

SQUEEZE

Topic Area: Effect of nicotine on the body

Audience: Middle School/High School

Method: Classroom Activity

Time Frame: 15 minutes plus discussion

Materials Needed: A rope

Learning Objectives:

- When nicotine enters the body, it constricts the blood vessels.
- This causes the blood to flow through a narrower opening. This elevates the body's blood pressure and causes the heart to work harder.
- Nicotine may enter the body through cigarettes or chewing tobacco.
- Other drugs such as meth and cocaine also constrict the blood vessels and cause the same effects.

Activity:

- In a creative way, ask for about 10 volunteers to come to the front of the class, or an open area in the classroom.
- Have the volunteers stand in a group. Have them spaced about an arms length away from one another.
- Take a rope and lay it on the ground so that it goes completely around the group and forms a circle.
- Now have all of the students step back out of the circle.
- Explain to them that you will be making the circle smaller and smaller.
- Each time you move the rope and make the circle smaller, it is their job to still get into the circle.
- Each person must be in the circle and no part of anyone's body may be touching the ground outside of the circle.
- After a few rounds of making the circle smaller, they will have exhausted the easy solutions to the problem. No longer will it work to just squeeze in tighter.
- It is at this point that you may have to mention that they need to start working together and help each other if they are to continue being successful. At some point the circle will become too small for them to fit into.
- Don't let them quit too early; they are capable of more than they think they are. Do not give them too many suggestions or it will take the impact of the exercise away.

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SQUEEZE (CONTINUED)

Discussion Ideas:

- What was happening during this activity?
- Why was it getting harder for you to fit inside the circle?
- Could the same number of people fit in the circle when it became smaller?
- Was it more difficult for everyone to fit in the circle when it became smaller?
- What were some of the techniques you used the first couple of times the circle became smaller to still fit inside?
- Why did these techniques stop working?
- What were some of the techniques you used after the circle became too small to easily fit into?
- How can we relate this activity to the constriction of the blood vessels when nicotine is introduced into the body?
- In what ways does the body have to work harder when the blood vessels become narrower?
- What happens to body parts when they have to work harder than normal?