



## Close to Home Study Guide

### Dealing with Drug Addiction

#### 1. Opening (1 minute)\*

Dear God, we long for a clean heart, a new and right spirit in our inner being. We know this is what you desire for us too. Help us to trust your love. Help us to receive your spirit and your salvation. Give us your hope, joy, and strength for all that we face. Amen.

#### 2. Story-telling (10 minutes)

Summarize Jane's story. How did her addiction start? What experiences made her especially vulnerable? How did she find help? What role did her church play? What role did the 12-step group play?

Alternatively, if someone in the group has struggled with drug addiction or has a family member who has, invite them to tell their story, if they are willing.

#### 3. Review of pamphlet (12 minutes)

- Summarize the information on pages 4-5. Note the differences between experimentation with drugs, drug abuse, and drug addiction.
- Explain the section on "Drug addiction and the brain," especially any words or concepts which might be new to the group. How does flooding the brain's reward system with dopamine encourage people to continue using drugs? If appropriate, print out copies of "Understanding Drug Abuse and Addiction" from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA InfoFacts). This can be downloaded from <http://www.nida.nih.gov/infofacts/understand.html>.
- Look at the risk factors on page 5. Which of these were present in Jane's situation? Would the group add or remove any of these?
- Point out the facts about drug abuse at the top of page 7. Why might girls and young women be especially vulnerable to drug addiction? For additional information, see: [http://www.theantidrug.com/drug\\_info/girls-and-drugs-facts-about-girls-and-drugs.asp](http://www.theantidrug.com/drug_info/girls-and-drugs-facts-about-girls-and-drugs.asp).
- If your congregation reflects the global population, with nearly 5% addicted to drugs, how many people would that be? Do you think this is true of your congregation? Why or why not?
- Look at the various categories of drugs on page 11. Which of these are most accessible in your community? What restrictions are in place to limit their use?

#### 4. Reading of Scripture text (12 minutes)

- The first three paragraphs of "Drug abuse, the Bible and the Christian story" (page 6) suggest that addictions often grow out of trying to hide something, and that healing involves a willingness to uncover and confront what was hidden. Discuss this process. Why is it so difficult—and yet so necessary—to be honest about our brokenness, caused either by our own sins or the sins of others? How can our congregations encourage more openness about the problems we face?

\*The suggested time frames are for a 45-minute session. With more discussion and storytelling, you will need to adjust upward, and possibly extend to a second session.

- Ask someone to read Jeremiah 31:11-13. How does God provide restoration and joy to those who have felt abandoned or full of sorrow? How do they experience God's love during difficult times? Ask the group to share in pairs about specific experiences they have had or heard about from others. If there is time, share some of these stories with the larger group.
- Ask someone else to read Romans 12:2. What steps are involved in renewing our minds? For example, the pamphlet mentions making daily commitments, finding treatment, retraining our body and emotions, and seeking help from God and others. Are there other steps needed?

### 5. Steps toward healing (9 minutes)

- Ask the group to look over the “Steps toward healing” on pages 8-9. What stands out to them? What questions do they have?
- If someone in the group has had experience with drug abuse, either personally or with a loved one, invite them to share their perspective on these steps. What steps have they found most helpful—or most unhelpful?
- Note the green side-bar on page 9, about relating to a loved one who is addicted to drugs. Why is it important to intervene early? Why is it important to stay calm, non-judgmental and supportive? What ideas might the group add?
- Provide information on local resources, therapists, and 12-step groups which assist in dealing with drug abuse. To locate a meeting of Narcotics Anonymous or download basic information, see their website at <http://www.na.org/>.
- Encourage the church library to purchase the books listed on page 10. Also encourage group members to look at the websites listed. The website, “Parents: The Anti-Drug” at [www.antidrug.com](http://www.antidrug.com) is especially written for parents.
- Pray together for all those struggling with drug abuse, as well as their family members and friends, that all would find healing and release.

### 6. Closing (1 minute)

*Dear God, transform our minds and transform us. When we feel weak, uncertain and lost, show us your love and draw us to yourself. Show us your way, that we may know and do what is good and acceptable and perfect, for ourselves and those we love. Amen.*




---

This study guide is written by Linda Gehman Peachey, Director for Women's Advocacy in the Peace and Justice Ministries section of Mennonite Central Committee US. It is one of a series of free downloadable study guides for the Close to Home pamphlets, which can be ordered from the Mennonite Publishing Network of the Mennonite Church (see [www.mpn.net/closetohome](http://www.mpn.net/closetohome)) or the Mennonite Brethren Kindred Productions ([www.kindredproductions.com/closetohome](http://www.kindredproductions.com/closetohome)).