Lesson Plan I: Epilepsy, Stigma and Teens

The lesson plan provided below is designed to extend the learning gained from the basic epilepsy awareness program. It is recommended that this lesson plan be used within one week of presenting the Seizures and You: Take Charge of the Facts program.

Relationship to National Education Standards: This lesson plan addresses the National Education Standards for Health Education (health advocacy): Students will be better able to utilize strategies to overcome barriers when communicating information, ideas, feelings and opinions about health issues.

Lesson Objective: Students will identify and discuss common issues/concerns facing teens with epilepsy.

Materials of Instruction: Out of the Shadows: Teens with Epilepsy Take Charge DVD

Motivation/Warm-up: “Write down 2 facts about epilepsy that you learned from the previous lesson and 1–2 questions about epilepsy that you have that have not yet been answered.”

Procedure:

1. Go over the warm-up activity to review material covered in the core lesson and to generate a list of student questions. Jot the questions on the board for later reference.

2. Transition to today’s lesson by saying, “We learned a lot of factual information about epilepsy yesterday. In today’s lesson, we are going to learn more about epilepsy so that we can answer some of the questions you have raised.” Show objective for lesson and have a student read it aloud: Students will identify and discuss common issues/concerns facing teens with epilepsy.

3. Have students engage in a think-pair-share activity. “Let’s pretend for a few minutes that you and your family have just been told by your doctor that you have epilepsy. Think about how you would be feeling and what thoughts and questions you might have. (Give students 30–45 seconds of quiet reflection). Now think about this question: Would you tell your friends that you have epilepsy? (Give another 30 seconds to quietly think.) Now turn to the person sitting next to you and share your thoughts with each other.”

4. After students have had a minute or two to talk, ask for 2–3 volunteers to share their ideas. Try to get some variety of response by saying, “Did anyone feel differently than the thoughts that have been shared?” Ask, “Why did many of you feel that you would not or could not tell your friends that you had epilepsy?” Summarize the main points shared.

5. Use this discussion to introduce the DVD. “Many of the ideas you have shared are typical of the way people feel. We are going to watch a short DVD that shows how some teens with epilepsy feel and how they are dealing with some of the issues you have raised. All of the teens on this DVD are real people—not actors.”

6. After watching the DVD, conduct an open discussion about how the DVD may have changed some of their perceptions, beliefs, etc., about people who have epilepsy. Begin by asking the question, “Why do you think this program is entitled Out of the Shadows and what does that suggest about the way teens with epilepsy may be feeling?” Go back to the questions generated at the beginning of the period to see if any of those questions have been answered by watching the DVD.
**Summary/Assessment:** Give each student a 3x5 note card. Project the following on the overhead or write on the chalkboard: *The biggest challenge facing a teen with epilepsy is______________________________.*

Have students complete the statement and *give a reason for their answer.* If time permits, share some of the answers. Collect the note cards as an “exit ticket” when the students are leaving. The teacher should review the note cards to be sure the students have accomplished the objective of identifying issues facing teens with epilepsy and that negative stereotypes and misinformation have been eliminated.

**Homework:** Have students write a journal entry on the following topic:

Imagine that in the cafeteria today, a student with epilepsy had a seizure. Describe how you would react/respond to that student the next time you saw him (or her) and explain if your response would be any different as a result of what you have learned today about epilepsy. When the homework is collected the following day, use this opportunity to review or present seizure first-aid procedures (if not done during the initial “Take Charge” lesson).