

Opioid Awareness Middle School Lesson

Objective: By creating and writing their own short stories, students will be able to articulate the dangers of opioid usage and express their knowledge about what they can do if they know someone struggling with prescription drug use.

Bell Ringer: (7 minutes) Students will be given a true/false prediction chart to start the class. This sheet will include facts about opioid usage and will be instructed to predict if each fact is true or false. The students will have about two minutes to fill out the chart. The teacher will then review the chart and tell which facts were true or false. The teacher will then explain what it means when he/she is talking about “opioids”.

Transition One (10 Minutes): The teacher will begin this transition by showing the “Opioids” video by American Character Builders. He/she will then guide classroom discussion by asking “What did you notice about the characters in the video?” The teacher will call on different students to answer the question, making sure that there is an emphasis on the fact that each character in the video comes from different walks of life and are of different demographics. The teacher will then transition the mood of the discussion from observation to civic action by asking “If you could say one thing to each character in the video, what would you say?” The teacher will instruct students to write their responses in their notebook.

Transition Two (20 Minutes): This will be a time when students move around the room to different stations. Each station will portray a different scenario where a teenager has the opportunity to become dependent upon opioids. The fourth station will include tips on how to help a friend who is addicted to these types of drugs or who is at risk. The students will be instructed to read each scenario and take notes on them. The teacher will set a timer and inform students that they have five minutes at each station to read the story and take appropriate notes. At the end of each five minutes, the teacher will tell students to rotate to the next station until each group of students has visited every station.

Transition Three (10 Minutes): This will be a time of formative assessment to ensure that the students got a grasp on the stories and how to help a friend who is in a similar situation. The students can either work by themselves or with a partner. They are to come up with a similar scenario to the stories they just read. However, instead of the person becoming addicted, their friends intervened and led the person to get help. The teacher should instruct students to use specific tips from the list that they read in the station. The students should also include specific details about the character in their story like age, gender, hobbies, etc. Because of limited time, the students can write in bullet form instead writing a full narrative. This will demonstrate the students' awareness of how serious the problem is. It will also encourage them to be aware that they have the opportunity to help a friend out of these types of situations.

Closure (5 Minutes): The teacher will call on one student/ set of partners to share the story they came up with. The teacher will reiterate the fact that anyone can suffer from opioid addiction and that they do have a way of helping if they know someone addicted.

True/ False Sheet (with answers marked):

	<u>True</u>	<u>False</u>
Drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the US.	X	
Because people are more knowledgeable about the dangers of drugs, the overdose death rate has significantly declined since 1999.		X
The prescribing rates for people under the age of 17 have declined in order to help stop people from becoming addicted.		X
Women are more likely to become dependent on prescription pain killers than men.	X	
Four out of five new heroin users started out misusing prescription pain killers.	X	

Scenario One: Jessica was in the middle of her tenth grade basketball season when she tore her ACL during practice. She was told that she would have to have surgery to repair the damage, but as long as she recovered like she was supposed to, she would be back in time for the end of the season. Because Jessica wanted to get back to the sport she loved, she would try to mask the pain by taking more of her prescription pain killers that her doctor gave her. Pretty soon Jessica became so dependent upon these pain killers that she couldn't start her day without taking one. She was still a post-surgery patient so she got her prescription refilled and wouldn't go a day without taking multiple pills. It wasn't long until Jessica was completely addicted to these pain killers.

Scenario Two: Josh was at a friend's sixteenth birthday party. Everyone was having a great time playing video games and eating pizza. Then, someone asked Josh if he wanted to "take something to make the party more fun". Josh looked at the person's hand and saw a small pill. The friend had recently had a surgery and had some extra pain killers that he didn't have to take. Josh had never done drugs and knew that it was wrong. However, the friend was able to convince him to take one by saying "It's a prescription so it's not illegal". Josh still didn't feel right about it but didn't want to make a scene. He realized he liked how the pill made him feel and asked the friend where he could get some more.

Scenario Three: Nicole was super into her local community theatre. She loved plays and was just given her first big role in the next production. Nicole knew all of her lines by opening night and was confident that she would perform well. However, she was much more nervous than she thought she would be. She felt like she was about to pass out just minutes before it was time to go on stage. A cast member who was a couple years older than her told her that she needed to take a chill pill. Nicole thought she was joking, but then she realized that her cast mate was holding a pill. Without thinking, Nicole took the pill and then went through the play with no mistakes. Nicole thought that it was thanks to the pill that she performed well since it took her nerves away, so she took it every night before she went on stage. After that weekend, she swore she didn't need them anymore, but she found herself craving them and finding ways to find these "chill pills". Nicole ended up needing to take one to calm her nerves before she could even get out of bed.

Tips:

<https://teens.drugabuse.gov/blog/post/how-help-friend-need>

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