

Substance Use



Alberta Education Health & Life Skills Programs of Studies Outcomes

The students will...

- W – 8.1 Examine the relationship between choices and resulting consequences, e.g., how choosing to smoke affects how one looks, feels and performs.

Teacher Background

Students will participate in a juggling activity that illustrates how risky behavior and associated consequences affect our lives. Using a worksheet, students will then apply what they have learned from this activity to explore scenarios associated with substance use and gambling.

This lesson is adapted with permission from an AHS (old AADAC) Grade 8 lesson plan called “*Weighing Risks to Make Decisions*”.

Objectives

- Show students that choosing to use substances or gamble has consequences that affect important things in their lives.
- Encourage students to make good choices about the daily risks they encounter.

Materials

- Felt markers
- Balloons
- Worksheet: *Weighing the Risks*

Get Ready

- Choosing to use substances or to gamble has risks and consequences.
- Ask students what the risks are of using substances or gambling.
- Then ask them what the consequences might be of using drugs or gambling.

Activity 1: Balloon Juggle

- Students will work with a partner and be given four colored balloons and a felt marker.
- Students will brainstorm four things that are important to them. These may fall into the following categories: family, friends, leisure, school/work, health (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual), money, legal.
- Students will blow up the balloons, and use the marker to label each balloon with the four important things they have identified.

- Each student will juggle all four balloons on their own. Ask students how they were finding it to try to keep all the balloons in the air. Comment that it seems difficult to juggle four things at once.
- Once both partners have had a turn, give each student an additional challenge to make the juggling more difficult, i.e., only using one hand, adding more balloons, or not being allowed to move their feet. These challenges represent risks associated with substance use or gambling.

Discussion/Questions:

- How did it feel when the additional challenge was introduced and what did you notice?
- Did you notice which balloons dropped?
- When a balloon dropped, how did that make you feel?
- Was there a strategy to keep your most important balloons in the air?
- The challenges (extra balloons, limited use of limbs) represent the risks of substance use and gambling. If you choose to experiment with substance use or gambling, are you making it more difficult to maintain the things you value?

Activity 2: Weighing the Risks

- Introduce the worksheet *Weighing the Risks* to the class. Have students read each scenario out loud.
- Students will work on the worksheet in the remaining class time, and complete as homework.

Conclusion

To make good decisions, we need to understand both the positive and negative consequences of our choices, and how they affect the things that are important to us. Thinking critically and weighing the risks is an important part of good decision making.

Take Home Activity & Follow-up Classroom Discussion

Have the students complete the worksheet: *Weighing the Risks* at home and bring back to class for discussion.

As a class, discuss each of the scenarios on the worksheet *Weighing the Risks*.

Assessment Strategy

- Students will be able to report what the risks are for substance use and gambling.
- Students will be able to describe the consequences of using substances or gambling.

Weighing the Risks

Worksheet

For each example situation below, think about the decision making process that you would go through in deciding your course of action. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

Situation	What are the risks?	What could happen (the consequences)?	What would you do?
Your friend is being bullied in school. One day, you decide to stand up for your friend and talk to the bullies.			
On the way to a school dance with friends, somebody pulls out a cigarette and passes it around. Eventually the cigarette ends up in your hand.			
During lunch, a friend challenges you to a quick game of dice where the wager is \$10/game. You have exactly \$10 for lunch, but you're feeling lucky and you might win.			
Your friend's parents are out for the evening, and you are at a party there. Your friend breaks open their liquor cabinet, and tries to pour alcohol in everyone's drink.			
You owe your parents \$20, but you have no money. All your friends tell you that playing poker on-line is a fun and easy way to make money.			

Adapted from "Worksheet: Weighing the Risks", AHS Grade 8 Lesson Plan "Weighing the Risks to Make Decisions"