SECTION IV: PREVENTION OF SUBSTANCE/DRUG ABUSE

MODULE 12: UNDERSTANDING SUBSTANCE/DRUG USE

Introduction:

From times immemorial, human beings have used drugs for medicinal purposes but also misused and/or abused them. In the last five-six decades, substance abuse has become a serious concern and the situation has worsened in the recent years. The young people including adolescents are more vulnerable to substance abuse. In this module, we shall discuss the meaning of substance/drug use, misuse and abuse, and different types of drugs.

Overall Learning Objectives:

At the end of this section, learners will be able to:
  • Understand the difference between use, misuse and abuse of substances/drugs;
  • Differentiate between commonly abused legal and illegal substances/drugs;
  • Become aware of common signs and symptoms of substance/drug abuse;
  • Understand the short term and long term consequences of substance/drug use;
  • Identify and access safety net for support to stay away/ give up substance abuse;
  • Support any individual who is into substance abuse to give up the habit rather than stigmatize him/her

Activity 1: Meaning and Types of Substance/Drugs

Learning Objectives:

To enable learners to:
  • Understand the meaning of the term drug/substance,
  • Differentiate between commonly abused legal/illegal substances /drugs

Time required: 30 minutes

Materials required: Writing Board/Rolling Chart, Marker/Chalk

Notes for the facilitator:

  • Begin a brainstorming session by asking learners whether they are aware of the terms drug and substance
  • Write the answers given by learners on writing board or rolling chart and make power-point or oral presentation, based on the fact sheet at the end of this module
  • After developing an understanding of the terms, drug and substance among the learners, distribute slips having the names of different drugs/substances
  • The slips may be prepared in advance based on the fact sheet. It may be ensured that the slips include all the drugs/substances that are commonly known in the learners’ locality
• If the number of learners is more, the slips having the name of the same drug/substance can be given to more than one learner.
• On the Writing Board or Rolling Chart prepare a table with two major columns and divide the second column into two sub-columns as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEGAL DRUGS</th>
<th>ILLEGAL DRUGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOCIALY ACCEPTABLE DRUGS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Ask the learners to come one by one and tag the slip under the appropriate category on the board or chart.
• Once everyone has tagged the slip, let the learners discuss the following questions:
  o Have you heard about the names of all the substances/drugs tagged on the board/chart? If ‘no’, which are new names you have learnt through the slips?
  o Identify the drugs that could be placed in more than one category?
  o What do you understand by the term, ‘socially acceptable drugs?’ Which are the drugs that are considered socially acceptable in your area?

• After the discussion is over, explain the categories and correctly place the slips that were wrongly tagged by learners on the board/chart.
• Summarize the session by focusing on key points.

**Summing Up:**

• Any chemical that alters the physical or mental functioning of our body is a ‘drug’
• Commonly abused substances among adolescents are tobacco and alcohol which are a gateway to use of other drugs.
• Need for critically analyzing issues related to drugs/substances, because socially acceptable drugs are abused and even many legal drugs can be abused.

**Activity 2: Use, Misuse and Abuse of Drug/Substance**

**Learning Objectives:**

To enable learners to:
• Understand the difference between use, misuse and abuse of substances/drugs

**Time required:** 30 minutes

**Materials required:** Writing Board/Rolling Chart, Marker/Chalk
Notes for the facilitator:

- Conduct an activity based on the following case study. Read out the case study loudly in the class:

  Raman, Robin and Rina, students of Class XII are good friends. Robin used to live in the hostel nearby and once got a bad cold and cough. The doctor prescribed him a cough syrup. Robin was soon cured. When Robin was ill, Raman and Rina used to visit his room regularly to know about his health and extend their help to him. Once during such a visit, while Robin was taking his medicine he mentioned its good taste to Raman and Rina. Later, whenever Rina and Raman came to Robin’s room, Raman would taste the cough syrup and soon acquired such a strong taste for it that he went and bought the cough syrup for himself from the chemist. Now he has started consuming the syrup everyday and does not feel comfortable if he misses it even on one day.

- Ascertain that learners have understood the case. Ask them to share their responses in relation to the following situations in the case study
  - Whether taking cough syrup by Robin is use or abuse?
  - Whether taking cough syrup by Raman is use or abuse?

- Note down their points and facilitate a discussion using the following questions:
  1. Do you think Raman did something wrong when he tasted cough syrup, although he did not need it? Please provide reasons for your response.
  2. Do you agree that Raman should not have bought cough syrup without the prescription of a Doctor? If ‘yes,’ why?
  3. Why does Raman feel uncomfortable when he does not take cough syrup?

Summing Up:

- Reinforce the meaning of use, misuse and abuse of drugs based on the following definitions, by citing examples drawn from the experiences of learners:
  - **Drug**: When a pharmaceutical preparation or naturally occurring substance is primarily used to bring about a change in some existing process or state (physiological, psychological, biochemical), it can be called a ‘drug’.
  - **Drug Use**: A drug when taken for medical treatment as per the prescription of the doctor constitutes drug use.
  - **Drug Misuse**: When drugs are not taken as per the direction and doses prescribed by a doctor, it is called misuse. For example, if a prescription requires the users to take one pill every four hours and he or she takes three or six pills every four hours or, self mediates over an extended period.
Drug Abuse: When an individual with or without a prescription intentionally takes a substance or prescription drug in an amount or frequency other than what is intended to treat, it is known as ‘drug abuse.’

- Emphasize that often times, casual first use or experimentation with drugs leads to addiction and dependence that involve increasing tolerance, development of withdrawal symptoms and disruption of psychological, occupational and social functioning.

Activity 3: Signs and Symptoms of Drug/Substance Abuse

Learning Objectives:

To enable learners to:

- Become aware of common signs and symptoms of substance/drug abuse;

Time required: 30 minutes

Materials required: Writing Board/Rolling Chart, Marker/Chalk

Notes for the facilitator:

- Inform the learners that the session would be a participatory story building activity that will incorporate the signs and symptoms of substance/drug abuse and the reasons for young people’s increased vulnerability to these substances.
- Write the incomplete story on the board/chart as follows:

  “Abdul and Sohan are classmates. Abdul observes that Sohan has not been coming to school for some days. One day Abdul sees Sohan lying under the tree at an odd hour in a sleepy condition………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………

- After reading the incomplete story, divide the learners into groups, each group having not more than 5-6 learners and identify one of them as group reporter.
- Ask each group to complete the story in 15 minutes by including the reasons for Sohan’s increased vulnerability to substance abuse and some of the signs and symptoms that they are aware of.
- Ensure that everyone in the group participates in completing the story.
- Ask all group reporters to share the completed story in the larger group.
- Note down the important signs and symptoms as well as the reasons for increased vulnerability of young people to substance abuse highlighted in different stories on the Writing Board or Chart Paper.
- Make sure that all the signs and symptoms have been covered in the list by mentioning the points that have been missed out by the learners.
- Have brief discussion with a focus on why young people are vulnerable to substance abuse
- Summarize the session by highlighting the key points given below.
Summing Up:

- The signs and symptoms of substance abuse vary depending upon the type, dose and method of drug use. Furthermore, the same drug can affect different individuals in different ways and it is difficult to predict this in advance. Hence, signs and symptoms of substance abuse may present in several different ways.

- Some of the factors that make adolescents vulnerable to substance abuse are poor self-esteem, low achievement at school, performance pressure, history of abuse, family history of substance abuse, family instability, and lack of easily available support from family, friends and school.

- Furthermore, irresponsible advertisements glorifying substance abuse, pressure from friends to try an addictive substance, the urge to gain popularity among friends, and curiosity to try out new things also make young people particularly vulnerable to substance abuse.

- No one starts taking substances with the aim of getting addicted to them. However, very few young people realize that experimentation can lead to addiction. Many of these substances have properties that alter brain functioning and after a point of time, the individual loses discretion and judgment and becomes addicted.
FACT SHEET

- **Drug**: When a pharmaceutical preparation or naturally occurring substance is primarily used to bring about a change in some existing process or state (physiological, psychological, biochemical), it can be called a ‘drug’. Any substance that when taken into a living organism may modify perception, mood, cognition, behaviour, motor function or any other aspect of physical or mental function can be called a ‘drug.’

- **Drug Use**: A drug when taken for medical treatment as per the prescription of the doctor constitutes drug use.

- **Drug Misuse**: When drugs are not taken as per the direction and doses prescribed by a doctor, it is called misuse. For example, if a prescription requires the users to take one pill every four hours and he or she takes three or six pills every four hours or, self medicates over an extended period.

- **Drug Abuse**: When an individual with or without a prescription intentionally takes a substance or prescription drug in an amount or frequency other than what is intended to treat, it is known as ‘drug abuse.’ Over a period of time, drug abuse damages the physical or mental functioning of an individual. Any type of drug can be abused. Drugs with medical uses can be abused in the following ways:
  - **Too Much**: When an increased dose of any drug is taken without medical advice, it will be a case of drug abuse, for example, the incidence of taking 10 milligram of valium when only 2 milligram has been prescribed.
  - **Too Often**: When small doses of any drug are taken frequently without medical advice, for example, taking the drug more than once when it has been prescribed only for bedtime.
  - **Too Long**: When the drug is taken for an extended period of time, longer than the prescribed one, for example, continued use of the drug for months when the Doctor has prescribed its use only for a fortnight.
  - **Wrong Use**: It will be wrong use of a drug, if it is taken for reasons other than medical, or taken without medical advice, for example, taking gardenal (an anti-epileptic drug) for the sedative side-effects, which is dangerous.
  - **Wrong Combination**: If a drug is taken in combination with another drug or any other intake without advice, it will be harmful, for example, taking barbiturates (a depressant drug) with alcohol to enhance the effect.

- **Drug Dependence**: Dependence is a state of physical addiction, which involves tolerance and withdrawal symptoms. Continuous abuse of a drug can lead to dependence as a result of increased tolerance to the substance.
Legal and illegal Drugs:

- Drugs could be categorized as legal and illegal.
- Legal drugs are those that are prescribed by qualified medical practitioner and they are available off the counter/on prescription.
- Substances like alcohol, solvents, and some others like glue, correction ink, may be legal in specific contexts, but when these are misused, it would be illegal. It is to be noted that misuse of any drug can lead to addiction.
- Excessive use of socially accepted substances like tea, coffee, nicotine, gutka are also addictive and harmful.
- Certain illegal drugs are used in legally permissible quantities to manufacture drugs/medicines, such as morphine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Drugs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Socially accepted drugs</td>
<td>Caffeine, Alcohol, Nicotine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Prescribed</td>
<td>Tranquilizer, Barbiturates, Narcotic Analgesic, Anabolic steroids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Solvent drugs</td>
<td>Glue, Petrol, Benzene, Nail Polish Remover, Iodex, Correction Ink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Over the counter drugs and other substances</td>
<td>Cough-mixture, Aspirin, Gutka, Country Liquor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Illegal drugs</td>
<td>Heroin, Cocaine, Crack Marijuana, Ganja.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Effects of drug abuse:

Drugs that are abused may be classified according to the effects they have on the central nervous system. Following are some of the groups in which they may be classified:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Drugs</th>
<th>Effect the user feels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stimulants</td>
<td>Amphetamines like Benzedrine, Dexedrine and Methedrine, Cocaine, Nicotine, Tobacco</td>
<td>Accelerate the brain (central nervous system) and the user may feel alert, full of energy or confident and strong. In higher doses stimulants may lead to anxiety or panic. Mental health problems can occur with increasing use. In cases of serious overdose, death may also occur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depressants</td>
<td>Alcohol, Barbiturates like, Seconal,</td>
<td>Slow down activity of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nembutal, Gardenal, Tranquilizers like Valium and Librium
the brain and may also have hypnotic effects

Sedatives
Hypnotic like Mandrax, Doriden
Produce opium like effects and stupor. This group of drugs produce a relaxing, peaceful and happy feeling. In higher doses, they may lead to drowsiness, decreased concentration, nausea, vomiting and sweating. Further increase in the dose may lead to deep sleep, loss of consciousness and even death.

Narcotic/Analgesics
Opium, Morphine, Codeine Heroin, Brown Sugar, Synthetic drugs like Methadone, Pethidine, Mephradine

Cannabis
Bhang (Marijuana), Ganja, Charas
LSD (lysergic acid, Diethylamide) PCP (phencyclidine), Mescaline, Psilocybin
Distort the way in which individuals see, hear and feel

The commonly abused substances among adolescents are tobacco and alcohol which act as gateway to the use of other drugs. Other drugs abused are marijuana (ganja), cough syrup such as Corex and Phensydyl, solvents (petrol, glue, correction ink).

Signs and Symptoms of Substance/Drug Abuse:

The following symptoms are noteworthy:
**Physical Symptoms:**
- Reddening and puffiness of eyes, unclear vision
- Running nose, congestion, coughing. Pale face, circles under eyes
- Slurring of speech
- Nausea, vomiting, body pain
- Messy appearance, lack of cleanliness
- Drowsiness or sleeplessness, lethargy and passivity
- Loss of appetite, significant weight loss or gain
- Fresh numerous injection marks on body, blood stains on clothes
Behaviour Symptoms:
- Changing mood, temper tantrums, hostility, defiance
- Acute anxiety, depression, profuse sweating
- Blaming, lying, making excuses, emotional detachment
- Loss of interest in sports and daily routine
- Impaired memory and lack of concentration
- Secrecy in respect of possessions and actions

Performance Symptoms:
- Withdrawal from family environment and non-participation in family work.
- Sudden lowering of grades in schools, non-completion of home work, absenteeism
- Presence of needles, syringes and strange packets at home
- More time spent in personal room, in the bathroom or away from home

Types of Substance/Drug Abusers:

Experimenters
Begin using drugs largely because of peer pressure and curiosity. Usually limit their use to recreational settings.

Regular/Compulsive User
These are individuals who regularly use harmful substances or are habituated to them. They devote considerable time and energy into getting high, talk incessantly about drug use and are likely to know a lot about availability of locally available drugs.

Dependent User
Repeated use of substances to the extent that user (referred to as an addict) is periodically or chronically intoxicated and will suffer from withdrawal symptoms, if the substance is not consumed.

Drug Dependence
- Drug abuse leads to drug addiction with the development of tolerance and dependence. Tolerance refers to a condition where the user needs increasing amount of the drug to experience the same effect. Smaller quantity that was sufficient earlier becomes ineffective, and hence the user is forced to increase the amount of drug intake at regular intervals.
- When psychological dependence develops, the drug user gets mentally 'hooked on' to the drug. The drug user has a continuous and uncontrollable craving for it.
- Physical dependence denotes a state when the user’s body requires continuous presence of the drug. With prolonged use the body becomes so used to functioning under the influence of drug that it is not able to function normally if the drug is absent. After the user becomes physically dependent on drugs, he or she develops withdrawal symptoms, if the intake of drug is abruptly stopped. The withdrawal symptoms may range from mild tremors to convulsions, severe agitation and fits, depending on the type of drug abuse.
- The intensity of withdrawal symptoms depends on the type of drug abused and the amount and duration of drug intake.
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If the online feedback page does not open on your internet browser, please type the above-mentioned link manually in your browser, or simply copy-paste the link.