Lesson 1: Understanding the Effects of Alcohol

Understanding the Effects of Alcohol

Key Action: Provide your students with facts about the effects of drinking alcohol.

Curriculum Connections: Life Science, Health

What Students Will Learn: Students will understand the effects of underage alcohol use on their bodies.

Rationale: By fifth grade, most students have studied life science and the human body, and they are at a cognitive level to understand cause and effect and to think critically about information they are given. Knowledge of alcohol’s effects can help them understand the importance of making healthy decisions about alcohol.

Materials Needed: Copies of Understanding the Effects of Alcohol reproducible 1.

Procedure: Discuss how the media portrays drinkers and the effects of drinking. Distribute the reproducible. Read aloud the description of alcohol’s effects, defining unfamiliar words and correcting students’ preconceptions. Students should understand that drinking alcohol can result in a loss of control and can make drinkers do things they do not want to do. They should understand that alcohol affects different people in different ways and that even one drink can have serious effects. List any questions students have on the board and assign teams of students to research the answers in reference books.

Follow-Up: Ask students to complete the at-home activity Alcohol: A True/False Quiz (page 1 of the Family Resource Guide) with their families. Have them bring the quiz back in class and review the answers together. Invite students to take the Understanding the Effects of Alcohol reproducible home to share with their parents and caregivers.

Getting It: A Science Experiment

Understanding the Effects of Alcohol

Key Action: Help your students visualize the effects of drinking alcohol on the developing brain using a simple science experiment.

Curriculum Connections: Life Science, Health

What Students Will Learn: Students will better understand the effects of alcohol on the developing brain.

Rationale: Students have a hard time visualizing just how alcohol can affect the developing brain. Teachers can help students understand this with the following experiment.

Materials Needed: Glass lab dishes, bottles of rubbing alcohol, eggs.

Procedure: Ask the students what they remember about the discussion the class had about the effects of alcohol. Prompt them to describe some of the effects of alcohol that they reviewed on the Lesson 1 reproducible. Have students get into groups of two or three. Give each group an egg, a lab dish, and enough rubbing alcohol to cover the egg in the dish. Ask each group to crack the egg without breaking the yolks and to place it in the dish. One student in each group should pour the rubbing alcohol over the egg until it is covered. Ask students to leave the dishes alone while you continue your conversation. After 5 minutes, ask the students to look at their eggs. What changes have taken place in the eggs’ color, consistency, etc.? Explain that some effects alcohol does have on the cells of our bodies and brains.

Making Healthy Decisions

Understanding the Effects of Alcohol

Key Action: Encourage your students to use critical-thinking skills to make healthy decisions and to express themselves effectively.

Curriculum Connections: Health, Life Skills, Language Arts

What Students Will Learn: Students will analyze how they make decisions, practice refusal strategies, and discuss the consequences of saying “No” to a friend.

Rationale: Students at school are surrounded by peers for hours every day. Teachers can help students cope with peer selection and peer influence.


Procedure: Explain to students that this role-playing lesson will help them:

1. Identify situations in which the decisions they make can affect their health.
2. Answer the question: What is the worst thing that can happen when you say “No”? Explain that some effects alcohol does have on the cells of our bodies and brains.
3. Develop refusal strategies that work.

Follow-Up: Have students take the reproducible home and talk with their parents or guardians about the ways in which their family makes decisions.

Learn How Alcohol Affects the Body:

Introduction:

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