

STAGES OF ADDICTION

Topic Area: Consequences of tobacco use

Audience: Middle School/High School

Method: Classroom Activity

Time Frame: 20 minutes plus discussion

Materials Needed: "Stages of Addiction" cards, "Stages of Addiction" handout.

Learning Objectives:

- Students will gain a better understanding of how smoking cigarettes can easily become an addiction to nicotine.

Activity:

- Write the word **CONSEQUENCE** on the board and ask students to define it. Write the following definition: "A result of something you do."
- Introduce the stages of addiction activity: "Most people know that tobacco use causes diseases, but they aren't aware of all the other negative consequences associated with using tobacco. People don't think that anything bad can happen to them. They don't realize that new tobacco users can become addicted to nicotine very quickly. Soon they have a habit they cannot control. Addiction sneaks up on them, and nicotine addiction is very hard to break."
- Ask for 10 volunteers to demonstrate what can happen when people use tobacco products.
- Hand out one of the "Stages of Addiction" cards to each volunteer. Ask them to look over their cards while the rest of the class reviews the "Stages of Addiction" handout. Tell the class to follow along while the volunteers read their cards.
- Beginning with Card 1, have volunteers stand, read, and act out their stage of use to the class, one at a time. Instruct students to pay attention to what is being said.
- When all stages have been read, ask if there are any questions or comments about the stages of addiction.
- Stress that anyone who uses tobacco for a while will most likely become addicted, because nicotine, the drug found in tobacco, is one of the most addicting substances known.

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STAGES OF ADDICTION (CONTINUED)

Discussion Ideas:

- What were some of the consequences of using tobacco that you heard from the cards?
 - First-time smokers cough a lot because the body is trying to get rid of something harmful in the lungs.
 - Tobacco contains many substances that cause cancer.
 - Smoking causes wrinkles, bad breath, smelly clothes and hair.
 - Quitting a nicotine addiction is difficult. It's best to never start.
- What are some other consequences that weren't mentioned?
- Will these consequences happen to everyone? Discuss how people can never know how their body will react to the chemicals. Some people can smoke for a long time with no serious consequences, while others can have a serious health issue after just a short time smoking. Why take the chance?"
- Do you know anyone that is addicted to nicotine? Have they tried to quit?
- How could you help someone who is trying to quit smoking?

****The above activity was adapted from Project TNT – Toward No Tobacco Use. Project TNT was created by the Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Research at the University of Southern California and can be found at ETR Associates at www.etr.org.**

STAGES OF ADDICTION CARDS

Copy or cut and paste each stage on card stock and laminate.

1. "I represent a first-time cigarette user."

(Cough several times as if you had just inhaled cigarette smoke.)

"People cough when they first smoke, because coughing is the body's way of trying to get rid of something harmful in the lungs. Inside your lungs are little hairs called cilia. Their job is to get things out of the lungs that don't belong there."

2. "I represent a first-time chewing tobacco user."

(Pretend to chew and then act as if you are sick to your stomach and dizzy.)

"Tobacco juices make people feel sick at first. Chewing tobacco can make you feel dizzy and nauseous."

3. "I represent a person who's been smoking for a while."

"I no longer cough, because after someone has been smoking for a while, the cilia become paralyzed and can't do their job. The body's warning system isn't working properly. I've just begun to get into trouble with my body. I'm developing a tolerance to nicotine. This means I have to smoke more and more to feel the same effects."

(Act like you're spraying yourself with perfume or cologne and squirting breath spray into your mouth.)

"My friends say I smell like cigarette smoke all the time. I try to hide it with perfume, hair spray, or whatever might cover up the smell. I don't really notice it, but other people sure do. I guess you can't hide it."

4. "I represent a person who's becoming addicted."

"I just asked the teacher if I could be excused to go to the restroom. I wanted to go to the bathroom to sneak a cigarette. Getting a hit of nicotine is really important. People will do things they normally don't do, like lie or steal, because nicotine is in control at this point, and they must maintain the habit. I didn't think I could get addicted so quickly."

(Act like you're unwrapping a piece of gum, put it in your mouth and start chewing it.)

"My friends say the smoking is disgusting and that my breath stinks. I not only have to pay for the tobacco, but also gum and mints to cover up the bad breath. It's getting pretty expensive."

5. "I represent a person who smokes a pack of cigarettes a day."

"The price of a pack has just gone up recently, and now I spend at least \$6.00 per pack. Yesterday I figured that over the course of a year, I have spent \$2190.00 on cigarettes! I have started thinking about all of the other things I could have spent my money on besides having it go up in smoke."

(Act like you're looking in a mirror and inspecting the lines on your face.)

"The other day I had lunch with my aunt. She's only in her thirties but I noticed wrinkles and dryness that make her look older than she is. She's been smoking since she was my age and it's really showing on her face. I guess those cigarettes cost more than just money. "

6. "I represent a person who has been smoking for quite a while."

(Act nervous, fidget and make your hands shake.)

"I haven't been able to smoke a cigarette for 3 hours. I feel nervous and uncomfortable. I'm suffering from withdrawal. This isn't fun. I'd like to quit, if only I could. "

7. "I represent a person who has been using chewing tobacco for quit a while."

"I went to the dentist a few months ago because my gums were bleeding. She told me to stop using tobacco. I tried, but after a few days I started again. I went back to see my dentist today. Now I have these white spots that are called leukoplakia. She says these spots can become cancer over time. I'm risking getting a fatal disease in order to avoid withdrawal. I think I'm too addicted to quit."

8. "I represent a person who has been smoking for years. I had to walk fast to get here in time."

(Cough and act as if you are trying to catch your breath.)

"I'm suffering from lung and breathing problems because of my years of smoking. I have a hard time walking up stairs because it becomes too hard for me to catch my breath and my heart starts pounding."

9. "I represent a friend of someone who started using chewing tobacco when he was 13."

"My friend saw teammates at track practice using and thought it would be safer than smoking. After 5 years of dipping a can a day he got mouth cancer. The doctors had to remove almost all of his tongue and the bones in his jaw. Then the doctors told him his cancer had spread and they couldn't control it."

10. "I represent a person who has been smoking since age 13."

"I thought I'd quit before I became addicted. But I couldn't stop. Now, 30 years later, I'm dying from lung cancer. It's a form of cancer that is hard to cure. I always knew that smoking could knock years off my life. But I thought that would happen when I was older, not now. I don't know how long I'll live. I realize now that smoking not only hurt me, but that my family has suffered too from secondhand smoke."

STAGES OF ADDICTION

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2. A first-time chewing tobacco user:

"Tobacco juices make people feel sick at first. Chewing tobacco can make you feel dizzy and nauseous."

3. A person who's been smoking for a while:

"I no longer cough, because after someone has been smoking for a while, the cilia become paralyzed and can't do their job. The body's warning system isn't working properly. I've just begun to get into trouble with my body. I'm developing a tolerance to nicotine. This means I have to smoke more and more to feel the same effects."

"My friends say I smell like cigarette smoke all the time. I try to hide it with perfume, hair spray, or whatever might cover up the smell. I don't really notice it, but other people sure do. I guess you can't hide it."

4. A person who's becoming addicted:

"I just asked the teacher if I could be excused to go to the restroom. I wanted to go to the bathroom to sneak a cigarette. Getting a hit of nicotine is really important. People will do things they normally don't do, like lie or steal, because nicotine is in control at this point, and they must maintain the habit. I didn't think I could get addicted so quickly."

"My friends say the smoking is disgusting and that my breath stinks. I not only have to pay for the tobacco, but also gum and mints to cover up the bad breath. It's getting pretty expensive."

5. A person who smokes a pack of cigarettes a day:

"The price of a pack has just gone up recently, and now I spend at least \$6.00 per pack. Yesterday I figured that over the course of a year, I have spent \$1920.00 on cigarettes! I have started thinking about all of the other things I could have spent my money on besides having it go up in smoke."

"The other day I had lunch with my aunt. She's only in her thirties but I noticed wrinkles and dryness that make her look older than she is. She's been smoking

since she was my age and it's really showing on her face. I guess those cigarettes cost more than just money. "

6. A person who's been smoking for quite a while:

"I haven't been able to smoke a cigarette for 3 hours. I feel nervous and uncomfortable. I'm suffering from withdrawal. This isn't fun. I'd like to quit, if only I could. "

7. A person who's been using chewing tobacco for quite a while:

"I went to the dentist a few months ago because my gums were bleeding. She told me to stop using tobacco. I tried, but after a few days I started again. I went back to see my dentist today. Now I have these white spots that are called leukoplakia. She says these spots can become cancer over time. I'm risking getting a fatal disease in order to avoid withdrawal. I think I'm too addicted to quit."

8. A person who's been smoking for years:

"I'm suffering from lung and breathing problems because of my years of smoking. I have a hard time walking up the stairs because it becomes too hard for me to catch my breath and my heart starts pounding."

9. The friend of someone who started using chewing tobacco when he was 13:

"My friend saw teammates at track practice using and thought it would be safer than smoking. After 5 years of dipping a can a day he got mouth cancer. The doctors had to remove almost all of his tongue and the bones in his jaw. Then the doctors told him his cancer had spread and they couldn't control it."

10. A person who's been smoking since age 13:

"I thought I'd quit before I became addicted. But I couldn't stop. Now, 30 years later, I'm dying from lung cancer. It's a form of cancer that is hard to cure. I always knew that smoking could knock years off my life. But I thought that would happen when I was older, not now. I don't know how long I'll live. I realize now that smoking not only hurt me, but that my family has suffered too from secondhand smoke."