

I'd rather be...drug free!

Finding alternatives to alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and gambling

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- learn reasons why people use substances or gamble
- learn about healthy alternatives to alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and gambling
- understand the benefits of making healthy choices
- identify healthy activities to become involved in

TIME

- 45-minute lesson

REQUIRED MATERIALS

I'd rather be...drug free! handout

flip chart paper

poster materials (poster paper, construction paper, tissue paper, crayons, felts, magazine pictures, glue, paint, etc.)



An important reason for taking drugs is to prevent or treat illness. When drugs are used as directed to restore or maintain health, they can be helpful and sometimes necessary. Some people use drugs for reasons other than illness. They may want to change the way the body or mind functions to deal with problems; they may be curious to try something new; they may hope to create a personal image of being “cool”; they may want to rebel against authority; or other people may influence them.

Many people are familiar with the negative effects of substance use and gambling, but it is also important to understand the reasons why people choose to engage in these activities. Encouraging young people to be aware of circumstances that may put them at risk to try substances or gamble helps them prepare themselves and plan a course of action in advance.

Opening activity: Why do people use substances or gamble?

(10 minutes)

Ask the class to brainstorm why people would gamble or use alcohol, tobacco or other drugs. Challenge students to generate a list that fills up a page of flip chart paper, and record their responses. If they have difficulty coming up with ideas, try to draw the following responses from them:

- for excitement
- for medical reasons
- to cure illness
- to be cool
- to have fun
- to stay awake
- to fall asleep
- to fit in with a group or make friends
- to feel better about themselves
- to escape problems
- to make money

Alternative charades

(15 minutes)

Ask the class to look at the list created and think of other ways to achieve the desired effects of gambling or using alcohol, tobacco or other drugs. For example, if people use drugs to cope with headaches, what else could they do to ease the pain? They could lie down, put a cold cloth on their head, ask a family member to rub their shoulders or find a quiet place where they can turn the lights down and relax. Another example is someone who gambles for excitement. This person could play a game of dodge ball, go for a mountain bike ride or play a board game with friends, without risking money or something of value.

After you have discussed a couple of examples, explain that the class will play a game of charades. Student volunteers will have an opportunity to act out healthy ways of achieving the desired effects of substance use or gambling (e.g., having fun, dealing with the flu or making friends). The rest of the class will try to identify the healthy activity being acted out, along with the desired effect of this activity.

After each performance, record the alternative action and the desired effect on flip chart paper.

“I’d rather be...drug free” posters (15 minutes)

This activity can be started in this lesson and completed for homework or during art class.

Invite students to design a poster with the theme “I’d rather be...drug free!” You can use the handout included in this lesson, or have students design their own, on larger poster paper. This poster will depict one or more alternatives to gambling or using alcohol, tobacco or other drugs. You may want to give students the choice of working individually or in pairs. You may also want to provide a variety of materials such as construction paper, tissue paper, crayons, felt markers, magazine pictures, glue, paint, etc. Encourage students to refer to the alternative actions recorded on the flip chart paper for ideas. They can focus on one alternative or several.

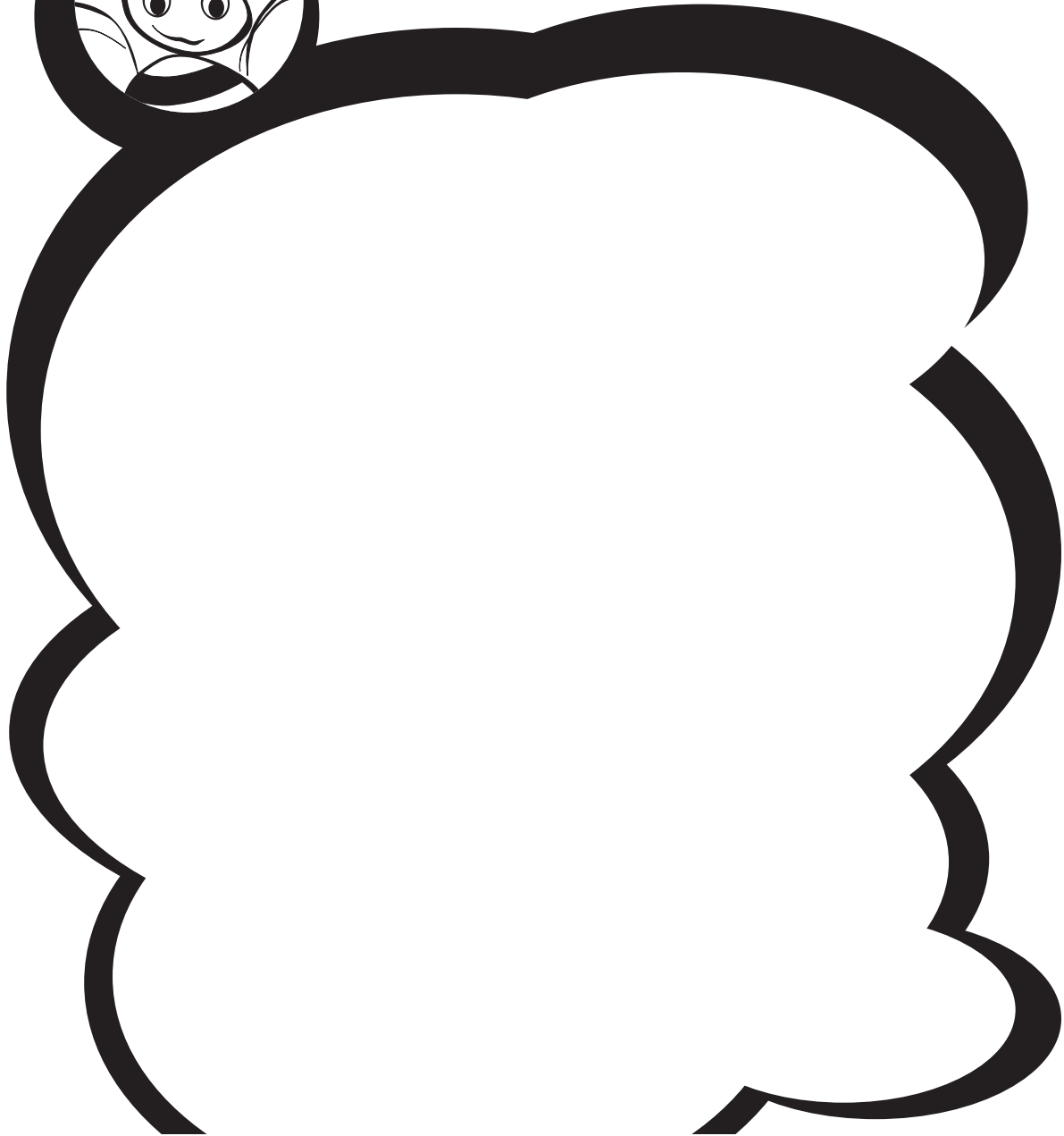
As an extension to this activity, you can have a poster contest with winners receiving small prizes (e.g., pencils, tattoos, posters, etc.).

Closure: Student suggestions (5 minutes)

Ask volunteers to present their poster to the class and give a brief description of it. Invite other class members to explain what they like about each poster.



I'd rather be...



DRUG FREE

