

Release and Relapse:
The State of Alcohol Rehabilitation in the US Today

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MSU Human Rights Education Internship

Lesson Title: Release and Relapse: The State of Alcohol Rehabilitation in the US Today

Grade/Course: Human Rights Day

Lesson duration: 40-45 Min

Topic of Lesson: Alcohol Rehabilitation

Central Focus: The focus of this lesson plan is to give students an understanding of alcohol rehabilitation centers and what they do. Students will learn about the inner workings of rehabilitation centers, what care they offer, and how effective it is. Students will also understand what needs to change, and what they can do about it.

Essential Question(s):

What actually happens in alcohol rehabilitation centers?

Why do they cost so much?

How effective are they?

What other options are there?

What can we do about it?

State/Disciplinary Standards: <https://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/2014/ss/>

Social Studies 6.3.4.D.1 - Identify actions that are unfair or discriminatory, such as bullying, and propose solutions to address such actions.

6.3.8.CivicsHR.1 - Construct an argument as to the source of human rights and how they are best protected

6.2.12.EconGE.6.a - Evaluate efforts of governmental, non-governmental, and international organizations to address economic imbalances, social inequalities, climate change, health and/or illiteracy.

Daily Performance Objectives:

- Rehabilitation centers are not as effective as they are made out to be.
- Care of alcohol misuse has been pigeonholed without much scientific evidence for new treatment.
- Stigma surrounding alcohol misuse affects people's ability to receive care.
- Stigma in language and proper language to utilize.

Prior Knowledge Resources:

- Students may have alcohol misuse in their own family or have experienced it themselves.
- Some misconceptions about alcohol misuse is that it is a choice or a habit.

Academic Language: *List the vocabulary, language function, syntax and/or discourse that is essential for mastery of this content.*

- Substance use/alcohol use disorder
- Recovery

- Rehabilitation
- In-patient
- Out-patient
- Withdrawal

- Materials and Preparation:**
- Google Slides
 - Paper and writing utensil
 - Mentimeter

- Assessment/Evaluation—note: all lessons *must* include checks for understanding**
- Open discussion throughout the lesson
 - Mentimeters

Lesson Progression (add rows as necessary):

Duration:	The teacher will...	The student(s) will...
2 minutes	Introduce self and give an introduction on alcohol addiction and recovery.	
2-5 minutes	Go over key terms and the language that will be used throughout the presentation.	Learn how words they probably use today regarding alcohol misuse can be problematic and add to the stigma. They will begin to utilize the correct language in this lesson.
2 mins	Go over what the risks of a substance use disorder are and what causes it.	Understand what addiction is.
5 minutes	Ask students to raise their hands if they have heard of each recovery option on screen. Then, have students write down a percentage of how effective Alcoholics Anonymous is.	Hear other recovery systems outside of Alcoholics Anonymous probably for the first time. See how effective the 12 step program they all know really is.
10 minutes	Explain Alcoholics Anonymous and why it is not as effective as they thought. Go over why it has become the standard for treatment. Show other treatment options and how they're different	Understand what Alcoholics Anonymous really is and what it does. Understand there are other options out there.
5 minutes	Break down what is offered in rehabilitation centers and have students guess the price of them. Then we will discuss and share opinions about this.	See the prices and form their own opinions on how reasonable they are.

7 minutes	Show VIDEO about families going through addiction and utilizing addiction services.	See the human and emotional side of addiction.
5-10 minutes	Talk about what needs to change and what the students can do to help.	Understand the impact they can have on making change.
2-5 minutes	Close out lesson and share with students hand out and tik tok account.	LINK TO HANDOUT

Annotated Bibliography

[The Business of Recovery](#). Directed by Adam Fineberg, Produced by Greg Horvarth, 2016.

Over 90% of American treatment centers are based on the twelve step program. Studies have shown it only works for 5-10% of people. It should not be thought of as standard since it does not work for most people. Alcoholics Anonymous was developed by two men in the 1930s and it should be considered a great start because it was created when there was no other treatment around. However, it was built on a foundation that no one should be forced to go to it yet, today, people are. It is the basis of most rehabilitation facilities and can be issued as court mandated treatment. There is no scientific basis on the twelve step program working. There are anecdotal statements but no concrete evidence. Many programs have to be “evidence based” for funding and even if the majority of studies do not support the practice but one does, it earns the “evidence based” credential. In addition, most rehabilitation facilities rely on self reporting for their sobriety statistics. Therefore, they call the former patient and ask if they are sober and use that answer for their statistics without any verification. Many rehabilitation centers also make up their success rate. Not many report a rate lower than 80%.

Another controversy is that many of these centers are taking advantage of families by offering a treatment they are not qualified to give and promising anything to get an upfront payment from distraught families. In interviewing the leaders of many rehabilitation facilities, they discuss that their costs are tens of thousands of dollars per month, primarily between 20-40 thousand dollars a month. Some patients raise the issue that AA is free outside of these facilities and if it is what they are based on, why is the treatment so expensive? One of the most shocking things in this documentary was the price comparison of 30 days at a rehab facility compared to

30 days at a senior living facility with the same amenities. The rehabilitation was \$53,000 and the senior living was \$4,300. The overall message of “The Business of Recovery” is that the promise of sobriety is all about making money.

Clapham, Andrew. *Human Rights: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Print

Human Rights: A Very Short Introduction sheds light on the new controversies that are surrounding human rights today. Human right’s role in the world of philosophy, politics, law, etc. is discussed. In addition, the text takes a look into modern issues that are developing from these rights in terms of privacy, equality, and health. Claphams explanation of health as a human right is what relates to my topic the best from this text.

For instance, the text states “the obligation to *fulfill* requires states to take positive measures that enable individuals and groups to enjoy the right to health” (Clapham). One of the contingencies on this is that there is to be a promotion of medical research and health education, as well as promoting information campaigns regarding the abuse of alcohol. These two factor would help the awareness of alcohol addiction and resources for it. Overall, this text explains the right to health very clearly; the right does not entail that one has a right to be ‘healthy’, rather that one has a right to accessible health treatments. That right is not something that should be diminished due to one’s alcohol use.

Friedman, J. (2014, May 2). Treating addiction. *CQ Researcher*, 24, 385-408.

<http://library.cqpress.com/>

This source discusses the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) twelve steps program. There is little known about the true effectiveness of this treatment despite the fact that it is the dominant approach to recovery in inpatient and outpatient programs. In recent years, the program has had a lot of scrutiny for its ineffectiveness in treating the chronic disease of addiction. AA has a religious/spiritual focus at its core and it seems that the program only works for people that can get behind that aspect of it. It is brought up in the text that when you have cancer, support groups help, however, you also need medical treatment; addiction should be viewed the same way.

Access to treatment is also a key point in this text. While there is treatment available, many people with addiction do not feel they have a problem and therefore do not utilize it. It can typically take people six to eight years to realize they have a problem and usually it is after some form of crisis. In addition, there are many price differences between treatment available and that creates a divide in people's ability to access treatment

Lyons, C. L. (2020, May 15). Alcohol abuse. *CQ researcher*, 30, 1-30. <http://library.cqpress.com/>

In recent decades, Americans have been drinking more alcohol and, Currently, 14.5 million Americans have an alcohol use disorder. People dying from alcohol addiction has increased greatly as well. There are many reasons for the mistreatment of alcohol, and there are many debates on whether advertising alcohol toward adolescents should be limited, lessen their exposure, and increase taxes. Other people believe that is placing the responsibility on the wrong side and that the consumer should be able to make their own choice.

The alcohol abuse institute is concerned about the rising numbers of women who are drinking and dying. Women “appear to manifest the negative effects of alcohol in a shorter time frame than men” (Lyons) which is very concerning. In addition, while the number of adolescents

that report underaged drinking has dropped, more young girls are drinking and more adolescents report drinking alone. Some of this can be seen as a connection to the high rate of young people that are suffering with anxiety and depression and they are turning to alcohol as a coping mechanism. This is more detrimental considering their brain is still developing. Furthermore, There is a call for more doctors and practitioners to be able to detect and diagnose their patients drinking problems earlier. There is ongoing research to aid in professionals' ability to screen and discover a patient's drinking problem sooner.

O'Connor, Anahad. "[Doctors Rarely Address Patients' Alcohol Abuse: \[Science Desk\].](#)" New York Times Jul 20 2021, Late Edition (East Coast) ed. ProQuest. 16 Feb. 2022 .

Many Americans do not receive care for substance disorders from their primary doctors. Even if they disclose their addiction, many doctors do not feel able to aid their patients. In some cases, doctors simply drop their patients as they believe the disease is too difficult to handle. In others, doctors that don't have experience with alcoholism do not feel prepared to give care for the disease.

One primary argument in this article is that treatment should take place at the point of care, it is a barrier in addiction rehabilitation to have to be referred out of the healthcare system for recovery. However, there is also the barrier of denial that gets in the way of the recovery process. The article also talks about Andy Mathisen and his journey in alcohol treatment. He found a method that worked for him that combined a support program and medication.

Shaffer, Helen B. "Treatment of Alcoholism." *Editorial Research Reports 1965*, vol. II, CQ

Press, 1965, pp. 839-58. CQ Researcher, 16 Feb. 2022,

<http://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/cqresrre1965111700>

Alcoholism is being acknowledged as a serious social problem, and that is the first step in creating solutions. This source discusses how alcoholism is finally being called a public health problem and that the federal government is beginning its efforts to make a difference. A lot of this has to do with research projects that they are funding. One of the main organizations making great strides in this area is The National Institute of Mental Health (N.I.M.H.). They are studying the development of alcoholism and what social, biological, etc. influences have on it.

Alcohol abuse has come a long way throughout history. For instance, people with an alcohol use disorder has been ridiculed, punished, or even tolerated throughout time, however, in modern times, we are finally accepting the individual as sick. However, there are still many people with stigmas against people that can not control their drinking. Many experts still debate over whether or not this illness is entirely mental or physical. “With the causes of alcoholism obscure and apparently so varied—some authorities say there are as many types of alcoholism as there are alcoholics”(Shaffer), Therefore, it would make sense that treatments should be developed for each person on a sort of trial and error basis.