**Addiction Script**

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| **Slide #** | **Text** |
| Slide # 1 | Health Week Intro |
| Slide # 2 | **Disclaimer:** The health information contained in this devotional is for general population use only, and must not be used to replace professional advice, guidance, or treatment. Where there is real concern and need for professional help or review, we strongly recommend contacting your primary care provider, general practitioner, or local mental health team. |
| Slide # 3 | **Journeying to Wholeness**  **• Freedom from Problematic Substance Use (Addiction) •**  **Pastor Ben Martin**  **President, South New Zealand Conference** |
| Slide # 4 | *“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”*  *Galatians 5:1 (NIV)* |
| Slide # 5 | “I’m not addicted, I can stop anytime I want.” Despite our insistence, we live in a society that is afflicted by an epidemic of addiction. |
| Slide # 6 | There are the more socially acceptable addictions, such as work, exercise, food, or technology usage – I sometimes wonder if any of us would pass a test for smartphone addiction in 2024! |
| Slide # 7 | The less socially acceptable kind are substance addictions to things such as illicit drugs, tobacco, alcohol, and in more recent times, vaping. We often feel uncomfortable talking about these socially unacceptable kinds of addictions, or are unsure of where to go for help. These addictions come with a certain social stigma, and if we’re honest, we can be inclined to look down upon those who find themselves caught up in them. |
| Slide # 8 | The fact is that these kinds of addictions are incredibly complex, and affect people from all walks of life - even those who follow Jesus. It is also true that where the chains of substance abuse hold many captive, there exists a glimmer of hope. Despite the formidable challenges to face in the journey of breaking free, there is an enduring hope that transcends our struggle |
| Slide # 9 | **Why We Get Addicted**  Understanding the roots of addiction involves delving into the intricate interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors that lead a person down the path of addiction. While each person has a unique story, there are also commonalities with which all of us can relate at some level. At its core, addiction often begins with the pursuit of pleasure or relief from pain. The brain’s reward system plays a crucial role, as substances like drugs or alcohol trigger the release of neurotransmitters, creating a pleasurable sensation.  Over time, repeated substance use can lead to changes in both the structure and function off our brain, making it increasingly difficult to control our impulses. |
| Slide # 10 | When you also factor for genetic predispositions, environmental influences, and trauma, there are many things that can contribute to the vulnerability of developing addictive behaviours. |
| Slide # 11 | **The Challenge of Breaking Free**  It must be acknowledged that breaking free from the clutches of addiction is an arduous journey, marked by numerous obstacles and setbacks. Withdrawal symptoms, both physical and psychological, are often common for anyone who wants to walk the path towards freedom. These can intensify the difficulty of quitting, creating a formidable barrier to recovery.  Moreover, the societal stigma surrounding addiction can lead to feelings of shame and isolation, hindering people from seeking help. The cycle of addiction often involves a sense of powerlessness, with individuals feeling trapped in a seemingly inescapable pattern of substance use. |
| Slide # 12 | Yet, in our weakness, the Lord’s strength is made perfect ( But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weakness so that Christ’s power may rest on me.” 2 Corinthians 12:9, NIV). The shame and isolation that often accompany addiction dissolve in the light of God’s unwavering love. |
| Slide # 13 | In Galatians 5:1 (NIV), we are reminded: “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” As we face the chains that bind us, we can trust in the promise that Christ has already paved the way to freedom. |
| Slide # 14 | **Hope for Breaking Free**  In the depths and darkness of addiction, we are told there is a path to recovery. The Bible speaks to the transformative power of renewal in Romans 12:2 (NIV): “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” The process of breaking free involves a renewing of the mind—a transformation fuelled by God’s grace.  Part of embracing a mindset of transformation involves reaching out for help, whether through counselling, therapy, or support groups. The acknowledgment of the struggles and the decision to reach out for assistance are pivotal moments on the journey to recovery. |
| Slide # 15 | In 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV), there is a promise of new beginnings: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” Our hope rests not in our strength but in the promise of a new beginning through Christ.. |
| Slide # 16 | The support of a compassionate community is instrumental in the recovery process. Galatians 6:2 (NIV) encourages believers to “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way, you will fulfil the law of Christ.” Breaking free from addiction often requires a network of understanding and caring individuals who can provide encouragement, accountability, and prayer. The power of prayer is a cornerstone of hope for many facing the challenges of addiction. Philippians 4:13 (NIV) declares, “I can do all this through him who gives me strength.” A compassionate and prayerful community can foster an environment of support, understanding, and love, where real healing can begin to take place. |
| Slide # 17 | **Conclusion**  By understanding the roots of addiction, acknowledging the difficulties of breaking free, and embracing the possibility of transformation, anyone in the grip of addiction can embark on a journey towards recovery. |
| Slide # 18 | The path to freedom involves a combination of self-awareness, professional guidance, community support, and faith. Through perseverance, the chains of addiction can be broken, and a new chapter of healing and renewal can unfold. |
| Slide # 19 | As Psalm 34:17-18 (NIV) assures, “The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” May this promise be a source of strength and encouragement for anyone on the journey to breaking free from the bonds of addiction - no matter how socially acceptable or unacceptable their addiction may be. |
| Slide # 20 | **God understands**  **Addiction**  **But wants to set you free** |
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| Slide # 22 | **Suggested Follow-up Discussion Topics**  Form groups of between 3 to 5 to discuss one of the following topics:   * What forms of addiction may we be subject to without being aware of the fact that we are addicted? * What forms of addiction might be more common in the young/elderly/men/women/religious/non-religious? (choose one area or similar area not mentioned here) * What might my community do in mitigating the effect of addictions?   Then spend just a few moments sharing your group’s contributions. |
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