

# Transitions: Embracing Change

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

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- students will be able to reflect on their personal response to change
- students will be able to identify examples of change, life transitions and the implications of turning 18
- students will be able to establish personal goals for the next five years
- students will be able to consider the impact of substance use on personal goal achievement
- students will be able to consider how substance use could affect personal goal achievement
- students will be able to assert opinions about issues related to substance use

## CONTENT AND TIME (80-MINUTE LESSON)

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- 6.1 Introduction (10 minutes)
- 6.2 Activity: Implications of Turning 18 (15 minutes)
- 6.3 Activity: Making a Personal Commitment Plan (25 minutes)
- 6.4 Activity: Substance Use (20 minutes)
- 6.5 Closure: Key Messages (10 minutes)

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

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HANDOUT 6.1: Sample Commitment Plan

HANDOUT 6.2: Personal Commitment Plan

HANDOUT 1.4: MAJOR LIFE AREAS (DISTRIBUTED IN LESSON 1)

TEACHER-MADE SIGNS:

"Definitely agree," "Mostly agree," "Neither agree nor disagree," "Mostly disagree," and "Definitely disagree" or seven sets of five sticky note pads of different colours (for example, blue, green, yellow, pink and red) and seven pieces of chart paper

Journal books or loose-leaf paper

Our thoughts, feelings and actions determine how we perceive a situation, and it is our perception of that situation that largely influences how we experience it. Knowing this enables us to accept that we, and not anyone or anything else, create our own experience. How we choose to think, feel and act often leads to a negative or positive cycle of events (AADAC, n.d. b).

This lesson encourages students to contemplate various transitions that will be happening for them in the next five years, along with the implications of turning 18. They will create a five-year goal plan to achieve personal success using the knowledge they have gained. Students will take into consideration their attitude about change, the major life areas, personal resiliency and the effects of substance use in their lives as young adults. Throughout the lesson, it is important to promote life transitions as positive changes.

## 6.1 Introduction

(10 minutes)

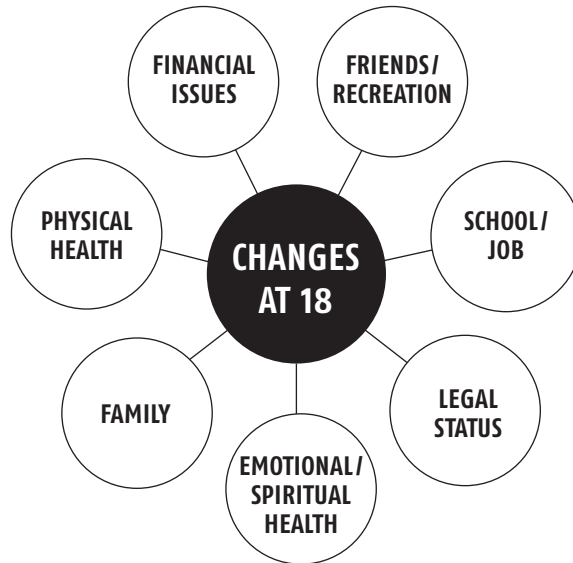
Have students stand in a large circle and remove their shoes. Ask them to place their shoes directly in front of them, and then have everyone move five places to the right. Once the class is repositioned, ask students to put on the shoes in front of them. Discuss the following questions:

- How do the shoes fit?
- What does it feel like to wear someone else's shoes?
- If you had to wear these shoes for the rest of the day, how would you manage that?
- How does this exercise relate to change and our response to change?
- Give examples of change and life transitions, both positive and negative (moving to a new neighbourhood, emotional ups and downs, going to college or university, growing apart from friends, etc.).

## 6.2 Activity: Implications of Turning 18

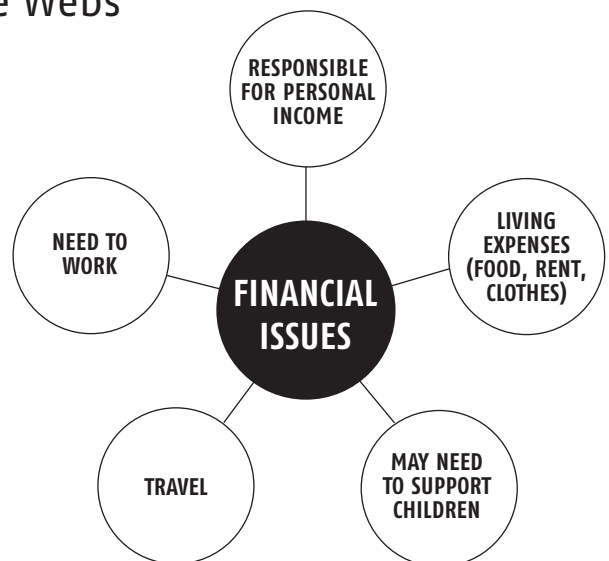
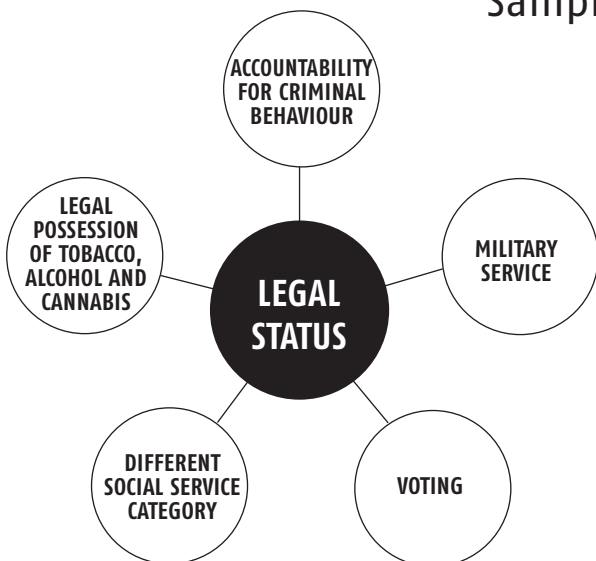
(15 minutes)

Create a web on the board entitled **Changes at 18**. Around the title, write the major life areas as follows:



Ask students to copy the web and record ideas around each of the major life areas. These ideas can include societal implications of turning 18, individual choices, desired circumstances or possible outcomes. The ideas can also range over a span of time. Some students may look only at the immediate future, whereas others might include possibilities further down the road (such as having children or owning a home).

### Sample Issue Webs



Have volunteers present a couple of ideas from their web.

Next, ask students to underline three ideas that are very important to them. Tell them to think of these ideas in terms of goals in the next five years. For example, someone who plans to take a trip would underline travel, and someone who wants to move out on his or her own would underline living expenses. If students recorded an idea that relates to a goal in the more distant future, have them underline another idea that will help them work towards that goal. For example, someone who wants to own a home would underline need to work. Once students have completed this task, invite them to relate one of their goals to the class.

### 6.3 Activity: Making a Personal Commitment Plan

(25 minutes)

Distribute HANDOUT 6.2: Personal Commitment Plan and explain that this activity has two parts. To begin, students will complete the first and second columns of their Personal Commitment Plan. In the first column, they will write attainable five-year goals using brief phrases. In the same column, they will also indicate which major life area is related to this goal. Next, they will complete the second column by writing down three steps they intend to take to achieve each goal. These steps should be both realistic and motivating.

The second part of this activity is to fill in the third column, where students identify how their involvement with substance use could affect the possibility of achieving each goal. For this part, have students refer to the handout from Lesson 1 on Major Life Areas.

Before getting started, distribute HANDOUT 6.1: Sample Commitment Plan, and read through the examples provided. Emphasize that students should be as specific and concrete as possible in naming their goals, outlining the steps to be taken, and describing the effect substance use involvement could have on reaching each goal.

## 6.4 Activity: Substance Use

(20 minutes)

This activity enables students to assert their opinions about various issues related to Substance Use. It also requires them to be open-minded and accepting of conflicting attitudes. Create five signs to post in different areas of the room. The signs should read: “Definitely agree,” “Mostly agree,” “Neither agree nor disagree,” “Mostly disagree,” and “Definitely disagree.”

Select some of the statements below to read. As you read each, have everyone stand by the sign that best describes his or her opinion. Invite volunteers to state their rationale, and encourage others with differing viewpoints to reply. Remind students that perception often influences experience. How we choose to think, feel and act enables us to create our own experience.

### Statements

- Legalizing cannabis has been good for society.
- There should be no minimum drinking age.
- Use of electronic smoking products (vaping) should be banned in all public places.
- A person’s environment plays a very significant role in determining whether he or she develops a dependency on substances.
- Dependency on gambling is not as damaging as dependency on alcohol.
- All Canadians should help pay the billions of dollars spent on healthcare for tobacco-related illnesses.
- It should be legal to drink while driving a vehicle, as long as the driver is not over the limit.

(You may also ask students to come up with their own statements that fit within this theme).

If students in your class are hesitant to verbalize opinions, you could modify this activity as follows:

Select some of the statements above to record on separate pieces of chart paper. Post the pieces of chart paper in different areas of the room. Beside each chart, have five different coloured sticky note pads. Explain that each colour represents a different opinion and record this information on the board, as below, for example:

**Blue** – definitely agree

**Green** – mostly agree

**Yellow** – neither agree nor disagree

**Pink** – mostly disagree

**Red** – definitely disagree

Have students rotate the room and attach one “sticky” to each piece of chart paper to represent their opinion. This will create a visual that can also be discussed as a large group.

## 6.5 Closure: Key Messages

(10 minutes)

In pairs or small groups, ask students to make a list of important concepts learned throughout the lesson. Encourage them to identify lesson themes, activities completed or something that they found interesting. Have volunteers report one or two ideas to the class.

### Journal writing assignment

In your journal, write about how this lesson has affected your knowledge, attitude or decisions about substance use. What will you do with the knowledge you have gained? Has your thinking changed? If so, how? Will you approach some experiences differently as a result of this lesson? What was the most important concept for you in this lesson? Why?

# Sample Commitment Plan

<p><i>What do I want in the next five years? What major life area does this concern?</i></p>	<p><i>What are three steps I can take toward achieving this goal?</i></p>	<p><i>How could involvement with alcohol, tobacco, other drugs or gambling affect achieving this goal?</i></p>
<p>To go to college or university</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Get good marks.</li> <li>2. Have a part-time job.</li> <li>3. Save money.</li> </ol>	<p>Using drugs could affect my concentration and memory.</p> <p>I might be too caught up with alcohol, drugs or gambling to care about work.</p> <p>Alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and gambling are expensive.</p>
<p>To feel good about myself, my life and the people I am around—emotional and spiritual health</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Think positive statements about myself.</li> <li>2. Do things that I enjoy.</li> <li>3. Surround myself with supportive people.</li> </ol>	<p>I might feel guilty, embarrassed or depressed.</p> <p>I might need alcohol, tobacco, other drugs or gambling to feel normal. I might feel very bad when I can't gamble or use.</p> <p>I might hang out with people who use or gamble, who may not be good for me.</p> <p>I might cause problems with important relationships, and feel bad about myself.</p>

# Personal Commitment Plan

<i>What do I want in the next five years? What major life area does this concern?</i>	<i>What are three steps I can take toward achieving this goal?</i>	<i>How could involvement with alcohol, tobacco, other drugs or gambling affect achieving this goal?</i>