



UNITED TRIBES
TECHNICAL COLLEGE
LAND GRANT EXTENSION

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UTTC Lifeskills Lessons – Relationships & Family

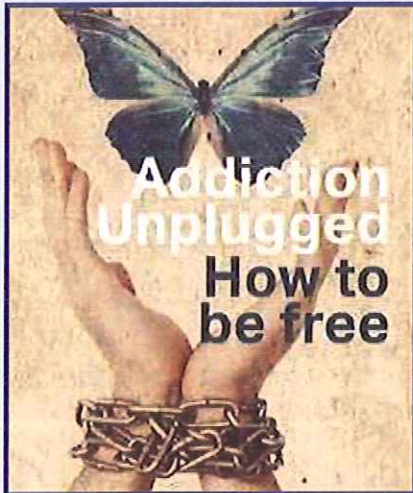
Lesson 24: Addictions

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ADDICTIONS

To begin this talking sheet, we will give a definition of addiction from the dictionary. The definition fits the many topics that will be covered. "ADDICTION: N, 1. the state of being enslaved to a habit or practice or to something that is psychologically or physically habit-forming, as narcotics, to such an extent that its cessation causes severe trauma."

With that definition we will address a few of the topics that might impact individuals and families in our communities.



RESOURCES

- www.parentslead.org
- www.ncadd.or/about/addiction/drug_facts
- National Institutes of Health information about drug use
- www.library.ca.gov/CRB/97/03/Chapt8.html (Gambling and addictions)

TOBACCO

Tobacco was used as part of tribal ceremonies for centuries, but the tobacco was different than what is sold today and it was not used on a regular basis.

It is reported (2015 NDDOH) that slightly more than 45% of the Native American population in North Dakota smoke cigarettes. That is compared to 19% of the Caucasian population. What can be done to reduce that rate? Education and awareness are effective.

First hand smoking dramatically increases the risk of lung cancer, mouth cancers, and other lung and breathing disorders.

Second hand smoking impacts the growth of children and is proven to increase the diagnosis of asthma for children. Third hand smoke is when non-smokers (children) are exposed to clothing, vehicles, or carpeting, etc. that holds tobacco residue. The residue increases the risk for children to grow and develop at a lower than desired rate. Research shows Sudden Infant Deaths (SIDS) is higher in families where smokers live.

Pregnant mothers who smoke expose their children to great health risk even before they are born. Pregnant mothers are told to quit smoking to prevent pre-mature births. Children born too early have lifelong health risks.

Smoking is labeled as the number one cause of preventable deaths.

Expense

Cigarettes range from \$3 to a whopping \$8 a pack and more increases are on the way. It is common for smokers to spend from \$2,000 to \$3000 a year, on their habit.

Social costs

More and more, smokers are ostracized and separated from positive opportunities because of their addiction. Smokers are seen as less educated (actually true on average) and unable to make good decisions about their own health. Tobacco users may be considered as poor employees. Many worksites are creating tobacco free policies for hiring and employment (example: United Tribes Technical College implemented a Tobacco-free Campus While Keeping Tobacco Sacred policy www.uttc.edu). Policies make a difference.

Help is available for smoking addiction

Tribal Tobacco Programs are available in every tribal nation in North Dakota. Other states and tribes offer assistance, too. There is more than one way to quit tobacco. No single method of quitting works for everyone. NDQuits offers several free options so you can find the way that works best for you. All NDQuits services include free counseling, advice and support and free nicotine replacement products for those who qualify. Call the toll-free number, 1.800.QUIT.NOW (1.800.784.8669).



ALCOHOL

Another common addictive substance is alcohol – beer, wine, whiskey, etc. These liquids are common and generally found to be inexpensive and damaging to families and communities. The impact of excessive drinking of these liquids decreases brain function, education abilities, and employment levels. Alcohol is directly related to poverty issues.

As we talk about alcohol addiction it is important to state, “Not all Indians are drunks!” In fact, Dr. Don Warne shares statistics from one South Dakota survey that shows more Native American’s refrained from drinking entirely than those who drink more than 3 drinks per day or live with an addiction.

WARNING! Pregnant women can negatively impact their child for life with even one drink at the wrong time. Pregnant women need to stop alcohol use completely or take the risk of delivering a fetal alcohol effected child. This is a 100% preventable birth defect.

Typically, the last person to be aware that he/she has a serious drinking problem is the alcoholic himself/herself - they live in denial.

Some signs and symptoms of alcoholism, as well as alcohol abuse, include:

- Drinking alone or in secret
- Not being able to limit amount of alcohol
- Blacking out - not being able to remember chunks of time
- Having rituals and being irritated/annoyed when these rituals are even discussed.
- Having relationship problems, when drinking
- Having problems with the law, when drinking
- Having work problems, during or after drinking
- Having money problems because of cost

Help is available for alcohol addiction

Alcohol treatment may require in-patient therapy but, many people are able to stop alcohol abuse through community resources. Programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) are found to be effective. Check what is available in your community. It takes more than will-power, but you can do it!

ILLEGAL DRUGS

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), an estimated 20 million (8%) Americans aged 12 or older used an illegal drug, in the past 30 days. Illicit drugs include marijuana/hashish, cocaine (including crack), heroin, hallucinogens, inhalants, or prescription drugs used without a prescription. And, despite the numbers, for many people, the facts about drugs are not clear. Cost to society for illegal drug use include:

- \$130 Billion in lost productivity at work
- \$20 Billion in healthcare costs
- \$40 Billion in legal costs including efforts to stop the flow of drugs
- Spread of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C, either through sharing of drug paraphernalia or unprotected sex
- Deaths due to overdose or other complications from drug use
- Effects on unborn children of pregnant drug users
- Impact on the family, judicial and homelessness

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Prescription drug addiction is now called the most common community drug problem. Prescription pain-reducing medications (opioids) including oxycodone, hydrocodone and morphine have benefits as well as potentially serious risks. These medications can help manage pain when used properly. But when misused or abused, they cause serious harm, including addiction, overdose and death. In response to the current opioid crisis, FDA has developed an action plan for citizen which is found at www.fda.gov/drugs. Check it out.

GAMBLING

Using the definition of addiction from the beginning of this Talking Sheet, gambling addiction impacts the vulnerable in the same way. Gambling has brought improved employment and even health statistics to some tribal nations. But, casinos do come at some cost. Four years after a casino opens, bankruptcy rates, violent crime, and auto thefts and larceny are up 10 percent in counties with a casino, according to the Evans and Topoleski paper titled “Social and Economic Impacts of Native American Casinos” www.nber.org/papers/w9198.pdf.