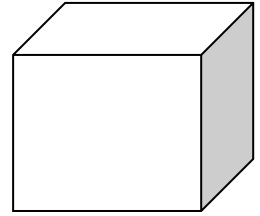


Challenge 8



Addictive Behavior

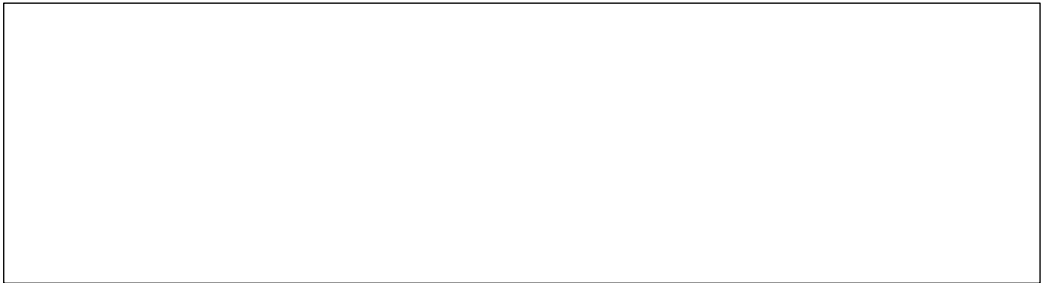
Addictive behavior is when *any activity, object, or behavior, has become the “obsession” in a person’s life and, therefore, is causing harm.* Sometimes, it even starts as a healthy activity, such as running, eating habits, academic achievement, weightlifting, etc. But, whenever it becomes so repeated that it becomes a habit that a person can’t stop obsessing about, an imbalance occurs. We begin to ignore other priorities, including friends, families, and other personal incentives. Obsessive habits can be harmful to the individual, in terms of personal relationships, physical wellness and mental instability.

Most of us think about addictive behavior in relationship to using drugs/alcohol. Substance abuse certainly causes destruction on many levels. Evidence of physical and psychological dependency takes away incentives to achieve, while creating a loss of self. Addictive behavior causes us to act compulsively, which means acting without boundaries or rational thought, and are considered a threat to our well-being.

Can you think of an addictive behavior that is unusual? Example: ditching school, playing video games, driving fast, etc.

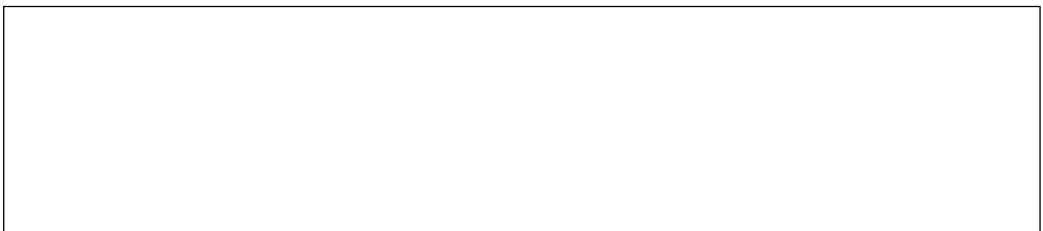
People can easily be addicted to texting, technology, eating or not eating, gambling, anger, relationships, working, not working, studying, and shopping, along with hundreds of other options. Any activity could potentially be a problem, if it becomes a habit that is out of control. Therefore, many of us look at these examples and think, “I could easily have several addictive behaviors.”

Can you think of anyone who might not have addictive behaviors?



You may also wonder if all addictive behaviors are as threatening as others. The response can only be answered by the individual. Everyone has habits that are just part of being human. People drink too much coffee, obsess about a celebrity, or are constantly taking in way too much sugar. Whether or not these actions become addictive behaviors depends on the frequency, dependency upon, and losses that occur within this behavior.

How does constantly “ditching school” become an addictive behavior?



Addictive behaviors come in all shapes and sizes. Some are obvious; some are well kept secrets. In order to maintain our personal power, we need to take charge of our lives when any habit makes us feel out of control. The hard part is admitting that there is a problem. Most of us like to feel that we are in charge of our lives, even when we are not. Here’s the good part. Change is always possible.

What happens when we try to change a habit that is harming us and we keep slipping back to the same behavior? It's important for everyone to understand that once a habit is engrained in our behavior, any process toward change takes great effort, perseverance and patience. We need to commit to understanding that the journey ahead is about re-establishing our own personal empowerment and control toward positive choices. It isn't easy, but it improve the quality of life.

What are the most common addictive behaviors that you feel teens experience today?

What is worse...having an addictive behavior to driving reckless, or having an addictive behavior to using heroine?

When do you think a person should start thinking about making positive personal changes?

One teen described having an addictive behavior as being trapped inside a box. What do you think he meant?

What do you think are the greatest challenges for teens in terms of "getting outside that box"?

Why is personal empowerment the key to a successful life?

