

The Truth About “Rehab” and Drug Addiction

In This Installment:

- Information about residential treatment centers and other treatments for drug addiction—a chronic disease
- Where and when to get help for an addiction
- What happens in drug treatment programs, including behavioral therapies and medications that help patients avoid relapse
- Why drug addiction and other mental illnesses often occur simultaneously



Dear Teacher:

“Rehab” is a commonly used term that can refer to a range of drug treatment options. Teens who read about celebrities checking into residential drug treatment centers—places that look a lot like five-star resorts—may have a glamorized view of drug addiction and treatment for drug addiction. Teens may not “get” the severity of drug addiction. If they do understand how serious drug addiction is, then they may not know where to get help. Untreated drug addiction presents the risk of serious problems within families and communities, including violence, crime, health emergencies, child abuse, and unemployment.

This final installment of this school year’s *Heads Up* series highlights the realities of treatment for drug addiction. Teens will learn that drug addiction is a serious and chronic, yet treatable, brain disease. Like other chronic illnesses, drug addiction requires continued care, and successful treatment can involve several different therapies.

I hope you share this article with your students to provide them with important facts about drug addiction and treatment.

Sincerely,

Nora D. Volkow, M.D.
Director,
National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)



Lesson Plan and Worksheet

NATIONAL STANDARDS

Science (NSES): Life Science: Regulation and Behavior;
Science in Personal and Social Perspectives: Personal and
Community Health
Language Arts (IRA/NCTE): Evaluation Strategies

KEY CONCEPTS

- “Rehab” is a commonly used term to describe a range of drug treatment options. The reality of treatment is very different from what the celebrity media shows us.
- Effective treatments for drug addiction include behavioral therapies and medications.
- Successful treatment involves a combination of therapies that address a person’s individual drug-abuse patterns and drug-related medical, psychiatric, and social problems.

BEFORE READING

- Discuss with students stories they’ve read about celebrities who have drug addictions and have gone to residential drug treatment centers.
- Discuss students’ impressions of drug addiction and treatment. Ask them: *What kinds of stories have you heard about celebrities and drug addiction? What do you think of when you hear the word “rehab”?*

AFTER READING

Have students take the quiz on the Student Worksheet (see reproducible on the following page), and then ask these questions:

- *Has your impression of drug addiction and treatment changed after reading the article? How and why?*
- *What are the similarities between drug addiction and asthma?*
- *What are some of the reasons that drug addiction is often comorbid with mental illness?*

CRITICAL THINKING

- *Why would a drug-addiction treatment program require a person recovering to attend checkups with a therapist?*
- *Why do you think it is important to tailor a drug-addiction treatment program to a person’s individual needs?*

WRITING PROMPT

Have students write a mock magazine article about a teen addicted to drugs for their favorite pop-culture magazine. The article should highlight the teen’s struggles with addiction and how he or she got help. Tell students that this article should bust myths about drug addiction and treatment.

ANSWERS to Student Worksheet: 1. B; 2. A; 3. A; 4. B; 5. A; 6. D; 7. D; 8. C; 9. C; 10. D

For printable past and current articles in the **HEADS UP** series, as well as activities and teaching support, go to www.drugabuse.gov/parent-teacher.html or www.scholastic.com/HEADSUP.

What Do You Know About “Rehab” and Drug Addiction?

Answer the questions below to find out what you know about treatment for drug addiction.

1. Drug addiction is a short-term illness that is cured with medicine.
(A) True (B) False
2. People who are addicted to drugs have a compulsive and sometimes uncontrollable craving for drugs.
(A) True (B) False
3. Drug addiction and asthma are both chronic, long-lasting diseases.
(A) True (B) False
4. When a person relapses during his or her recovery from drug addiction, this means the treatment has failed.
(A) True (B) False
5. “Rehab” is a commonly used term that can refer to a range of drug treatment options.
(A) True (B) False
6. Which of the following is a “trigger” that could cause a person to relapse?
(A) Exposure to drugs
(B) Exposure to friends who abuse drugs
(C) Stress
(D) All of the above
7. Some people who need treatment for drug addiction do not receive it because
(A) they won’t admit they have a problem.
(B) they don’t know how to get help.
(C) of a range of different reasons.
(D) All of the above
8. Detoxification is
(A) the last step in drug treatment.
(B) the process of becoming addicted.
(C) the process that allows a person’s body to get rid of a drug.
(D) one-on-one counseling.
9. Methadone is used to treat
(A) anxiety and depression.
(B) alcohol addiction.
(C) opiate addiction.
(D) indigestion.
10. Which of the following is a reason that a person might suffer from both drug addiction and other mental illnesses?
(A) There are common brain areas involved and possibly even shared genes.
(B) Environmental triggers like stress can lead a person to use drugs and can also cause mental illnesses.
(C) A person experiencing the symptoms of a mental illness may turn to drugs or alcohol to cope.
(D) All of the above