

Substance Abuse



Substance Abuse

Purpose

To learn about what is substance abuse and why it is risk taking behaviour?

To understand the difference between prescribed medicines, illegal drugs and use /misuse of over the counter medicines

Entrance of Pupils

A thought provoking slideshow introducing the theme of Substance Abuse for the pupils to enter assembly to (10 minutes)

Introduction

Substance abuse is the misuse of a number of different substances for the purpose of altering the mind and mood. Most commonly considered are drugs (legal medicines and illegal drugs) and alcohol, but it also includes glue and solvent abuse and inhalants commonly found in household products. More recently the use of the so called 'legal high' has become part of common usage.

Drugs

A. Illegal Drugs

All illegal drugs cause harm. In the UK, there are three categories of drug depending on how much harm they are considered to cause.

Category A drugs are the most harmful and addiction can be immediate. These include heroin, cocaine, ecstasy, LSD amongst others.



Category B drugs are also very harmful and can cause addiction. These include speed, cannabis, ketamine, mephedrone and some amphetamines.

Category C remain harmful and can have life changing consequences. They include anabolic steroids (often misused by some gym goers to build muscle mass quickly), GHB and some tranquillisers.

It is illegal to buy or sell these drugs and it is also illegal if you knowingly allow these drugs to be used on your premises or in your house; this includes on school property.

B. Misuse of Medicines

Of course, medicines given by the doctor or bought over the counter and used correctly are really important for our health. The companies who make these medicines have already ensured that they are safe for use when prescribed by doctors—indeed, it can be very dangerous NOT to take prescribed medicines given for a very wide variety of needs.

Medicines are only dangerous if:

- A. A doctor has not prescribed them for you.
- B. You do not take the right amount

Some medicines that doctors prescribe for very good reasons, can be stolen and sold to people who should not be taking them. This is not only illegal, but it is also very dangerous.



Alcohol

Alcohol in the form of beer, wines and spirits, is legal when bought and consumed by adults over the age of 18. Whilst many people enjoy the taste and mildly mood changing effect of limited amounts of alcohol, for many others it is a real problem.

Alcohol can be addictive which means an alcoholic needs more and more drink just to get through a day. The more alcohol that is drunk, the more damage it is likely to do to the organs of your body. It can affect your mood and mental state, often causing depression; inappropriate and sometimes aggressive behaviour; and removing the ability to make good and safe decisions.

Some people with particular illnesses or taking some medications can find alcohol even more damaging. The same is true for pregnant women as the alcohol goes into the blood stream and is carried to the unborn baby.

For young people, the body is not yet fully developed and can be damaged even more quickly by excessive or regular intake of alcohol.



Inhalants

Over 1000 everyday household products contain chemicals that are safe in normal use, but if sniffed or inhaled in closed spaces are toxic. Some people do this to have a very short 'high' feeling, however there is a real danger that the chemicals can cause irreversible physical and mental damage even leading to death.



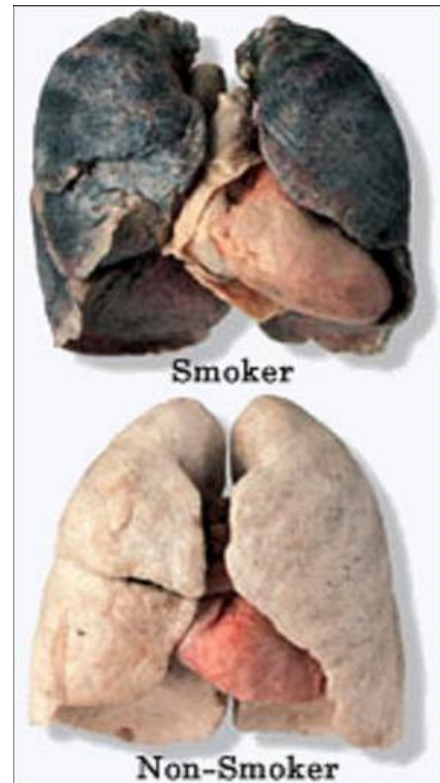
Smoking and Vaping

Tobacco is a plant that contains many dangerous elements, in particular:

- Nicotine
- Carbon Monoxide
- Tar

Additionally there are more than 4000 other chemicals in tobacco, many of which are harmful to our health.

These chemicals effect our heart, lungs, brain and many other organs and cells of the body and smoking is highly addictive.



Some people believe that vaping is safe, but in fact it still contains nicotine but in smaller quantities than cigarettes. Additionally electronic cigarettes have been know to explode in the face of users causing serious burns and injuries.



'Legal High'

This term is used to describe substances that mimic the effects of illegal drugs such as cocaine, ecstasy and speed but which have been 'tweaked' chemically in order to avoid anti drug laws. Since May 2016, so called 'legal highs' have, in fact, become illegal for production, sale or supply and doing so carries a punishment of up to seven years in prison.

They can be very dangerous as the chemicals have not been tested for safety and therefore users cannot be sure of how they will react. Again they can lower inhibitions which leads to poor judgement and risk taking behaviour.

Why are these Substances Dangerous?

Addiction

Addiction is defined as not having control over doing, taking or using something to the point where it could be harmful to you. There are lots of reasons why addictions begin. In the case of drugs, alcohol and nicotine, these substances affect the way you feel, both physically and mentally. These feelings can initially be enjoyable and create a powerful urge to use the substances again.

Being addicted to something means that not having it causes withdrawal symptoms, or a "come down". Because this can be unpleasant, addicts find it easier to carry on having or doing what they crave, and so the cycle continues.

Often, an addiction gets out of control because you need more and more to satisfy a craving and achieve the "high".

The strain of managing an addiction can seriously damage your school, work, life and relationships. In the case of substance misuse (for example, drugs and alcohol), an addiction can have serious psychological and physical effects on the individual and also badly damage family and friends.

Whilst some drugs are not known to be addictive, the statistics show that a large percentage of users will go on to try other types of drugs.



Not Controlled by Chemists

Illegal drugs have no one checking on what is actually in the drug or how strong it is. Many dealers will mix up the drugs with other things such as household cleaning products to make it go further. This makes the drug doubly dangerous.

Also, drugs and alcohol have different effects on different people. No one can know how they are going to react and sometimes they only find out by being very ill or dying from the drug.

Dangerous Behaviour

Illegal substances alter the way the brain works and therefore how we act. It shuts down our inhibitions and so we behave out of character. This can lead to arguments, fights, poor decisions regarding our safety and doing things that we later really regret. Unfortunately this is often filmed or photographed and before long, images of our poor behaviour are out in the public domain.

There has been a 25% rise in the number of deaths involving drink/drug driving since 2015. An estimated 9040 people were killed or seriously injured in 2016 where substance abuse was a major factor.



Dangerous Company

The buying , selling and using of drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, and other substances carries other risks . Mixing with criminals is dangerous and finding the money to buy more and more of the substances inevitably leads to stealing and other criminal activities. What seems harmless and fun, quickly leads people into the dark world of crime.

What the Law Says

Class	Drug	Possession	Supply & Production
A	Crack cocaine, cocaine, ecstasy (MDMA), heroin, LSD, magic mushrooms,	Up to 7 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both	Up to life in prison, an unlimited fine or both
B	Amphetamines, barbiturates, cannabis, cocaine.	Up to 5 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both	Up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both
C	Anabolic steroids, benzodiazepines (diazepam)	Up to 2 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both	Up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both
	'Legal High' - now illegal		Up to 7 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both
	Alcohol	Confiscation and if caught 3 or more times, social contract, fine or arrest	Up to £4000 fine
	Tobacco or E cigarettes	It is against the law to sell tobacco to anyone under 18.You must be 18 or over to buy e-cigarettes or e—liquids.	Up to 6 months in prison, up to £5000 or both

It is also worth remembering that anyone with a criminal record will never be allowed entry to countries such as the USA.



Loss of Interest in Other Aspects of Life

School

All of the substances have an effect on both the physical body and mental capacity. They restrict us being able to think and work effectively and slow down learning.

Issues related to buying the substances are constantly on the mind:

- Who do you need to meet with?
- Where will you need to go and will you be safe?
- How will you get every increasing amounts of money?
- What if you get caught?
- What if have a bad, even life threatening reaction?

Research shows that those involved in such activities gain lower results in school than they are capable and tend to drop out of activities such as sports.

Most schools have a 'zero tolerance' approach to taking, buying or selling illegal substances on school property. This includes the idea of 'Joint Enterprise' meaning that you do not have to be caught in the act, simply the fact that you are with the group is enough to treat you as fully involved.

For many schools, the sanction for these behaviours is permanent exclusion.

Family, Friends and Self Esteem

Perhaps one of the worst aspects of substance abuse is how it makes you feel about yourself. Most of the substances are depressants and make you feel low after the short lived 'high'.

People you care about will start not to want to mix with you anymore and you live with the fear of being 'found out' by your family knowing that you will have let them down and disappointed them terribly.



Where to Get Help

So what if you have already got into a bit of a mess with substance abuse or if you are worried about a family member or friend?

All is not lost! There are many organisations who can help you whatever the situation you find yourself in.

For more information try:

- www.addaction.org.uk
- www.youngspeoplehealth.org.uk
- www.nhs.uk
- www.childline.org.uk

You can speak to a someone at home; a mentor/ teacher in school ; your school nurse; or your family doctor (GP)

**Choose to
Refuse**



The Bible Says

'Be on your guard. Don't let yourselves become too occupied with feasting and drinking.....or that day may suddenly catch you like a trap.'

Luke 21: 34-35

Let's Pray

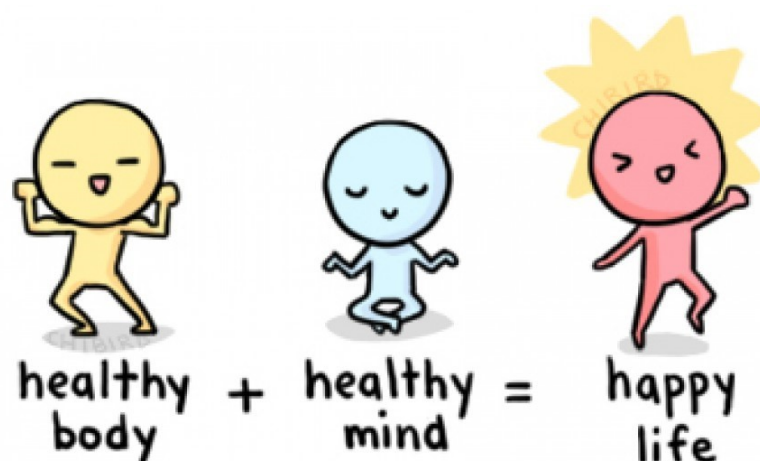
Dear God

Help us to be responsible for ourselves and look after the body and mind that you have given us. Help us to have the strength to say 'no' when others tempt us and to walk away from dangerous practices.

Amen

Exit of Pupils

A thought provoking slideshow of the key issues raised in the assembly about the theme of Substance Abuse for the pupils to exit assembly to (10 minutes)



Collective Worship and Putting it into Practice for the Rest of the Week

This week, working in teams, prepare a publicity campaign for your school on the Dangers of Substance Abuse.

Split into different groups to prepare and deliver:

- ⇒ An Assembly
- ⇒ Posters
- ⇒ True Stories
- ⇒ A Poem
- ⇒ A Play
- ⇒ A Magazine



Your teams will have to consider:

- Reliable research
- Age appropriate materials
- How to get the message across to your peers in a way that they will take notice



Let's Pray

Day 2

Dear God

Help those in trouble to turn to you to find the strength to overcome their problems. Forgive them any doubts and fears and fill them with your power and love.

Amen

Day 3

Dear God

Help all families who have someone involved with substance abuse. Give them the strength to help and support their loved ones in need.

Amen

Day 4

Dear God

Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Amen

Day 5

Dear God

Help us to look with compassion on those who have lost their way. Help us to care for them, love them and understand them even when they are making poor decisions.

Amen

