

A photograph of a tropical village scene. In the foreground, a river flows with several small wooden boats. The middle ground shows a dirt path leading to a wooden house with a corrugated metal roof, partially obscured by dense tropical vegetation including banana trees and palm trees. The background is filled with more lush greenery under a cloudy sky.

RENEW HEALTH PROMOTION TOOL KIT BOOKLET #4

**HEALTHY LIVING:
ADDICTION FREE**

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
INTRODUCTORY GROUP ACTIVITY 1.....	4
INTRODUCTORY GROUP ACTIVITY 2.....	5
GROUP ACTIVITY 3- THE DANGEROUS LIZARD	6
ADDICTION.....	7
UPPER DRUGS.....	10
DOWNER DRUGS.....	11
HALLUCINOGEN DRUGS.....	12
SYMPTOMS OF ADDICTION.....	13
PREVENTION OF ADDICTION.....	14
GROUP ACTIVITY 4- TEN SEED CAUSE IDENTIFICATION.....	17
GROUP ACTIVITY 5-PROBLEM SOLVING AND TAKING ACTION... ..	18
THE SOLUTION GRID.....	19
TREATING ADDICTION- PHYSICALLY, EMOTIONALLY.....	20
TREATING ADDICTION- COGNITIVELY.....	21
GROUP ACTIVITY 6- THE PATH EXERCISE	22
GROUP ACTIVITY 7- PROBLEM TREE	23
ADDICTION RECOVERY.....	24
MAINTAINING RECOVERY.....	26
BIBLE VERSES.....	28

OVERVIEW

This booklet is a simple introduction to the many kinds of addiction, though it focuses on addiction to different drugs and alcohol. When addiction occurs, everyone is affected—the person using, the family, & the whole community. The health trainer can use this book to begin to generate discussion and to share information about addiction to drugs and alcohol in the community.

GOAL

The goal is to have healthier communities by facilitating individual and community initiatives to help prevent and treat addiction.

METHOD

Each health trainer will adapt the material to fit their culture and community, and each community group should work with in-country experts who are familiar with the language and culture to prevent and treat addiction. Recovery from addiction is a lifelong process. The process is more successful when it is done in a group of people who can walk through the long process together. This booklet is also a book of hope. It can be used by different cultures and Christian *and* secular communities.

Secular communities can build addiction intervention on a positive cultural identity, of which addiction and its consequences are identified as *not integral* to that identity.

Christian communities can build addiction intervention on Jesus who came to bring “good news to the poor... to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives” (Isaiah 61:1). Christians believe that they have already been provided with “... everything that pertains to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who calls us to his own glory and excellence.” (2 Peter 1:3) and that his truth will always liberate (John 8:32). For Christians, knowing Jesus, finding his truth, and walking with him holds the hope of recovery, freedom from addiction, and full restoration.

In-country organizations with experienced successful programs, and who have expertise in working with diverse cultures, should be sought to help the community live healthier and addiction-free.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Using the participatory group activities in the book, engage the participants in discussions about addiction—definition, specific kinds of addictions, prevention, and treatment in order to develop a community approach. To view and download the entire package of Renew Health Promotion booklets and training materials, go to: renewoutreach.org/health

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY 1

In both secular and Christian communities, health promotion begins with identifying and affirming the positive aspects of the community.

GOAL

Identify and celebrate the community's unique positive local resources that can be used to live healthier, addiction free lives. Viewing addiction as foreign to the culture and inconsistent with cultural identity can also help create buy-in and empower a community to pursue addiction-free health using local initiatives.

METHOD

Using a **mapping exercise**, the resources (physical and cultural) of a community can be highlighted and affirmed (See Mapping section in *Book 1: Healthy Community*). 20 people is an ideal sized group. Decide if the group will be composed of men, women, and children or if the exercise will be done separately with each group so that everyone freely participates. Have this representative group of people draw a map of their community and discuss the culture and resources the community has. Use sand, sticks, and leaves to create a map on the ground or use paper and markers. Share the map and discuss the good things that exist in the community and culture which can contribute to living healthier.

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

1. What are our cultural resources? *Examples: language, music, dance, stories, art, dress*
2. What are our natural resources? *Examples: plants, water*
3. What are our knowledge and skills resources? *Examples: how to grow things, weave, hunt*
4. What are our education resources? *Example: school*
5. What are our economic resources? *Example: ways we can make money*

TEACHING POINTS

- ① Every community has resources and unique positive cultural features with which to live healthier lives. The most significant resources in any community are the people.
- ② When we identify and celebrate the different kinds of resources, we foster thankfulness, honor one another, and create encouragement.
- ③ Every community has positive aspects of their unique cultural identity to be honored and appreciated. Every community also has negative or harmful elements that have become a part of the current culture.

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY 2

In Christian communities, this activity lays a foundation for a Biblical view of health.

GOAL

Show health is more than just healthy bodies. In Christian communities the good news of Jesus Christ is believed to hold the key to total health, including freedom from addiction. Jesus came to make us whole and well in every way—spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically, and relationally.

METHOD

Act out the following scriptures.

STORY & TEACHING POINTS

- ① Man and woman, together, were created in the image of God to be his representatives on the earth, to walk in relationship with God, and reign over the earth. (Gen 1:26-28, 2:7, 18-25) Woman as the *ezer*, a term of strength. Men and women were created with equal strength, dignity, and value.
- ② With sin, came brokenness, including a broken relationship with God, a broken sense of our identity, and broken relationships with one another. The whole earth was affected, resulting in sickness, addiction and death. (Genesis 3, Romans 8:20-22)
- ③ God came to earth himself to take away our sin, free us from its power, and restore all things. He is right now in the process of doing this. He gives us power to overcome in this life and become his holy people. John 3:16, Romans 8:35-39. Note verse 37. Corinthians 1:3-4, John 10:10, Jude 24-25.
- ④ At the end of all things the restoration will be complete. (Revelation 21:1-7, 22:1-5)

THE RELATIONSHIPS JESUS RESTORED:

1. **Our relationship with God.** Because *he* took our sins on himself at the cross, we can receive that and sin no longer keeps us from knowing him personally, discovering his nature, and walking in daily relationship with the Living God.
2. **With ourselves.** When we know who he is, we discover who we were created to be and begin to step into our new and true identity.
3. **With others.** When we know him and who we are, we are able to love others, even our enemies.
4. **With the earth.** We can steward this physical earth well and are salt and light to the world around us.

GROUP ACTIVITY: THE DANGEROUS LIZARD

THE DANGEROUS LIZARD STORY

CHARACTERS:

- Edo
- Friends and Family
- Village Wise Man
- The egg/dragon (can be imagined, a puppet, person costumed, or someone just acting the part)

NARRATOR

The Village Wise Man warned the village not to have anything to do with the lizards or their eggs because they are dangerous and deadly! Edo is sad and lonely. Many of Edo's friends have eggs or small lizards and most seem to be doing fine. A few people look like they are getting into trouble with their lizards—some people even killed. The friends with the small lizards say “that will never happen to us.” Edo goes with their friends to the valley or place of the eggs. For a small fee, Edo is promised that a little lizard will make one feel good and help forget their troubles. Edo finds a beautiful egg and knows they should not, but decide to bring it home. Edo is obsessed with the egg and with the beautiful little lizard it produces. Edo is always thinking about the lizard and anticipating the next time they are together.

The little lizard is so cute and snuggles up. It does little tricks and makes Edo laugh. Edo begins to feel less sad or lonely. Over time, the lizard gets bigger and needs food. Edo has to hunt and look for food to feed it but it takes all day to find food for the lizard.

Soon after, the lizard's appetite became huge and Edo couldn't go to school, work, or take care of themselves or their children. As a result, Edo became sick.

Edo's family becomes worried. They think the lizard is the problem, but Edo is in denial and becomes angry with the family. Edo hides the lizard and lies about it being in the house. Edo even steals from family, friends, and neighbors to buy food. Sometimes Edo even robs and hurts total strangers to get money to buy food. Edo ignores the big poop on the floor and the lizard's presence. Edo accuses others of making it up and has many excuses for keeping the lizard.

Overtime, Edo begins to hate the lizard. Edo promises the family they will get rid of it, but it is difficult now because the lizard will not let Edo go. The lizard is large and has big teeth, sharp claws, and is always very hungry. It begins to eye Edo and licks its lips.

THE DANGEROUS LIZARD STORY (CONT.)

THREE QUESTIONS

1. What did you SEE? DO about
2. What does it mean?
3. What can we DO about

TEACHING POINT: The lizard represents addiction. Addiction to alcohol and drug use begins with a poor choice. Soon, it becomes a disease. Addiction's promise to make a person feel better ends up making the person and their whole lives worse. Identify some of features of addiction illustrated in the story.

ADDICTION

DEFINITION

Addiction is continuing to engage in a behavior that temporarily helps, but ultimately harms.

Addiction starts by finding pleasure or relief in a behavior. Initially engaging in that behavior is a choice.

By repeatedly choosing that behavior it becomes addiction, a disease and a compelling obsession. It is very difficult to stop.

The behavior results in serious problems affecting all areas of life—relationships, physical and mental health, and the ability to think, work, and function. A common characteristic of addiction is self-deception or denial, where the addict will deny that there is a problem.

With alcohol and drugs, the obsession is only temporarily satisfied by the addicted substance. With continued use, often the obsession or craving intensifies. With some substances, higher and higher doses are needed to get the temporary satisfaction. This is called tolerance. With tolerance, accidental fatal overdoses can occur as the addicted person uses higher and higher doses to satisfy the craving. When the substance is not available, there is a period of often painful withdrawal.

ADDICTION (CONT.)

CAUSATION

Addiction is caused by using an unhealthy practice or substance to avoid pain or to find relief from pain. The pain may be physical, emotional, or cognitive. Drugs and alcohol help people avoid pain and seek relief by affecting the brain. One way to describe the brain is a place where messages are received and sent. The brain is made up of cells called **neurons**. The neurons are connected to one another and to the rest of the body in order to transmit messages of thought, emotion, physical movement, and sensation. These connected nerves are the paths of our mind.

Drugs and excess alcohol change and damage the brain. They mix up the neurons' connections and pathways so that the brain is not able to perform its necessary functions like thinking, feeling, sensing, moving normally, and responding accurately and appropriately to the world around them.

DRUGS

Drugs may activate a part of the brain that receives pleasure, deactivate a part of the brain that perceives pain, or alter the brain's ability to perceive all the senses.

Although drugs promise to increase pleasure and decrease pain, drugs lie. Drugs do not keep their promise. Instead, addiction to drugs will increase stress and trouble in a person's life. They also increase stress and trouble in the person's family and community. Addiction to drugs actually decreases pleasure and causes pain in everyone's lives—both the addict and everyone in their life.

ALCOHOL

Alcohol at low doses activates a part of the brain that receives pleasure, but primarily alcohol numbs the part of the brain that perceives pain or stress. Addiction to alcohol increases stress in the addict's life and in the lives of their family and community. Also, alcohol is poisonous to brain cells. It permanently destroys neurons and is especially harmful to the growing brains of children and babies still in the womb!

SYMPTOMS OF DRUG ABUSE

Symptoms of drug abuse depend on the specific drug, the dose, and how the drug is taken—by mouth, breathing them in through the nose, smoking them, or injecting them with a needle into the vein or muscle.

Acute effects are the immediate and short-term symptoms

Chronic effects are the symptoms that occur with ongoing use.

Symptoms include physical, emotional, and cognitive effects on the person using drugs. They also include the profound disruption to the person's life, family, and community. For example, drug seeking behavior from addiction may result in violence, illegal activity, injury, neglect of important life activities and functions, and the destruction of relationships.

THREE MAIN CATEGORIES OF DRUGS

Uppers

Downers

Hallucinogens

Symptoms can be confusing. This is because there are many kinds of uppers, different kinds of downers, and different kinds of hallucinogens. Also, some drugs have more than one effect, different kinds of drugs are sometimes used together, and drugs might be taken with alcohol.

DRUGS: UPPERS

DEFINITION

Uppers stimulate the brain.

ACUTE EFFECTS

Acute effects of uppers at lower doses include increased energy, confidence, and a sense of wellbeing. Also—increased heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, and the size of the pupils. Higher doses cause an extreme rise in temperature and blood pressure, seizures, heart failure, and the person can stop breathing, leading to death.

CHRONIC EFFECTS

Chronic effects at lower doses include nervousness, jitteriness, insomnia, over activity, weight loss, big emotional swings, irritability, difficulty concentrating, teeth grinding, serious tooth and gum disease, shaking, ulcers on the tongue, picking at the skin, irregular heartbeat, and excessive sweating. Tolerance develops with some stimulants.

Higher doses cause paranoia (becoming extremely suspicious and afraid when there is no real danger), delusions (thinking, seeing, or hearing something that is not real), aggression and violence, suicides, seizures, and heart attacks.

AFTER THE UPPERS WEAR OFF

During withdrawal, the opposite effect of the uppers is experienced such as lethargy, depression, and hunger.

WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

Symptoms can also result in severe paranoia and delusional thinking with associated bizarre and dangerous behaviors.

Using uppers will come to affect all aspects of a person's life:

1. Their thinking
2. Their emotions
3. Their health
4. Their ability to work and do daily tasks
5. Their most important relationships
6. Their finances
7. Their whole community

DRUGS: DOWNERS

DEFINITION

Downers depress the brain.

ACUTE EFFECTS

Acute effects of downer drugs at lower doses usually include a pleasant dreamy sleepiness with a profound sense of wellbeing. Also—slurred speech, poor thinking and decision making, itching, and unsteady walking.

Downers are especially dangerous at higher dose!

These kinds of drugs are often taken at high doses because when used over time, higher and higher doses are needed to experience the good feeling the drug caused the first time it was taken. This dangerous situation is called tolerance and leads to many unintentional deaths from an “overdose”—taking too much of the drug at a time. Death occurs when the person becomes unconscious and stops breathing which can occur acutely while the drug is still being taken. Downers are deadly!

There are drugs that can be given to reverse the effects of the downers during an overdose to save the person’s life. Naloxone hydrochloride is the antidote medication for downers. They do not work on uppers, hallucinogens, or alcohol. These are available in hospitals and clinics. Some police departments and other groups who respond to emergencies may also have them.

CHRONIC EFFECTS

Once people start using these, they take higher and higher doses, often until an early death. If the person does not receive help, before the drug causes death, chronic effects can include bruising from falls, and needle marks and scars as well as potentially fatal infections from dirty needles including HIV, liver disease, and heart, lung, and brain infections. Besides the physical effects of chronic use, serious psychological and social outcomes adversely affect every area of life.

AFTER THE UPPERS WEAR OFF

During withdrawal, the opposite effect of the drug is experienced. Milder symptoms may include severe anxiety, vomiting, muscle spasms and jerking, diarrhea, excessive yawning, and goose bumps.

WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

Should be managed in a medical facility because withdrawal from downers can be fatal. These patients need to be watched and given medicines that help reduce the severe and dangerous symptoms of downer withdrawal.

DRUGS: HALLUCINOGENS

DEFINITION

Hallucinogens change the brain's perception.

There are many different kinds of natural (from plants) and synthetic (man-made) hallucinogens.

All hallucinogens change the way reality is perceived. They affect judgment, sense of time, ability to concentrate, emotions, seeing and hearing, and muscle coordination. People who use these do not experience tolerance or withdrawal as with uppers and downers.

ACUTE EFFECTS

Acute effects vary significantly from drug to drug depending on its effect on the brain and if any other drug or alcohol is also taken at the same time. Symptoms may include seeing things very vividly, feeling very smart, silly or happy, and feeling unattached to the world, weightless, strong, powerful, or drunk.

Also—feeling anxiety, paranoid, fearful, or irritable, hearing voices, seeing things that are not physical realities, poor judgment and taking dangerous risks, acting erratically or just sitting doing nothing and staring off blankly. These symptoms can be pleasant or terrifying. Some hallucinogens can lead to dizziness, nausea, injury, death, seizures, kidney failure, bleeding in the brain, and seizures. If a woman is pregnant, the baby can be damaged.

CHRONIC EFFECTS

Chronic effects vary from drug to drug. They include the destructive cycle of addiction which includes being consumed with the drug use, even when there are severe adverse effects on the body and life. Also—the denial of a problem, drug seeking behavior which may be violent or dangerous, and increasing the dose or experimenting with other substances which can ultimately lead to death.

Some hallucinogens have led to permanent or difficult to treat mental illness, such as memory or speech problems, depression, personality changes, sleep problems, and paranoid or delusional-thinking. Some people who use hallucinogens get “flashbacks” which is a recurrence of the acute effects of the drugs days to years after taking it.

Some people use hallucinogens because they want to induce a trance to speak with the dead or with the spirit world. This is prohibited in the Bible and many people believe that using hallucinogens opens up a person to not only contact with but ongoing oppression from malevolent spirits or demons.

SYMPTOMS OF ALCOHOL ABUSE

DEFINITION

Consuming small amounts of alcohol is a common practice throughout the world for personal enjoyment and social gatherings. Used in this way there is seldom drunkenness, addiction, and associated harmful behaviors. Jesus, his disciples and the culture he grew up in enjoyed wine (**John 2:1-11**). Christians use wine and other 'fruit of the vine' in their thoughtful and thankful remembrance of the death and resurrection of Jesus. There is no Biblical mandate against the use of small amounts of alcohol, but excess use is mentioned in both Old and New Testaments. (**Proverbs 24:29-35, Ephesians 5:18**)

However, consuming more than small amounts of alcohol poisons and depresses the brain.

ACUTE EFFECTS

At lower levels in adults, symptoms include relaxation, feeling good, sleepy, depressed, uninhibited, and moody. They may help a person fall asleep, but impair the ability to remain and sleep restfully, especially as the person ages. At higher levels: nausea and vomiting, combative or violent behavior, stuporous, and coma. People can have "alcohol poisoning" by drinking too much alcohol at a time and they will stop breathing and die.

If the alcohol is homemade it may be especially dangerous. For example, there can be toxins such as methanol, which can cause blindness.

CHRONIC EFFECTS

Chronic use poisons the brain and destroys the body. People may have "blackouts" where they lose consciousness and do not remember what happened when they were drunk.

Permanent problems occur with thinking, walking, muscles, liver, heart, blood, esophagus and stomach, female and male hormones, and bones. The hands will shake until another drink is found. Tolerance develops. Besides the physical effects of chronic alcohol addiction, the person's life is consumed with drinking and will be destroyed. This has dire consequences for family, friends, and community.

Any alcohol consumed by children and young adults is poisonous to their developing brains. When a pregnant woman drinks, the alcohol goes right to the baby and causes serious problems in the child's brain from which the child may never fully recover.

CHILDREN AND PREGNANT WOMEN SHOULD NEVER DRINK ALCOHOL!

PREVENTION OF DRUG & ALCOHOL ABUSE

Prevention focuses on addressing the contributing causes of alcoholism and drug use. There are individual, family, and community factors that contribute to addiction.

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

Addiction to alcohol and drugs comes from an individual attempting to cope with pain and stress and seeking pleasure or relief. Preventing addiction in a community involves identifying and addressing the source of these 3 things:

- ① **Common personal stressors and sources of pain.** Some examples of stressors might be financial, relational, physical, or emotional stress. Examples of emotional sources of pain may include feeling worthless, unloved, unaccepted and pressure to fit in, excluded, inadequate, rejected, empty, without personal purpose or meaning, boredom, hopeless, guilty or ashamed, embarrassed, tense, or angry.
- ② **How people think about pain, stress, alcohol intoxication and drug use.** Some examples of disordered thinking might be “I should be able to do what I want, I should not have to experience trouble, alcohol allows me to really be myself, everything should be easier than it is, I need to always be happy, life should have no pain like I have, I need to do everything perfect, I am not responsible for my life and behavior—it’s someone else’s fault, drinking is the way to have fun, it’s what friends do together, drugs help me see what’s real, I won’t get addicted—I’ll be able to stop, if life weren’t so difficult I wouldn’t have to drink so much, my family says I drink too much but they are overreacting”.
- ③ **Unhealthy ways people have learned to cope with pain and stress.** This includes seeking pleasure, even when their unhealthy coping leads to risky and disruptive lives and is hurtful to themselves, family, and community.

FAMILY AND CULTURAL FACTORS

Addictive behavior can be fostered unintentionally by family and culture.

Addiction occurs often in families when parents are addicted or when parents for some other reason are unable to nurture and attend to the needs of their children and family members. This is true when home or community is not a safe place to be vulnerable, heard, supported, and respected or a place where healthy communications skills, problem solving, and coping skills are not modeled or taught. **A community that supports effective nurturing families helps prevent addiction.** Cultural factors can also contribute to individual factors above.

Here are two activities which can help a community identify individual, family, and community factors that contribute to addiction and take action to prevent it:

THE TEN SEED TECHNIQUE

The Ten Seed Technique (page 16) helps a community identify important stressors, sources of emotional pain, and thinking patterns that contribute to addictive behavior and its consequences.

THE SOLUTION GRID

The Solution Grid (page 18) helps a community problem solve and come up with an action plan to address some of the things in their community which they have identified and which may contribute to drug use and alcohol—before they happen.

TEN SEED TECHNIQUE

Talk together to begin the process of community-initiated health improvement.

GOAL: To hear from representative group(s) in order to come to a common visualization of local factors that are thought to contribute to addiction in a community and begin talking about prevention.

METHOD: Use the Ten Seed Technique to facilitate dialogue and come up with a visual picture of the group's perspective. This is best done in groups of around 20. Ask the group "What are some of the causes that contribute to addiction, drugs, or alcohol in our community?"

TEN SEED TECHNIQUE*

1. Specifically identify what makes people and the community vulnerable to the lure of overusing alcohol or drugs. This may include common stressors and sources of pain, ways people think about stress and pain, and unhealthy ways people cope with problems
2. Record these with words, pictures on pieces of paper, by writing them on the ground, or in some other way that all can visually see what are identified as some of the contributing causes of addiction.
3. Give the participants a total of 10 seeds, beans, or beads. Tell them to decide and talk together about where to place the seeds. Put more seeds on what they see as the most important causes that contribute to people using drugs or drinking too much. Put fewer or no seeds on less important problems. Only 10 seeds for this.

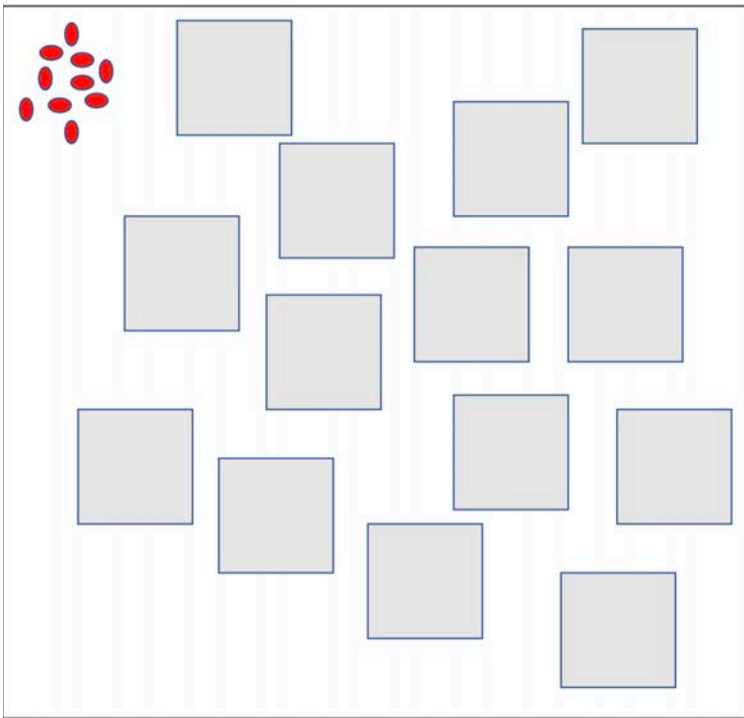
Ask: What do you see? What does it mean? What can we do about it?

TEACHING POINT

1. The Ten Seed Technique is a tool we can use to talk together about what we visually see as the reasons why people in our community start using drugs or drinking too much and become addicted.
2. The Ten Seed technique is an interesting way to discuss what we understand about addiction in our communities. Addiction has many causes. This exercise should give everyone a chance to be heard. We learn from one another and can compromise in setting our priorities.
3. The Ten Seed technique gives us a picture we can all look at, so that we can begin the process of problem solving and take action to prevent addiction and improve our health.

Specific Questions: What are the top 4 things that contribute to drug and alcohol use in our community?

THE TEN SEED TECHNIQUE ILLUSTRATION



**Adapted from the Ten Seed Technique by Ravi Jayakaran. Download the full Ten Seed exercise for free online.*

THE SOLUTION GRID

(SEE RENEW HEALTH BOOKLET 1 FOR MORE INFORMATION)

Lead the community in a problem-solving exercise and come up with an action plan.

GOAL

Implement a community-initiated solution to address ONE contributing factor or identified cause of drug use and alcoholism in the community

METHOD

Facilitate a Solution Grid. This participatory exercise involves making a chart or grid on the ground or on paper with words or illustrations. The following page shows an example.

- ① Have the group select one contributing factor to discuss. If you can, start with a simpler cause rather than a complex one.
- ② Have the group “brainstorm”, coming up with multiple potential solutions for that cause. All ideas are welcome. Try for at least 5 possible solutions.
- ③ Chart the solutions and for each solution, ask the following questions:
 - What is a potential solution or way to address this issue?
 - Who would do it?
 - How much would it cost in time, money, risk, or other resources?
 - How much time will it take to do? (Optional question—how do you know if it is working?)
 - When will you all meet again?
- ④ Vote on the solution the group would like to try first. Remember—it’s best to start simple.
- ⑤ **Take action!**

THE SOLUTION GRID

(SEE RENEW HEALTH BOOKLET 1 FOR MORE INFORMATION)

WHAT are possible solutions?	WHO would do it?	HOW MUCH will it cost?	HOW much TIME will it take?	WHEN will you meet again to see if it is working and make further plans?
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

INITIAL INTERVENTION: DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT

Addiction treatment needs to be addressed in a holistic way—*medically, emotionally, cognitively, socially, and spiritually*. The alcohol and drugs need to be STOPPED totally. However, recovery is much more than stopping the drugs or alcohol—it involves totally changing the way a person *thinks, feels, and lives*.

PHYSICALLY

Arrange for medical help when withdrawing from most drugs and alcohol. Withdrawal can be very difficult, even fatal, because of the body's intense physical response to not having the drug or the alcohol.

Medical supervision involves monitoring and treating dangerous withdrawal symptoms, lessening the acute and intense craving, preventing self-harm, and replacing the necessary things which the drugs/alcohol have depleted from the body. Often, giving specific medications under medical supervision is needed to reduce severe physical withdrawal symptoms.

The withdrawal of downers often requires a substitute medication prescribed by a qualified physician. Methadone is a medicine used not only to help opioid users in alleviating the intense craving during withdrawal, but also to maintain abstinence from opioid use during ongoing treatment.

EMOTIONALLY

The choice to engage in behavior that eventually leads to addiction is often motivated by the desire to escape emotional pain and suffering. The pain is always personally experienced but may have its roots in the family or culture.

The behavior soon becomes a disease, an emotional obsession, over which the addict has no control despite negative consequences. Addiction then causes even further emotional pain and suffering for the addict, the family, and community. Identifying and addressing the initial motivating emotions is helpful for recovery. These may include feelings such as shame, guilt, hurt, anger, anxiety, depression, loneliness, fear, resentment, disappointment, impatience, or boredom.

Compassionate, yet honest, counseling is often necessary for the addict and the family to identify and overcome the underlying emotional causes and consequences of addiction.

(CONT.) INITIAL INTERVENTION: DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT

COGNITIVELY

Not thinking clearly is at the root of addiction.

The addict must change the way they think before any progress toward recovery can be made. Addiction is built on false thinking or lies.

Recovery involves thinking differently and includes *overcoming*.

- ① **Denial.** This is always a symptom of addiction. It is a way that the addict keeps anything from interfering with the behavior.

Denial may be a total break from reality, minimizing the addiction and the consequences, avoiding the subject, rationalizing and excusing the behavior, blaming others for the problem(s), or being convinced they have control over the addiction and can quit any time. Denial is so strong it can make the addict think that *others* are the problem. The addict may also convince everyone else (family and friends) that they are the ones, not the addict, who has the problem.

- ② **False ideas and thinking patterns the addict has developed about themselves and their behavior** to prevent anything from interfering with the drug/alcohol use.

- ③ **False ideas and thinking patterns the addict has developed about the world and others.**

In all cases of recovery, the disordered thinking must be replaced with new thinking, knowledge, and understanding.

This may be a complete reversal of how the addicts views the addiction and abstinence. For instance, the addict may see abstinence as a terrible problem and addiction as the source of good. In recovery, addiction itself needs to be identified as the source of pain and slavery and recovery the source of liberation and future well-being!

Changing thinking is difficult, because thinking patterns are like well-worn paths. Making new thinking paths is work and needs to be constantly maintained.

PATH EXERCISE

Go on a walk in the community. Notice the paths, the well-worn places people have been walking.

QUESTIONS

Ask: Where does this path lead to? *Our destination*

Ask: Where does this path lead from? *Our origin*

Ask: Why do people take one path instead of another way? For example, why would a person go around a tree, down a hill, back and forth vs straight? Note that we go the path of least resistance! We go the easiest way; it is often a well-worn, frequently traveled path and it is easier.

Ask: What do you have to do if you want to go somewhere new, to a new destination?

Ask: Why is it often hard to make a new path if you want to go to a new place?

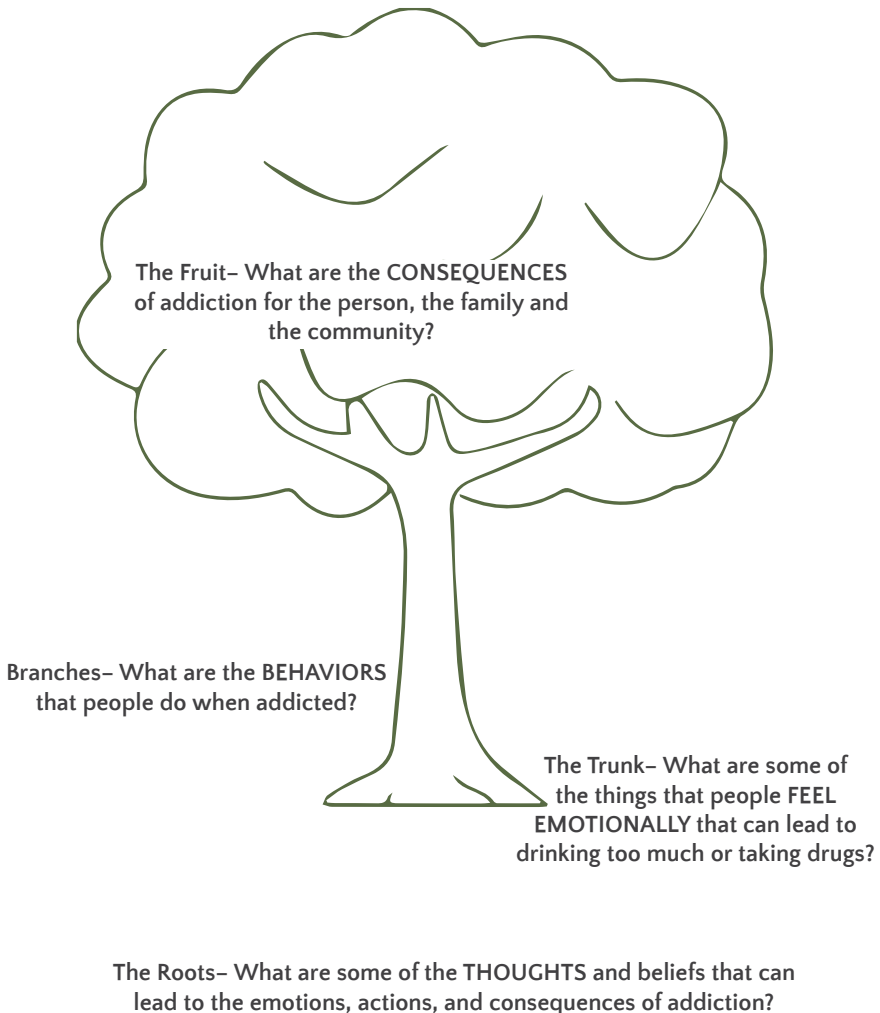
TEACHING POINT

Our habits are like paths.

1. In our thinking we have familiar things we think again and again. We may not be aware we are thinking the same thoughts all the time. It may be something we have been told or come to believe some another way. But the more we think something, the stronger the thought becomes. It is our well-worn "thinking path." It becomes the path of least resistance.
2. Sometimes the way we think is wrong or dangerous. Then our thinking patterns or habits or paths take us to a destination (conclusions) that are also wrong and dangerous. This happens with addiction to drugs and alcohol; wrong or dangerous thinking leads us to a bad destination.
3. We actually have physical "paths" in the brain where the neuron cells are lined up. When we think the same thoughts, the message wears a path in those cells. The connections between the neurons becomes strong, it becomes an easy thing to think the same thing over and over. Our brains are used to it.
4. When we want to get to a different place, a healthier place, we have to take a different path. It is true in our communities; it is true in our brains. We have to make a new path in our thoughts to overcome addiction. It involves work. We have to begin to travel that new path, in our thinking, again and again. The path eventually after hard work gets well worn. With repeated exercise, our brains get used to thinking new thoughts—that new path—and it becomes easier.
5. **Thinking in a new way is a necessary part of recovery from addiction.**

ADDICTION TREE

In this exercise, the facilitator helps the community identify the fruit of addiction and the branches, trunk, and roots that lead to addiction. If these can be identified, this insight can help create an intervention & treatment plan. *This exercise requires a culture where representation, allegory, and abstract thinking work.*



ADDICTION RECOVERY

Successful recovery nearly always takes place only with the help of others—community groups, counselors, and mentors. Actively building and maintaining a support network is imperative to recovery. This has been used successfully in many alcoholic treatment programs.

RECOVERY INVOLVES

- ① **Stopping the drugs or alcohol completely.**
- ② **Arranging for a personal support team** with professional counselors, other healthy individuals, and supportive groups. A support network is made up of peer groups like Alcoholics Anonymous, professional counselors, close friends, and mentors who can speak the truth and help people who are addicted achieve and maintain abstinence. These support networks can:
 1. Increase hope for a better life
 2. Provide a healthier group of people to spend time with and connect with in a deep, meaningful way
 3. Create a safe nonjudgmental environment
 4. Help structure personal time in a better way
 5. Be a place to belong, to benefit others, have accountability, and receive feedback
- ③ **Cleanly breaking off all contact with people and settings which trigger or lead to engaging in the addictive behavior.**
- ④ **Strategically structuring personal and social time** in new and healthy ways.
- ⑤ As much as possible, **putting other major life issues ‘on hold’** during the initial recovery phase. Once a person is no longer using, the consequences of addiction will need to be addressed. Many of the alcoholic treatment programs include addressing personal and relational issues that have been affected by the alcohol use.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Alcoholics Anonymous and **Celebrate Recovery** are two examples of successful support groups. They are usually made up of people who understand addiction or the pain and dysfunction that leads to addiction.

12 STEPS TO RECOVERY: THE ADDICTED PERSON

- 1 Recognizes they are powerless in the face of the addiction and that life has become unmanageable.
- 2 Puts their hope in God, a higher power, to restore their lives. Decides to turn their will over to God.
- 3 Becomes fearlessly honest about themselves and their life.
- 4 Confesses to God, themselves, and others the exact nature of the wrong things done.
- 5 Is ready to do the work of change—think differently and live differently.
- 6 Asks God to transform their heart and mind.
- 7 Assesses what damage the addictive behavior has done to others.
- 8 When appropriate, makes amends to others who have been damaged by the addictive behaviors.
- 9 Lives in complete honesty, takes responsibility, is quick to confess wrong and do what is right.
- 10 Meditates on God to know him better, to understand his will, and to find his power to live free.
- 11 Continues to live free and to help others who struggle with drugs and alcohol.

MAINTAINING RECOVERY

AN ONGOING PROCESS

Addiction starts with a poor choice and becomes a disease. Recovery is a lifelong process of becoming free.

It takes time for the disease's symptoms to no longer be present. Recovery usually occurs slowly over time as the addict's vulnerability to using drugs and alcohol diminishes by *not* using the drugs or alcohol. Making a good choice again and again weakens the disease. Thinking new thoughts over and over weakens the false thinking that contributed to addiction.

Maintaining abstinence requires continued work. This means keeping a good personal support system, continuing to work and rework the principles outlined in the 12-step program, being aware of the common challenges addicts experience when coming off drugs/alcohol, and taking decisive action. Identifying the challenges, anticipating when vulnerability to drugs could be avoided, and making a plan will help prevent relapse.

SOME TIPS

- ① Set goals you can keep. Start simple and build on success.
- ② Early recovery can be exhilarating, but will not last. Do not expect the elation to last.
- ③ The emotions the drugs and alcohol were hiding will now need to be dealt with. Do not think this means abstinence is not worth it—it means you will be fighting for your liberty.
- ④ Expect strong cravings. The good news is that they will not last and will diminish when you resist them. Every time you tell yourself you do not need to use and don't, the cravings will lessen.
- ⑤ Abstinence is not recovery, and relapse (using again) is not failure. Relapse is dangerous and common but can be overcome. Use your team, get back in the battle. Identify your potential triggers. Relapse doesn't happen suddenly, so watch for the triggers and danger signs which will be present long before relapse occurs. Pay attention and come up with an action plan using the medical, cognitive, emotional and social resources you have to intervene early—before using again!
- ⑥ Recovery involves changing the way a person thinks and lives. It requires humility to learn how to do this. Humility is not humiliation—it is power restrained to choose right OR wrongly. So, choose to do the right thing.
- ⑦ The process of recovery will make it possible to eventually and successfully deal with the causes and consequences of addiction. This takes time and help.

Your life has value. It is worth it—do the work to become free from addiction!

BIBLE VERSES

1. DRINKING ALCOHOL IS NOT BAD IN AND OF ITSELF.

- 1 Timothy 5:23
- John 2:1-11
- Psalm 104:15 (The whole Psalm is one of great thankfulness)

2. *BUT*, DO NOT BECOME DRUNK.

- Proverbs 23:29-35
- Proverbs 20:1
- Isaiah 5:11-12
- 1 Corinthians 9-12
- Ephesians 5:15-20

3. IF ALCOHOL IS A PROBLEM-GET RID OF IT! DON'T DRINK IT.

- Romans 12:1-2
- Matthew 5:30
- James 4:7

4. DON'T USE IT AROUND OR GIVE IT TO OTHERS WHO HAVE A PROBLEM WITH ALCOHOL.

- Romans 15:1-3
- 1 Corinthians 8:9

Renew Health Promotion
In collaboration with Renew World Outreach
Kathryn C. Halverson MD, Renew Health, Medical Director
Copyright Kathryn C. Halverson 2020
Email: kathy@renewoutreach.org



RENEWWORLDOUTREACH

WWW.RENEWOUTREACH.ORG