

Houston, We Have a Problem . . .

Strength of mind rests in sobriety; for this keeps your reason unclouded by passion.

—Pythagoras

Objective: To identify addictive behaviors, the associated symptoms, and the consequences of those addictions.

Materials needed: None.

Procedure: Have a mentee read the following:

Hello, old friend; I've come to visit once again. I live to see you suffer mentally, physically, spiritually, and socially. I want to make you restless so you can never relax! I want you to be jumpy and nervous and anxious! I want to make you agitated and irritable so everything and everybody make you uncomfortable. I want you to be confused and depressed so that you can't think clearly or positively. I want to make you hate everything and everybody, especially yourself. I want you to feel guilty and remorseful for the things you've done in the past that you'll never be able to let go of. I want to make you angry and hateful toward the world for the way it is and the way you are. I want you to feel sorry for yourself and blame everything but your addiction for the way things are. I want you to be deceitful and untrustworthy, and to manipulate and con as many people as possible. I want to make you fearful and paranoid for no reason at all. I want you to wake up during all hours of the night and scream for me. You know you can't sleep without me. I'm even in your dreams.

I want to be the first thing you wake up to every morning and the last thing you touch before you pass out. I would rather kill you, but I'll be

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Symptom #3

The need increases to engage in behavior or use more of a substance to achieve the same effect or feeling.

Symptom #4

Has tried but failed to stop using the substance or end the behavior.

Symptom #5

Continues to engage in the behavior or use the substances after they have been caught or confronted.

Answering yes to three or more of the above symptoms during a 12-month period may show that you or a loved one has an addiction. The first step to treating an addiction is recognizing that it exists.

Closure:

Remind mentees that if they know of anyone who demonstrates any of these destructive behaviors, they should seek out an adult who can help. Ask mentees to identify a behavior that might be an indicator of addiction.

happy enough just to put you back in the hospital, another institution or jail. But you know I'll still be waiting for you when you get out. I love to watch you slowly going insane. I love to see all the physical damage I am causing you. I can't help but sneer and chuckle when you shiver and shake, when you freeze and sweat at the same time, and when you wake with your sheets and blankets soaking wet. It's amusing to watch you make love to the toilet bowl—heaving and retching and not able to hold me down. It's amazing how much destruction I can do to your internal organs while at the same time work on your brain, destroying it bit by bit. I deeply appreciate how much you sacrifice for me. The countless good jobs you've sacrificed for me. All the fine friends that you deeply cared for—you gave up for me. And what's more, the ones you turned against yourself because of your inexcusable actions. I'm even more grateful.

And especially, your loved ones, your family, the most important people in the world to you—you even threw away for me. I cannot express in words the gratitude I have for the loyalty and respect you have for me—you sacrificed all these beautiful things in life just to devote yourself completely to me. But do not despair, my friend, for on me you may always depend. For after you have lost all of these things, you can still depend on me to take even more! You can depend on me to keep you in living hell, to keep in your mind, body and soul; for I will not be satisfied until you are dead, my friend.

—Anonymous

Pause here before continuing.

Ask: Who is the narrator of this writing? *Answers: My name is: crack, alcohol, weed, coke, "h," dust, uppers, oxy, and so on.*

Give mentees a few minutes to think about this reading.

Discussion questions:

- What is the first thing you think of when you hear the word *addiction*?
Answers: Drugs, alcohol, etc.
- What would you add if you knew addiction is defined as compulsive patterns of behavior? *Answers: Gambling, eating disorders, shopping, etc.*

There are certain prevalent behaviors among addicts that strongly indicate a problem.

Symptom #1

Unable to meet responsibilities at home, school, or office.

Symptom #2

Continues to use substances or engage in behavior even when it is dangerous.

Activity: Prompts for Discussion - Good Prom Decisions

The Prom is in May and quickly approaching. Students are already planning many aspects for the event. The point of the discussion to be generated is to help students become aware of the many things to consider:

Paying for Bids/ Deadlines for Payment

Selection of Dress/Tux – appropriateness

Discussion of the Site – Table Selection (Who is sitting with Who)
Type of Music

Planning Transportation- Who's going with whom, Rules for the Ride

Prom Arrival – Date/Partner Etiquette

Behavior

After Prom Parties

Drinking/Sex