

“Speedaholic”

ADDICTION THERAPY IS THE NEW WAY TO STOP SPEEDING BIKERS AND CAR DRIVERS. John Earl is 25 and addicted to speed. Not the drug, but a mixture that is just as powerful - an intoxicating combination of high-powered engines, testosterone and youth. 'It's not the speed exactly,' he says. 'It's the adrenaline. It's the buzz you get when you go fast.'

But if you regularly drive at 120mph (190kph) on a public road, sooner or later you're going to get caught, and today John is one of a dozen speeders attending a new programme designed to cure them of their need for speed. It is similar to (1) _____. At the beginning of the course the participants are asked to introduce themselves and admit that they have a problem. 'Hello, my name's John, and I'm a speedaholic.'

The speedaholics course is for serious and habitual offenders, and is offered as an alternative to getting points on your licence. It is based on research into the attitudes of young drivers and bikers,' says Chris Burgess, a psychology lecturer at Exeter University, who created the programme. There are courses for both car drivers and motorcyclists. There is an element of addiction in this sort of behaviour,' says Burgess. 'It's sensation-seeking, it's taking risks, looking for that buzz, but ignoring the potentially fatal consequences. They all have the feeling that (2) _____

Today's course, which is for motorcyclists, is led by Inspector Robin Derges, a police officer who is a senior investigator of road deaths and a keen biker himself. After introducing themselves, (3) _____. They range in age from 18 to mid-forties and most were caught doing at least 20mph (36kph) over the speed limit. Derges gets straight to the point. 'Motorcyclists make up just 1% of all the vehicles on the road, but 33% of all deaths and serious injuries happen to motorcyclists. Unless something changes, if we meet up here in a year's time, one of you will be dead.'

Says Derges 'We want to give them a sense of their own vulnerability, their human limitations, and to help them make a realistic assessment of the risks involved. It's not about stopping people from enjoying riding, it's about preventing deaths. Towards the end of the day he asks (4) _____

'The problem is that people get on their bikes and suddenly think they're Valentino Rossi,' says John.

Standing in the car park at the end of the course, the bikers seem to have taken everything they have heard very seriously. John admits 'It's certainly made me more aware. I know I sometimes behave like an idiot. But that's not to say I won't forget all about it in a few weeks' time.' Burgess knows this, (5) _____

It is to remind them of a part of the course that explained what can happen to the brain in a collision.

'The idea is that they will see the key ring when they are riding and it will make them think twice,' says Burgess.

A. Answer the questions.

1) Who is John?

2) Who is Chris Burgess?

3) Who is Robin Derges?

B. Please take notes here.

C. You are going to listen to an expert talking about the risks of driving. Before you listen, choose which you think is the right option, a, b, or c. Compare with a partner and give reasons for your choice.

- 1) The most dangerous thing to be on the road is....
a. a pedestrian b. a driver c. a motorcyclist
- 2) Most fatal accidents happen because drivers.....
a. fall asleep at the wheel b. are drunk c. drive too fast
- 3) Driving at night is as dangerous as driving during the day.
a. three times b. four times c. ten times
- 4) You're most likely to have an accident on a.....
a. Monday morning b. Friday afternoon c. Saturday night
- 5) Most accidents happen....
a. on long-distance journeys b. in the city centre c. very near your house
- 6) The worst roads for fatal accidents are....
a. motorways b. urban roads c. country roads
- 7) Mile for mile, women have more...than men.
a. minor accidents b. serious accidents c. fatal accidents
- 8) The age at which a driver is at most risk is....
a. over 25 b. between 21 and 26 c. under 25

D. Answer the questions.

1) Do you think punishments for dangerous driving should be more severe?

2) What else do you think would help to reduce accidents in your country?

E. Complete the questions with a phrasal verb or expression from below.

take care of / take advantage of / take part in / take place / take (your) time
take into account / take after / take off / take up

- 1 Who do you take _____ more, your father or your mother?
- 2 Do you worry about your health? Do you take _____ yourself?
- 3 Do you get up very quickly in the morning or do you take _____?
- 4 Have you ever not taken _____ a good opportunity (and regretted it)?
- 5 Have you ever taken _____ a demonstration?
- 6 Have you taken _____ a new sport or hobby recently?
- 7 Has any big sporting event ever taken _____ in your (nearest big) city?
- 8 If you were thinking of buying a new computer or mobile phone, what factors would you take _____?