

Discussion Topics

- Discuss the places where a person can find support if he or she is experiencing problems.
- Have students create a poster showing the cycle of addiction. Use a large circle to represent the ongoing cycle of any addiction and illustrate the stages of alcohol addiction around the circle.
- In peer discussion groups, have students share strategies for keeping themselves drug and alcohol-free.

Follow-up Activities

- Have students research how laws have changed based on the dangers of alcohol and create a time line illustrating the use of alcohol in American society from colonial times to the present day.
- In small groups, have students discuss the many factors involved in a person's risk for developing alcoholism. Studies have shown that a person's chances of abusing alcohol can increase based on the person's environment, including where and how he or she lives; family, friends, and culture; peer pressure; and even alcohol's availability. Have students create posters listing biological, psychological and social factors that can lead to abuse. Once these factors are "out in the open," brainstorm ways to resist and create accompanying posters.
- Why do people feel like they have to "experiment" with drugs and alcohol? List other things that teens can "experiment" with that are less dangerous.
- Through a local police department or juvenile detention center, arrange to have a young person who is serving time for an alcohol-related crime speak to the class about his or her experiences.

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our Web site at www.LibraryVideo.com

- www.al-anon.org/alateen.html
Support group for teenagers who are affected by an alcoholic. The Web site provides literature, meeting information and an overview of the group's activities.
- www.niaaa.nih.gov
The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism is dedicated to providing alcohol and alcoholism information about the causes, effects, coping, medications, and treatment of this addiction.

(Continued)

- www.health.org
This Web site from the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information contains a wealth of resources for students, teachers and parents.
- www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/students
This site contains an interactive program that shows how alcohol travels through the body, affecting virtually every organ system.

Suggested Print Resources

- Abraham, Henry D. *What's a Parent to Do?* New Horizon Press, East Rutherford, NJ; 2004.
- Gerdes, Louise. *Drunk Driving.* Greenhaven Press, San Diego, CA; 2001.
- Stewart, Gail. *Teen Alcoholics.* Lucent Books, San Diego, CA; 2000.

For help with a drug problem, call 1-800-662-HELP or go to:
www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Paula J. Bense, M.Ed.
Curriculum Specialist, Schlessinger Media

COMPLETE LIST OF TITLES

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • ALCOHOL & ALCOHOLISM | • MARIJUANA |
| • ALCOHOL: TEENAGE DRINKING | • METHAMPHETAMINE & OTHER STIMULANTS |
| • CLUB DRUGS | • STEROIDS |
| • COCAINE & CRACK | • TEENAGE DEPRESSION & SUICIDE |
| • HALLUCINOGENS | • TRANQUILIZERS & OTHER DEPRESSANTS |
| • HEROIN & OTHER OPIATES | |
| • INHALANTS | |

Teacher's Guides Included
and Available Online at:

libraryvideo.com
The Leading Educational Video, DVD & CD-ROM Distributor

800-843-3620

SCHLESSINGER
MEDIA
— A DIVISION OF LIBRARY VIDEO COMPANY, —

Teacher's Guide and Program Copyright 2004 by Schlessinger Media,
a division of Library Video Company
P.O. Box 580, Wynnewood, PA 19096 • 800-843-3620
Executive Producer: Andrew Schlessinger
Program produced and directed by Center City Film & Video
All rights reserved.

F7001
V7101



ALCOHOL & ALCOHOLISM

Grades 7 & up

Successful prevention education must empower teens to develop their own decision-making skills and assume responsibility for making choices that keep them healthy and safe. It is important to convey that most youths do not use drugs. In fact, smoking, drinking and other drug use has fallen among teens in recent years.

Nonetheless, drug related problems continue to devastate families and communities. Prepared with credible information, students develop an understanding of the risks involved in the use of any drug and learn that you don't have to be an addict for drugs to change your life.

SCHLESSINGER
MEDIA
— A DIVISION OF LIBRARY VIDEO COMPANY, —

Before Viewing the Program

Engage the group with the following discussion points before viewing the program. Brainstorm a list of responses and record them on the chalkboard or flipchart. After viewing the video, refer to the list and add or revise if necessary.

- Why do people use drugs?
- What is addiction?
- Do you know of someone who is addicted to drugs? What is his or her life like?
- Is there a type of person more likely to become addicted to drugs?
- What is your image of a drug addict?
- Where can a person find support if they are experiencing problems?

Background

Alcohol is produced during a natural process called fermentation, which occurs when yeast, a microscopic plant that floats freely in the air, reacts with the sugar in fruit or vegetable juice, creating alcohol and releasing carbon dioxide. The process stops naturally when about 11% to 14% of the juice is alcohol. The product of this fermentation is wine, but a similar process is used to make beer, which typically contains between 3 and 6% alcohol.

Distillation is the process used to make beverages with a higher alcohol content. In this process the fermented liquid is heated until it vaporizes, and then the vapor is cooled until it condenses into a liquid again. Distilled alcoholic beverages (e.g., whiskey, gin, vodka, and rum) contain 40% to 50% alcohol. They are sometimes referred to as “spirits” or “hard liquor.”

Alcohol belongs to a class of drugs called depressants. Depressants are drugs that slow down the normal activity of the brain and spinal cord. (In other words, they “depress” the central nervous system.) They have been used throughout history to induce sleep, relieve stress, and reduce anxiety. Alcohol is one of the oldest and most universal depressants used for these purposes. Drinking alcohol causes lessening of inhibitions, decreased attention, mood changes such as euphoria and drowsiness.

The body disposes of alcohol in two ways: elimination and oxidation. Only about 10% of the alcohol in the body leaves by elimination from the lungs and kidneys. About 90% of the alcohol leaves by oxidation. The liver plays a major role in the body’s oxidation of alcohol. When alcohol enters the liver, some of it is changed to a chemical called acetaldehyde. When acetaldehyde is combined with oxygen, acetic acid is formed. When the acetic acid is further combined with oxygen, carbon dioxide and water are formed. The oxidation of alcohol produces calories. Oxidation continues slowly until all the alcohol has left the body.

Effects of Alcohol

Alcohol acts directly on the brain and affects its ability to work. Judgment is the first function of the brain to be affected; the ability to think and make decisions becomes impaired. As more alcohol is consumed, the motor functions of the body are affected.

When someone drinks an alcoholic beverage it flows into the stomach. Some of the alcohol is absorbed through the stomach walls into the bloodstream, but most passes into the small intestine and then into the bloodstream, and this circulates throughout the body. Once alcohol is in the bloodstream, it quickly reaches the brain and the drinker begins to feel its effects.

Drinking has varying effects on people. Physiologically, there are a number of factors that affect the body’s response to alcohol. The speed of consumption, the type of beverage consumed, a person’s body weight and gender, along with the amount of food in one’s stomach all have an impact on how a person will react to alcohol. Even when an individual drinks exactly the same amount of alcohol on two different occasions, the effects can be different.

Drinking too much can cause lethargy, confusion, loss of motor control, amnesia, depressed breathing, and even death. A lot of people think that a person needs to be vomiting or passed out to need medical attention. In fact, there are many signs that can indicate a problem. Some signs of intoxication include: slurred speech; stumbling or having difficulty maintaining balance and walking independently; trouble making eye contact; feeling excessively cold or warm (to oneself or to the touch); shortness of breath; erratic, withdrawn, or aggressive behavior; queasiness, vomiting, or dry heaving; a tired stupor; unconsciousness.

Abusers of alcohol drink even when it threatens their health or well-being. They often suffer from denial — deciding not to recognize a problem as a problem. Their bodies adjust to the continuing, frequent presence of alcohol, resulting in the need to drink more and more to feel any effect. This is tolerance and is an indication of a developing problem because tolerance ultimately leads to addiction.

Someone addicted to alcohol has the disease of alcoholism and needs to drink. An addict’s pattern of use is compulsive, and withdrawal symptoms (nausea, sweating, shakiness, anxiety, increased blood pressure and/or seizures) can occur when drug use has stopped. These symptoms disappear when an alcoholic resumes drinking, making it very difficult to fight the disease.

Alcoholism affects the entire family, contributing to stress, dysfunction, domestic violence, and conflict. Children of alcoholics are more at risk for alcoholism and other drug abuse than children of non-alcoholics. There is evidence that links alcoholism to dysfunctional marital relationships, child abuse, depression, physical and mental health problems, below-average academic achievement, and impaired reasoning.

(Continued)

Although some people are able to recover from alcoholism without help, the majority of alcoholics need assistance. With treatment and support, many individuals are able to stop drinking and rebuild their lives.

Focus Questions

1. What is alcohol?
2. Why do people drink alcohol?
3. What are some factors that affect a person’s response to alcohol?
4. What is alcohol abuse?
5. How does a person become an alcoholic?
6. What are some long-term effects of alcohol abuse?
7. What is Fetal Alcohol Syndrome?

Vocabulary

addiction — A chronic, relapsing disease characterized by compulsive drug-seeking and abuse and by long-lasting chemical changes in the brain.

Alcoholics Anonymous — A well-known organized support program for alcoholics who want to stop drinking (alcoholics-anonymous.org/).

cerebral cortex — The region of the brain responsible for cognitive functions including reasoning, mood, and perception of stimuli.

cirrhosis — Scarring of the liver and liver dysfunction due to long-term alcohol abuse.

craving — A strong need, or compulsion, to drink.

psychological dependence — A craving or compulsion for repeated use of a drug despite any adverse effects that may occur.

physical dependence — The process that occurs when the body has adapted to the presence of a drug and reduces its own production of neurotransmitters. When drug users develop physical dependence, withdrawal symptoms occur if use of the drug is reduced or stopped abruptly.

relapse — To slip back into addiction.

tolerance — A process involving the body’s lessening response to a drug, making it necessary for users to take higher doses of the drug to achieve the same effects once reached with lower doses.

withdrawal — Symptoms of illness that occur when an addict discontinues use of a drug. Withdrawal from heroin and other opiates produces anxiety, uneasiness, yawning, tears, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, goose bumps, and runny nose.