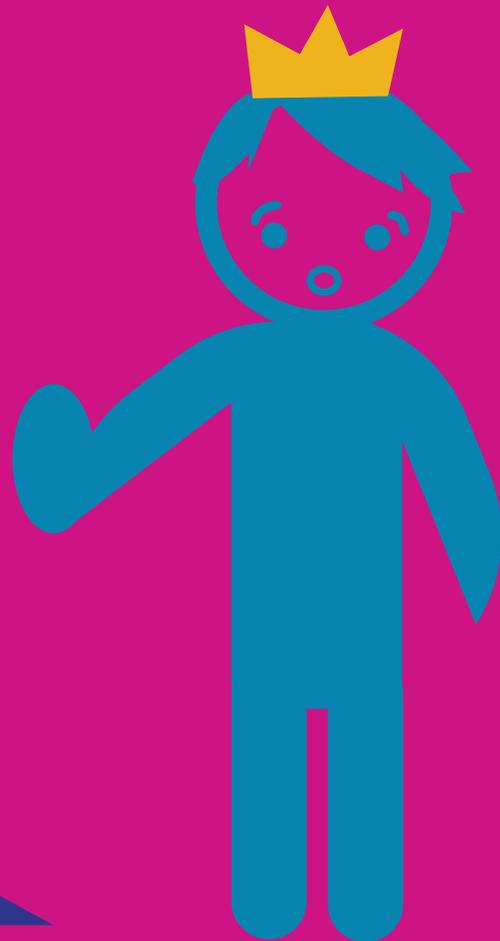




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LESSON:

Talking to Your Kids About Addiction



Background

Addiction does not just refer to substances. New neurological research shows how food, gambling, video gaming, and pornography can affect the brain—literally changing the way it works. It is important for your child to understand that everyone’s body craves constant dopamine release and pleasure, especially in times of distress.

Preparation

Review the objective of the lesson and understand why it is important to talk to your child about it. Read over the lesson first and try to anticipate what your child is ready for and what questions your child might have. Familiarize yourself with the glossary terms.

Objective

Help your child understand coping mechanisms and what triggers them and that they can take charge of their own behavioral choices. Children need to recognize when **cop**ing occurs and what triggers their need to cope. We can help them come up with positive coping methods to deal with reactions such as boredom, stress, sadness, fear, loneliness and anger.

Lesson: What is Addiction?

Addiction is a condition that results when a person ingests a substance (for example, alcohol, cocaine or nicotine) or engages in an activity (for example, gaming, pornography use, social media, shopping) that can be pleasurable but the continued use/act of which becomes compulsive and interferes with ordinary life responsibilities such as work, relationships or health (Psychology Today).

Other points to make:

- Everyone has different coping **mechanisms**, but we need to make sure ours are positive.
- We need to make healthy choices, no matter what.
- We should not harm our body in anyway.

Questions to Ask Your Child

- What do you do when you feel bored or tired?
- What are the things that make you stressed or worried? How do you handle these emotions?
- Do you remember the last time you were angry? What did you feel like? What did you do?
- Have you ever been really sad? What makes you sad? What makes you feel better?
- What are other ways you could deal with things like being tired, sad, or stressed?
- Have you ever heard the term “coping mechanism”? What do you think it means?
- Can you think of negative ways some people choose to handle their difficult emotions?

- What are some reasons people may choose to do things they know are harmful to their bodies?
- What are some things we can become addicted to? How would we know we were addicted?
- How could knowing about your coping mechanisms help you deal with difficult emotions or situations?

Activity

Set a goal to replace something that isn't working so well in your life with a better choice. Write down and set small daily and weekly goals to change your habit. Give yourself time to accomplish the goal and recognize your small achievements along the way.

Following Up

- We can change our habits by changing our environment.
- We should replace something that isn't working so well with a better choice.



Glossary Terms

Coping: an activity we do to see and apply solutions to stressful situations or problems that emerge because of our stressors.

Mechanism: routine methods or procedures

Citations

Ph.D., M. L., Ph.D., M. D., Ph.D., A. J., & Ph.D., S. D. (n.d.). Psychology Today. Retrieved January 08, 2017, from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/addiction>