

Instructor's Guide
for
***Youth Corrections Series for Young Women:
Choices, Consequences, and Your Future***

My Body, My Well Being

Overview

Everyday we make choices that impact our health and physical and mental well being. These choices are reflected in the food we eat, our bathing and grooming, our sexual behaviors, and our use or non-use of drugs and alcohol.

Unfortunately, many of the young women entering juvenile corrections have made poor choices as it concerns their health. Drug use and sexual misconduct are prevalent among this population. Many have been the victim of sexual abuse, which has lead to their own poor choices regarding sex and drugs. These behaviors and choices are influenced by culture, by peers, and by family members, but they are still individual choices. This means that the individual can choose *not* to engage in these behaviors if he or she is willing stay committed and to work hard.

That's why it is important for you to teach your students the value of making positive choices as it concerns their physical health. This can range from ensuring that they get 15 minutes of exercise a day to helping them overcome a serious drug addiction. Most importantly, it involves helping students discover the underlying causes for their behaviors and engraining more positive coping mechanisms for dealing with those problems.

This video discusses the impact that drugs, alcohol, and sex can have on an individual's behavior. It encourages students to think about the contributing role that drugs and/or sex might have played in their criminal behavior and to consider strategies for combating their urges and addictions. Most importantly, it reinforces the need for students to be personally committed to change.

The video provides opportunities and questions for group discussion. Feel free to follow the cues, pausing for activities and discussion as your own schedule dictates.

Presentation Suggestions

Begin by asking students to think about their own physical health? Do they take care of their bodies? Have they used drugs or alcohol or engaged in unprotected sex in the last month? How often? What are the consequences of those behaviors? What is the value of stopping those behaviors and taking control of one's body and mind? Keep in mind that these are intensely personal issues, and some students may be reluctant to discuss these matters in a group setting. It might be easier to talk about this in general terms.

When you feel students have begun thinking about these issues, give them the **Anticipation Quiz** to complete prior to watching the video. If you wish, allow the students to state their answers and discuss them.

Show the video. Encourage students to take notes or to make changes to the answers they put down for the Anticipation Quiz while watching the video.

At the conclusion of the video, ask students to discuss any changes they made to their answers on the Anticipation Quiz as a result of information they learned. Follow up this discussion with the **Activities**.

Use the **Discussion Questions** to request oral or written responses from students or assign the questions as homework essays.

Give the **Quick Quiz** at the conclusion of class and correct the quizzes as a group. Assign the **Homework Option**, if desired.

Anticipation Quiz

Directions: Answer these questions as completely as possible. You may revise your answers as you watch the video.

1. What is the relationship between drug use and criminal behavior?
2. Why do people take drugs?
3. What can you do to take better care of yourself?

Answer Key

1. In many cases, drugs and addictions are at the root of criminal behavior. The problem may be doing the drugs themselves, the actions individuals take to acquire those drugs, or the results of the drugs' effects.
2. People take drugs to fit in with their peers, to fit in with expectations of society, or to escape from their problems. Most often, people take drugs to cope with other, non drug-related issues.

3. Eat right. Exercise. Bathe and brush teeth regularly. Avoid drug and alcohol use. Set boundaries on sexual activity. Avoid unprotected sex.

Activities

Activity #1

Title: The Healthy Alternative

Format: Individual

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: Worksheet, pen

Procedure:

1. Most people use drugs and alcohol as a means of escaping from or coping with other problems. Use the worksheet included in this guide to help individuals develop alternative coping strategies or even generate ideas for solving those deeper problems.
2. When everyone has finished, bring the class back together for a general discussion of coping strategies. Be aware that students may find this issue difficult to talk about. Don't push individual students to share more than they are willing to.

Activity #2

Title: Develop Your Credo

Format: Individual/Group

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: Paper, pen

Procedure:

1. One key to avoiding drugs and dangerous sexual or criminal behavior is developing a core set of values that you are willing to stick to. Some people call this a "credo." Essentially it is a statement or a list of the key beliefs that a person lives by.
2. Bring in examples of credos either from your own personal experience or from things you've read. (One example would be the first chapter from Robert Fulghum's book, *Everything I Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*.) Discuss as a class what a credo is, where it comes from, and what value it has.
3. Give students time to create their own credos. Encourage them to simply brainstorm a list of their values, beliefs, life lessons, mottos, etc. Then have them pick those that are most important to them.
4. Finally come back together as a class and discuss how having—and sticking to—a credo can help them to resist the situations and emotions that prompted their criminal behavior in the first place.

Discussion Questions

1. Many people use drugs as a way to cope with other social and emotional problems. Why, specifically, do you think people take and become addicted to drugs? What other, more positive coping strategies could people use instead?
2. What choices do you make every day that concern your body and your health? What do you choose to eat? When do you exercise? What do you do on a daily basis to take care of yourself, both mentally and physically? What could you start doing?
3. Why do people have sex? How do you decide whom to have sex with? What are all of the potential consequences of those choices? What can you do in the future to ensure that you make better choices in your relationships?

Quick Quiz

Note: You may read these questions out loud, allowing time for students to respond, or copy and hand this out as a written exercise.

Directions: Indicate whether each statement is true or false, according to the video.

1. Around 80% of all youth in corrections have some kind of substance abuse issue.
2. One out of every four girls has a sexually transmitted disease.
3. It's okay to use drugs in order to fit in with your peers.
4. Part of being sexually responsible means having boundaries.
5. Only you can end a substance abuse problem. Nobody can help you.
6. Substance abuse is a learned behavior and thus can be changed.

Answer Key

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|----------|----------|
| 1. True | 4. True |
| 2. True | 5. False |
| 3. False | 6. True |

Homework Option

Have students research and make a list of five things they can do to stay healthy. Encourage them to be as specific as possible. In the following class, compare students' lists and create a master list that the whole class can use.

Finding Healthy Alternatives

In order to break your addictions and take control of your health and well being, you need to find alternatives to drugs, alcohol, sexual behavior, and other potentially harmful behaviors.

In the left hand column, list the behaviors you engage in to cope with your problems. This might include drugs that you use, sexual behaviors you engage in, or other violent or criminal actions you take. In the middle column describe how that behavior or activity makes you feel. In the right column, list other healthy and legal behaviors you could engage in to make you feel the same way.

Negative Behavior	How It Makes Me Feel	Other Things I Could Do To Make Me Feel This Way