a big dinner at the house with Dad's family. Mom is still stuck in the bubblegum, so Jimmy might have to do all the preparations. Recovery is a process. We take two steps forward, and because we're human, sometimes we take a step backward. So we get stuck and unstuck. We get stuck and unstuck.

That's the Bubblegum Family.

Comfortable/Uncomfortable Feelings

Feelings Session: High School

This activity helps teens to know that all feelings are okay and that it's what they do with their feelings that counts.

Description

The facilitator explains that individuals experience a wide range of feelings on a daily basis. All feelings are okay; there are no such things as good or bad feelings. Some feelings are much more comfortable to have than other feelings. Living in an addicted family, teens often experience lots of uncomfortable feelings.

Ask the group members to think about which feelings are comfortable and uncomfortable for them. Give each member a pencil and copy of the worksheet. Have each member place the feelings on the following list (add any others that are appropriate for the group) in the comfortable and uncomfortable categories on the worksheet.

anger
calmness
confusion
embarrassment
excitement
gratitude
guilt
happiness
hurt
joy
loneliness
sadness
serenity
shame
surprise

Have a discussion about these feelings by having each person share his/her responses with the group. Then ask these questions:

How do you handle the comfortable feelings?

How do you handle the uncomfortable feelings?

Materials Needed

- Copies of Feelings worksheet (on next page)
- Pencils

Feelings Worksheet

Comfortable Feelings	Uncomfortable Feelings

Dealing With Anger

Problem Solving Session: Elementary School

This exercise introduces the discussion of anger and ways for children to deal with it.

Description

Read or summarize the following points:

- Anger is a very natural and normal feeling.
- Children feel different kinds of anger frequently during a regular day. They may feel upset when a little brother or sister messes with a prized possession, or mad when a friend tells others something said in confidence, or really, really mad when they realize how much addiction has hurt them and their family.
- It's okay to feel angry; however, how you handle it is very important.

- There are healthy ways to deal with anger.
- There are three important guidelines to remember when sharing anger:
 1. Respect others.
 2. Respect yourself.
 3. Respect property.

List the above three guidelines on the board or flip chart as you discuss them. Duplicate and distribute the exercise on Anger on the following page to upper elementary children. For younger children, you may want to work from the flip chart or help the children by filling the form out with them.

Materials Needed

- Chalkboard/flipchart
- Pencils
- Dealing with Anger worksheet (on next page)

Dealing With Anger

It is okay to feel angry. How you handle it is very important. Fill out this sheet. We will then talk about it as a group.

*Healthy ways to
deal with anger*

I feel angry when _____

I feel angry when _____

I feel angry when _____

I feel angry when _____

Drinking and Drug Problems

Addiction Session: Elementary School

This exercise helps children understand that all drugs change how the body works and that some drugs are healing and some drugs are addictive.

Description

Explain to young people that a drug is something we put into our body that changes how our body works. Aspirin, penicillin, alcohol, and marijuana are names of some drugs. All drugs affect our body in some way. Some drugs affect how we think. Some drugs, like penicillin, affect how our body heals itself. Other drugs affect our moods (feelings). Drugs that affect our feelings are called mood-changing drugs. Alcohol and marijuana are drugs that change our moods. The names of some drugs are listed below.

Write the following list of drugs on a flipchart or chalkboard. Have the children choose the drugs that can change a person's moods.

aspirin
nicotine
marijuana
penicillin
heroin
librium
valium
alcohol

Then ask them to answer the following questions:

1. A mood-changing drug found in beer, wine, and liquors (like whiskey, scotch, bourbon, and vodka) is called

_____.

2. "Pot" is a nickname for the mood-changing drug _____.

3. Some pills that change people's moods are

and

_____.

Drinking alcohol or using other mood-changing drugs changes how people act. Have the children think of a time they saw someone drunk or high.

Have children choose words from the list below that describe how that person acted (you can add your own words to the list):

Fell asleep
Got mad
Yelled
Got clumsy
Acted scary
Said something stupid
Did something crazy

Sometimes people are not careful when they are drinking or using drugs. Joe's father drank one beer after another, until he drank too much and drove the car into a tree. Peter's mom drank too much and did silly things that embarrassed Peter in front of his friends. Susan's mother took lots of pills. The pills made her forget about the time. She forgot to fix dinner.

People who use too much of a mood-changing drug—such as alcohol or marijuana—become “drunk” or “high.” They cannot think clearly. They forget things. Their bodies do not work as well. They do clumsy or silly things. Sometimes they say crazy things or see things that aren’t really there. People who are drunk or high can lose control of their thoughts, their feelings, and their actions. Being around someone who is drunk or high can feel scary.

Have the children think of a time they were around someone who was drunk or high and they felt embarrassed or afraid. Ask them to share about this time with the group:

When he/she was drunk, he/she

and I felt

People who drink or use other mood-changing drugs, even though it keeps causing problems with family, work, or health, are sick. They have a disease called “alcoholism” or “drug addiction.” The sickness is the same whether a person uses alcohol or drugs.

People who keep drinking (or using drugs) even when it keeps causing problems usually are addicted. Addicted means stuck. They are stuck needing to drink and use drugs, just like you need to scratch when you itch. People

who are addicted to alcohol or drugs need help to quit drinking or using drugs. They cannot do it on their own. They are sick. We say people with this sickness are “addicted.”

Some people believe that all alcoholics or drug-addicted people are grungy, dirty men who lie in gutters with wine bottles at their sides. But most alcoholics are just regular people. What do you think an alcohol- or drug-addicted person looks like?

Alcohol- or drug-addicted persons can be men or women, boys or girls, rich or poor, tall or short, fat or thin. Addicted people work as doctors, dentists, construction workers, teachers, mechanics, and grocery store clerks, and in many other kinds of jobs.

Every alcoholic or drug-addicted person is somebody’s mother, father, sister, brother, or friend.

Do you think somebody in your family might have this sickness of addiction?

What makes you think that? _____

Materials Needed

- Pencils
- Flipchart or chalkboard

Family Self-Care Map

Treatment and Recovery Session: Elementary School

This activity helps children understand what they can do to take care of themselves and what their family members can do to take care of themselves. In other words, they need to understand the difference between the adult's recovery jobs and their recovery jobs.

Description

The facilitator explains to the children that recovery from addiction takes work. The addicted person in treatment needs to do certain things to stay well. The other adults in the family also have to take care of themselves. The children do not have to take care of the adults; their only jobs are self-care, having fun, and being kids.

The facilitator explains the many resources for children and adults to take care of themselves such as the 12-step programs of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA), Al-Anon, and Alateen. Many people need additional counseling, treatment, and continuing care. Explain to the children the concepts of anonymity at meetings, using first names only, and 12-step service work. Explain that when parents go to meetings, it does not mean the children are not important; the parents need to do this for their own recovery.

Children need to remember to reach out to other safe people when parents are busy with recovery work. Be prepared to answer questions the children may have about these concepts and resources, such as "Why do people in recovery have to keep doing these things after treatment?" and "When do they get better?"

The facilitator writes on the chalkboard/flipchart the areas to be covered in the activity: Body, Mind, Spirit, Feelings, and Being a Kid. If the group has done this activity under the Jeopardy Self-Care Game, they can just review the areas. If the group has not done the activity before, have the children brainstorm things they can do in these areas for self-care.

The facilitator can then give out copies of the Family Self-Care Map worksheet. Have the children list things the adults can do for themselves under the adult section. Then, have the children list things they can do for themselves under the child section. Make sure children understand how their jobs are different from the adult jobs.

Materials Needed

- Copies of Family Self-Care Map worksheet (on next page)
- Pencils
- Nontoxic markers
- Chalkboard/flipchart

Family Self-Care Map

Child

Body

Feelings

**The kid's job
is to do self-care
and have fun!**

Mind

Spirit

Kid

Adults

**The adult's job is
to do treatment and
recovery (T & R)**

Feelin' and Healin' Game

Feelings Session: High School

This activity introduces young people to the concept of helpful and harmful ways to express feelings. It encourages them to develop positive ways to share their feelings on a daily basis.

Description

The facilitator introduces the group to the concept of helpful and harmful ways to share feelings. This notion gets beyond the “all feelings are okay” construct to guide teens with specific strategies to share their feelings in healthy ways. While this exercise can work well with any feeling, it is particularly effective with the emotion of anger.

Using a mini-lecture format, the facilitator teaches the group about the three harmful ways to express anger. Even though anger is a normal feeling these young people experience on a regular basis, it is not okay to express it by

- Hurting other people
- Hurting themselves
- Destroying property

The facilitator engages the group to brainstorm examples of each harmful category. Teens might come up with “saying mean words to others” as an example of hurting others, “putting themselves down” as a way to hurt themselves, and “graffiti” as a means of destroying property. The facilitator lists these on the chalkboard/flipchart and a rich discussion ensues.

The facilitator then introduces the group to the helpful ways to express anger:

- Respect others
- Respect themselves
- Respect property

The group discusses how it's okay to express anger to safe people by just telling them or writing them a note. It isn't necessary to yell, threaten, or hit the person to share anger. The discussion continues as the group brainstorms helpful ways to express anger. Reinforce to the young people that it's okay for them to get angry as many of them have lots of things to be angry about. What's essential is to learn safe ways for them to express it.

Introduce young people to the idea of taking a timeout when they get really angry. Doing so will help prevent them from doing or saying something that can be very harmful and potentially dangerous.

Materials Needed

- Chalkboard/flipchart
- Nontoxic markers

Feelings Box

Feelings Session: Elementary and Middle School

This activity helps children to recognize and accept their feelings and to use positive/safe ways to handle their feelings.

Description

The facilitator places a number of cards in a box with statements such as "I feel angry when...." (See list of phrases on next page.) Each child draws a card and supplies the answer to the question. Give children the option to pass on the first card and select another one. Explain that feelings may come out as headaches, stomachaches, or just being "upset" rather than a "real" feeling. Sometimes people try to ignore their feelings, but our bodies give us signals or clues to our feelings through such things as stomachaches, headaches, and sleeping problems. Sometimes our feelings get locked into our bodies and can't get out easily. We feel a tightness in our stomach when we are nervous or jittery. Sometimes we have a tightness in our chest and we have difficulty breathing. We cannot sleep at night when we are worried, and sometimes we do not want to eat when we have upset feelings.

Facilitator reviews the following "rules" for handling feelings: We should not

1. Hurt ourselves. Sometimes people start taking drugs to feel happy or solve problems if they are sad. That doesn't work for long, and it becomes hard for them to feel okay when they are not taking drugs.

2. Hurt anyone else. When we're angry with someone, hitting is not okay, but telling someone we feel that way may be okay.
3. Destroy property. It is not okay to break something.

After we recognize our feelings, we can learn to accept them, which means to admit to ourselves that we are feeling something. We may learn that we can change our feelings by doing something, maybe talking about them with someone who cares, or by doing something we enjoy such as biking or playing. For example, if we wake up in the morning and it is raining, and we planned to play outside, we may feel sad. We can learn that we can change our feelings perhaps by inviting a friend over. We don't have to feel sad all day. Addiction is called the "feelings disease" because people sometimes start drinking or using drugs to change the way they feel or to relieve uncomfortable feelings and make them go away for a little while.

Conclude with "all feelings are okay." Feelings are signals to us that we are having a reaction to something. What is important is that we remember to handle our feelings in safe ways, which means that we

- Do not hurt ourselves
- Do not hurt someone else
- Do not break anything

Materials Needed

- Feelings Box with phrase cards inside (on next page)