

Overview

It is often assumed that people who abuse drugs lack moral principles. It is also presumed that if addicts simply exercised greater willpower, they could stop using drugs. In reality, drug addiction is complex. Many people do not understand why or how people become addicted to drugs. Drugs change the brain in ways that induce compulsive drug abuse. Quitting is difficult - even for those ready to do so.

Scientific advances have helped us to better understand how drugs work in the brain. We are also learning about treatments that have higher success rates in order to help people stop abusing drugs and lead productive lives.

This class will cover

- Why drug addiction is a disease
 - How drug addiction changes the brain
 - Current research about addiction
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Objective

This class is designed to introduce the general public to the science behind addiction, how addiction affects our brains, and to provide real facts about addiction including how it can affect everyone.

Prior Knowledge Needed

A basic understanding of the parts of the brain are recommended.

Assessment Tools

Discussion. Question and Answer. Assessment Quiz available online for those interested.

Preparation

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Articles printed & copied | <input type="checkbox"/> Optional: Agenda printed or written on board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Video prepared to play | <input type="checkbox"/> Pamphlets for handouts: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chart paper & markers for note taking | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Get Nalaxone Now brought up on computer | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snacks set up | |



What you will do

Discussion. After introducing yourself and the goals of the class, ask the class *What do you think addiction is? How do drugs affect the brain to cause addiction?* Allow time for discussion. Take notes on the chart paper.

Introduce Video. This TedMed talk “Why do our brains get addicted” by Nora Volkow is 16:23 minutes long and was originally produced in 2014. Neuroscientist Nora Volkow is the director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse at the NIH.

<http://www.tedmed.com/talks/show?id=309096>

Present Article. Pass out the article “The Science of Addiction” and allow time for everyone to finish reading. As people finish reading, you can invite them to enjoy a snack while waiting for others to complete the article. This is a good time to invite people to view the Surgeon General’s report.

Discussion. After everyone has completed the reading, begin a discussion by asking

- *Why is the teen brain especially susceptible to the effects of drug abuse?*
- *What are some risk factors that lead to drug abuse and addiction?*
- *How can prescription drugs be just as dangerous as street drugs?*
- *Why are drugs addictive?*
- *What can you do to prevent drug addiction?*

Take notes on the chart paper.

Prepare for break. Let the class know that it’s almost break time. Before everyone takes a break, ask who has heard of naloxone. Explain that after the break the class will be participating in an online training called Get Naloxone Now. Further handouts from Science of Addiction are available on table or online.

After Break

Ask if any questions came up over the break. Introduce the Get Naloxone Now Training. Help everyone get logged in (recommendation: have it pulled up on the large screen and demonstrate how to log on). Walk around and answer questions during the online session.

Closing. At the end of session, answer any questions and thank everyone for attending. Introduce the other upcoming classes and website.

Agenda & Time Line

5 minutes	Welcome and Introductions
20 minutes	Video: TedMed talk “Why do our brains get addicted” by Nora Volkow
10 minutes	Presentation & Reading of Article
20 minutes	Group Discussion
10 minutes	Break
5 minutes	Q&A then introduction
40 minutes	Get Nalaxone Now Training
5 minutes	Good night, Final Questions
2 hours	