



## Avoiding Addiction

### Materials:

- Worksheet

**Brainstorm:** Ask students: “What are some positive habits or activities you spend your time doing? Is this a reasonable amount of time? Are you able to balance the time and energy with your other responsibilities? In other words, is it a healthy habit or addiction? What is the difference between a healthy addiction and a negative addiction?”

**Discuss:** In our previous lessons, we have examined how to manage stress and become the person we want to be. To become the person we want to be, we have to make conscious decisions to remain focused on our personal vision for ourselves. What are some ways we have discussed to manage our stress, take care of ourselves and be the person we want to be?

How do you define addiction? What are some examples of addictions? (write list on the board as students share).

**Dive in!** In our last lesson, we discussed stress and its impact on our mental and emotional health. As we continue to examine stress in our lives, we want to learn how to deal with it positively or healthily to ensure that building the habit creates a strong, healthy lifestyle.

William Glasser created a term called “positive addiction” in his book “Positive Addiction”. Positive addictions would include running or meditating. Glasser claims that positive addictions “strengthen us and make our lives more satisfying.” Positive addictions help develop our confidence, be creative, and be happier. These positive addictions should enhance our lives. What are some habits you can incorporate into your life that would be positive?

Addictions can be either positive or negative. To be positive, it should bring value and improve your quality of life. There are many negative addictions that actually harm you or decrease your quality of life, including alcohol, marijuana, and other non-prescription drugs. They may seem to bring you a sense of temporary relief, but often, the addiction becomes a negative



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factor in your life. You should be mindful of others and how they handle these substances over time. Does it bring additional value to their life? Is their life similar to how you envision who you want to be?

If you can find positive activities to manage your stress and responsibilities, it will actually lead to a better life. A life that helps you move towards goals you create.

To be healthy addiction, Glasser provides six criteria:

Is the activity non-competitive? The activity should help you relax, meditate or de-stress for approximately an hour a day.

Does it come easily to you? For example, does running come naturally for you? Are you able to sit quietly and meditate alone?

Are you able to do the activity alone? You can include others, but it should be an activity where you focus on yourself.

Does the activity bring some value to you?

Do you believe you CAN reach your personal best? Focus on your best rather than comparing yourself to others.

Are you able to compliment yourself while doing the activity? Remember it should bring you joy or satisfaction.

Remember a positive addiction brings a sense of joy, happiness or contentment to life. It should be something that you look forward to doing for a specific amount of time. It should bring balance and value to all areas of your life.

Although there may be other activities to participate in, they may not be positive or bring increased value or happiness for the long term. For example, alcohol or other substances may bring a temporary relief to a situation - they are not healthy habits to manage the stresses of life. Finding the positive addictions will help resist the temptation to engage in negative activities. Focus on the goals you have created for yourself. Surround yourself with the people that will help you reach those goals.

**Activity:** Distribute the worksheet to students and provide them with enough time to brainstorm some healthy addictions. If possible, play soothing instrumental music while students work.



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**Reflect:** When students finish creating their worksheet, ask for volunteers to share some interests they listed.

Review the list students shared at the beginning of the lesson, have students categorize the list into positive and negative. For example:

Positive addictions/choices which help us become the person we envision	Negative addictions/choices which may prevent me from becoming the person we envision

### Extend and Enrich

Students are overwhelmed with temptations to develop negative addictions. Challenge your students to practice their healthy habits regularly during the week. Encourage students to start simple, for example if they choose running, start by running ten minutes per day and let it build as they find joy in the activity. Follow up with students to see how they are building healthy addictions.

### For Further Study

**Positive Addiction by William Glasser.**

[18 Ways to Stop Teen Addiction](#)

[Marijuana: What you Need to Know to Protect Children](#)

### Professional Development

Take a few minutes to reflect on your own methods to manage stress. Do you engage in any healthy addictions? How often do you engage in this activity? If not, what might you be interested in trying out this week that might become a healthy addiction? Review Glasser's criteria and set an intention to give it a try!