Psychology | Addiction

Key Question: Why are some people more likely to become addicts?

Topic Overview: In this topic, students will explore the signs, symptoms, theories and treatments of addiction. Students will apply their knowledge from other areas of the course (e.g. biological, behavioural and cognitive psychology) to attempt to explain why some people become addicts and how psychology can be used to help treat people suffering from addictions. Throughout this unit, students will apply their knowledge to two different types of addiction: smoking and gambling and consider which theories/approaches are better at explaining and treating these two different addictions.

	Lesson Exploration	Lesson Experience(s)	Knowledge and Skills	Key Words
Lesson 01	What are the signs and symptoms of an addiction? (Part 1)	Students will start their exploration of addiction and describe the different types of signs/symptoms that psychologists look for when diagnosing addiction. They will describe the concepts of dependence, tolerance and withdrawal symptoms and consider the effect that these can have on an individual.	Describing addiction: physical and psychological dependence, tolerance and withdrawal syndrome.	Addiction Aversion Therapy Behavioural Interventions: Reducing Addiction Brain Neurochemistry Explanations: Nicotine Addiction Cognitive Behavioural Therapy: Reducing Addiction Cognitive Bias Cognitive Theory: Gambling Cover Sensitisation Cue Reactivity Dopamine Drug Therapies:
Lesson 02	What are the signs and symptoms of an addiction? (Part 2)	Students will continue their exploration of describing addiction and apply their knowledge of dependence, tolerance and withdrawal to a range of different addictions and a range of different case studies. Students will assess the impact that these factors have on an individual suffering from an addiction.	Describing addiction: physical and psychological dependence, tolerance and withdrawal syndrome.	
Lesson 03	How do genes and stress lead to addiction?	Students will start their exploration of the different risk factors that contribute to addiction and consider how genetic vulnerability and stress can lead to addiction. Students will evaluate evidence and draw conclusions on the significance of these two risk factors.	Risk factors in the development of addiction, including genetic vulnerability, stress, personality, family influences and peers.	

Lesson 04	How do personality, friends and family lead to addiction?	Students will continue their exploration of the different risk factors that contribute to addiction and consider how personality, friends and family can lead to addiction. Students will evaluate evidence and draw conclusions on the significance of these risk factors.	Risk factors in the development of addiction, including genetic vulnerability, stress, personality, family influences and peers.	Reducing Addiction Family Influences Genetic Vulnerability
Lesson 05	Is dopamine really to blame for smoking?	Students will start their exploration of the different explanations for smoking and consider whether dopamine is really to blame for the initiation and maintenance of smoking. Students will consider the biological effect that dopamine has on the brain and how dopamine can cause someone to start and continue smoking.	Explanations for nicotine addiction: brain neurochemistry, including the role of dopamine, and learning theory as applied to smoking behaviour, including reference to cue reactivity.	Learning Theory: Gambling Learning Theory: Smoking Partial Reinforcement Peers Personality:
Lesson 06	Are biological theories an appropriate explanation for smoking, or can other theories better account for this addiction?	Students will continue their exploration of the dopamine hypothesis and evaluate evidence to support the role of dopamine in the initiation and maintenance of smoking. Students will then consider whether alternate explanations (e.g. learning theories) may provide a better explanation.	Explanations for nicotine addiction: brain neurochemistry, including the role of dopamine, and learning theory as applied to smoking behaviour, including reference to cue reactivity.	Addiction Physical Dependence Prochaska's Six-Stage Model Psychological Dependence
Lesson 07	How can learning theories explain a smoking addiction?	Students will continue their exploration of the different explanations for smoking and consider whether learning theories (e.g. classical and operant conditioning) can explain the initiation and maintenance of smoking. Students will apply their knowledge of these learning theories by applying the principles of classical and operant conditioning to smoking.	Explanations for gambling addiction: learning theory as applied to gambling, including reference to partial and variable reinforcement; cognitive theory as applied to gambling, including reference to cognitive bias.	Risk Factors: Addiction Stress Theory of Planned Behaviour Tolerance Variable Reinforcement Withdrawal Syndrome
Lesson 08	Are learning theories an appropriate explanation for smoking, or can other theories better account for this addiction?	Students will continue their exploration of the learning theories and evaluate evidence to support the role that classical and operant conditioning play in the initiation and maintenance of smoking. Students will then consider whether alternate explanations (e.g. dopamine) provide a better explanation.	Explanations for gambling addiction: learning theory as applied to gambling, including reference to partial and variable reinforcement; cognitive theory as applied to gambling, including reference to cognitive bias.	

Lesson 09	**How can learning theories explain a gambling addiction?**	Students will start their exploration of the different explanations for gambling and consider whether learning theories (e.g. classical and operant conditioning) can explain the initiation and maintenance of gambling. Students will apply their knowledge of these learning theories by applying the principles of classical and operant conditioning to gambling.	Explanations for gambling addiction: learning theory as applied to gambling, including reference to partial and variable reinforcement; cognitive theory as applied to gambling, including reference to cognitive bias.
Lesson 10	**Are learning theories an appropriate explanation for gambling, or can other theories better account for this addiction?**	Students will continue their exploration of the learning theories and evaluate evidence to support the role that classical and operant conditioning play in the initiation and maintenance of gambling. Students will then consider whether alternate explanations (e.g. cognitive) provide a better explanation.	Explanations for gambling addiction: learning theory as applied to gambling, including reference to partial and variable reinforcement; cognitive theory as applied to gambling, including reference to cognitive bias.
Lesson 11	**How can cognitive theories explain a gambling addiction?**	Students will continue their exploration of the different explanations for gambling and consider whether cognitive theories (e.g. cognitive biases) can explain the initiation and maintenance of gambling. Students will apply their knowledge of cognitive psychology to consider how casinos (and other gambling environments) are designed to promote addiction at a behavioural and cognitive level.	Explanations for gambling addiction: learning theory as applied to gambling, including reference to partial and variable reinforcement; cognitive theory as applied to gambling, including reference to cognitive bias.
Lesson 12	**Are cognitive theories an appropriate explanation for gambling, or can other theories provide a better account for this addiction?**	Students will continue their exploration of the cognitive theories and evaluate evidence to support the role that faculty cognitions play in the initiation and maintenance of gambling. Students will consider whether alternate explanations (e.g. learning theories) provide a stronger explanation.	Explanations for gambling addiction: learning theory as applied to gambling, including reference to partial and variable reinforcement; cognitive theory as applied to gambling, including reference to cognitive bias.
Lesson 13	**How can drug therapies be used to treat smokers?**	Students will explore how drug therapies can be used to treat smoking and gambling addictions. Students will outline the biological mechanisms of drug therapies	Reducing addiction: drug therapy; behavioural interventions, including aversion therapy and covert sensitisation; cognitive behaviour therapy.

		and evaluate their effectiveness in treating smoking and gambling.	
Lesson 14	**Do behavioural interventions, like aversion therapy and covert sensitisation, work?**	Students will explore how behavioural interventions can be used to treat smoking and gambling addictions. Students will outline how the behaviour treatments work and evaluate their effectiveness in treating smoking and gambling.	Reducing addiction: drug therapy; behavioural interventions, including aversion therapy and covert sensitisation; cognitive behaviour therapy.
Lesson 15	**How can CBT be used to treat smokers and gamblers?**	Students will explore how cognitive interventions can be used to treat smoking and gambling addictions. Students will outline how the cognitive treatments work and evaluate their effectiveness in treating smoking and gambling.	Reducing addiction: drug therapy; behavioural interventions, including aversion therapy and covert sensitisation; cognitive behaviour therapy.
Lesson 16	**What is the Theory of Planned Behaviour? Can this theory adequately explain addiction?**	Students will start their exploration of theories of behaviour change, starting with the Theory of Planned Behaviour. They will draw the TPB to explain how this theory can enhance our understanding of the development and treatment of smoking and gambling addictions.	The application of the following theories of behaviour change to addictive behaviour; the theory of planned behaviour and Prochaska's six-stage model of behaviour change.
Lesson 17	**What is the Prochaska's Six-Stage Model? Can this theory adequately explain addiction?**	Students will continue their exploration of theories of behaviour change, considering Proschaska's Six-Stage Model. They will outline Proschaska's theory and explain how this theory can enhance our understanding of the development and treatment of smoking and gambling.	The application of the following theories of behaviour change to addictive behaviour; the theory of planned behaviour and Prochaska's six-stage model of behaviour change

Literacy Links	Numeracy Links
Literacy, in particular the understanding of key terminology, will be examined through two Check Out questions, every lesson. One question will focus on the definition of a subject-specific key term, while the other question will focus on the spelling of a key term.	Numeracy skills are required in A-Level Psychology, and approximately 10% of the exam questions (in all three papers) comprise of maths/numeracy concepts. In this topic, numeracy concepts are covered within the Research Methods lessons and some of the Attachment lessons where Psychological studies are investigated.

Furthermore, students will encounter subject-specific command verbs regularly and within this topic will be examined of their understanding of the following terms: *calculate, compare, criticise, discuss, estimate, evaluate, explain, identify, interpret, justify, outline, suggest*