

Substance Use and Gambling Information

SUMMARY

Objective: To provide students with accurate information about substances and gambling.

Process: Through a Trivia game, students will learn about alcohol, cannabis, tobacco and tobacco-like products, gambling and factors that influence our choices.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Identify positive and negative consequences to using drugs, alcohol and gambling
- Assess drug and gambling information
- Be aware of the dangers of binge drinking
- Understanding the danger of mixing drugs
- Be aware of accurate facts and rates of use related to youth
- Understand tolerance, dependence and withdrawal as possible consequences of use

CONTENT AND TIME (45-MINUTE LESSON)

- 5.1 Facts about Substance Use and Gambling (10 minutes)
- 5.2 Activity: Game (30 minutes)
- 5.3 Closure: Key Messages (5 minutes)

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Trivia activity

This lesson is one in a series of Grade 7 lessons. If you aren't able to teach all the lessons, try pairing this lesson with the "Understanding Influences," "Protecting Ourselves from Risk," or "Decision Making" lessons.

Teaching about substance use and gambling can and should cross all subjects. Here are a few suggestions for use in subjects other than health.

LINKS TO OTHER SUBJECTS

- **Science:** Explore the health implications of substance use on the brain and other body organs.
- **Career and Technology Studies:** Use a computer application to create a brochure with information learned through the game.

5.1 Facts About Substance Use and Gambling

(10 minutes)

Lead the class in a discussion to determine what we mean by ‘substances’ and ‘gambling’. Record their responses and try to summarize them into working definitions.

Drug – A drug is any substance taken into the body which changes the way the body or mind works. Three basic categories of drugs are:

- Legally available drugs (e.g., alcohol, tobacco and tobacco-like products, cannabis, caffeine, solvents). [Note: Only discuss solvents if raised by the students.]
- Medicines (e.g., antibiotics, sleeping pills, pain relievers, steroids).
- Illegal drugs (e.g., cocaine, ecstasy, crystal meth)

Gambling – Gambling is risking something of value (could be an iPod or clothes, etc.) on an activity with an uncertain outcome and a result that can’t be changed.

Ask your students whether they feel that people start using alcohol or other drugs, or gambling, thinking they are going to have a problem, and have them discuss it. Note that no one ever starts using substances or gambling believing it’s going to become a problem but it can happen. Explain that it’s important to talk about these things to gain a better understanding of their effect on people’s lives and goals, and to practice skills and strategies.

Note: Examples of “tobacco-like” products include hookah/shisha (waterpipe tobacco) and electronic smoking products (sometimes called vaping).

5.2 Activity: Trivia Game

(30 minutes)

Objective: To provide students with important and accurate information about substances and gambling in a fun and interactive way.

Instructions: Playing the game is a great way to teach your students about substance and gambling information.

Divide your students into teams and explain that you will be playing a trivia game, where they will answer true and false questions. One team will be allowed to choose a category and question, they will then have 15 seconds to determine their answer. Often it is helpful to discuss the answers with students, providing more information about the topic.

5.3 Closure: Key Messages

(5 minutes)

Discuss with students what they learned from the game, including the information they found surprising, unsettling or meaningful.

By learning about making healthy decisions and receiving accurate, relevant information about the harm associated with substance use and gambling, your students will be better equipped to make healthy choices.

Trivia Questions and Answers

Alcohol

100
Points

Q. Alcohol is a drug.

A. True. A drug is any substance, other than food, that is taken to change the way the body or the mind functions. Drugs can occur naturally or can be produced in a lab.

200
Points

Q. Alcohol is a depressant.

A. True. Alcohol depresses the brain centres that control behaviour.

300
Points

Q. When a person stops drinking suddenly after drinking heavily, they can get sick.

A. True. Physical dependence occurs when the body gets used to having alcohol in the system. Withdrawal symptoms (sickness) may happen if drinking is suddenly stopped.

400
Points

Q. If you drink only beer, you won't develop a drinking problem.

A. False. The form of alcohol makes no difference. The effect of the pure alcohol contained in all alcoholic beverages is the same.

500
Points

Q. Only people who drink every day can become dependent on alcohol.

A. False. Anyone who drinks can become dependent on alcohol.

Cannabis

100
Points

Q. Smoking cannabis interferes with your sense of time and distance.

A. True. Judging distance and passage of time is difficult under the influence of cannabis. People who drive after using cannabis can misjudge the speed at which they are driving, and the amount of time required for braking.

200
Points

Q. Smoking cannabis is less harmful than smoking cigarettes.

A. False. Similar to tobacco, smoking cannabis can damage your lungs. Second-hand cannabis smoke can be just as harmful as tobacco.

300
Points

- Q.** The majority of Alberta youth in grades 7–9 have tried cannabis.
- A.** False. Over 90% of Alberta students in grade 7–9 have never tried cannabis.

(Source: Canadian Student Alcohol and Drugs Survey 2016–17, https://uwaterloo.ca/canadian-student-tobacco-alcohol-drugs-survey/sites/ca.canadian-student-tobacco-alcohol-drugs-survey/files/uploads/files/ab_cannabis_a_20181022.pdf).

400
Points

- Q.** Cannabis can affect your attention, judgment, decision making and ability to learn.
- A.** True. Taking anything that changes the way you think, act and feel could have consequences on major life areas. This could include poor performance in school or dropping out of things you enjoy.

500
Points

- Q.** Cannabis is not addictive.
- A.** False. It can be. Regular use of cannabis at an early age increases your risk of becoming dependent on it.

Tobacco and tobacco-like products

100
Points

- Q.** Smoking causes 80% – 90% of all lung cancers.
- A.** True. Researchers estimate that 80% to 90% of all lung cancer is smoking-related.

200
Points

- Q.** Tobacco smoke contains tar.
- A.** True. Tar consists of solid particles from cigarette smoke. It interferes with the normal exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the lungs, and contributes to shortness of breath.

300
Points

- Q.** Electronic smoking products (sometimes called vaping) are a safe alternative to smoking cigarettes.
- A.** False. Using electronic smoking products can lead to nicotine addiction, lung problems and risk of injury from battery malfunction. The long term health effects of using electronic smoking products are unknown.

(Source: Health Canada, 2019, <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/smoking-tobacco/vaping/risks.html#a1>).

400
Points

- Q.** Most Alberta Students in grade 7–12 have tried smoking cigarettes.
- A.** False. 80% of students in grade 7–12 have never tried a cigarette.

(Source: Source: Canadian Student Alcohol and Drugs Survey 2016–17, https://uwaterloo.ca/canadian-student-tobacco-alcohol-drugs-survey/sites/ca.canadian-student-tobacco-alcohol-drugs-survey/files/uploads/files/cst16_ab_profile_combined_for_online.pdf).

500
Points

- Q.** Tobacco smoke contain approximately 7000 chemicals.
- A.** True. Nearly 70 of these chemical are cancer-causing agents called carcinogens.

Gambling

100
Points

- Q.** Playing pool with friends for money isn't really gambling.
- A.** False. This is gambling. Gambling is defined as "the act of risking money, property or something of value on an activity with an uncertain outcome"

200
Points

- Q.** Some features in gambling devices can contribute to the development of a problem.
- A.** True. For example, the most powerful and long-lasting learning pattern occurs when a behaviour is reinforced intermittently and unpredictably. Patterns of intermittent winning may lead to irrational beliefs about gambling and winning. Slot machines and VLTs pay out on an intermittent reinforcement schedule.

300
Points

- Q.** Some video games designed for youth contain elements that are similar to gambling.
- A.** True. Some video games are designed to be similar to casino games, motivating players to continue playing by offering frequent rewards and the chance to gamble using virtual or real money, or the acquiring of skills.

400
Points

- Q.** Computers keep track of every game played on licensed VLTs.
- A.** True. If there is accomplaint by a customer, the computer centre can print out each selection made by the player for the entire game.

500
Points

- Q.** When a flipped coin comes up heads four times in a row, the next flip will more likely come up tails than heads.
- A.** False. There is no relationship between previous outcomes and the next flip of the coin. The coin is just as likely to come up heads as it is to come up tails (50-50 chance). People who gamble often feel they have some control over the outcome, even when they don't.

Risk and Protective Factors100
Points

- Q.** Protective factors decrease kids' chances of harmful involvement with substance use or gambling.
- A.** True. Other examples of protective factors are developing good social skills, participating in productive activities, feeling connected to school and having friends who positively influence decision-making.

200
Points

- Q.** Risk factors increase kids' chances of harmful involvement with substance use or gambling.
- A.** True. Other examples of risk factors are early involvement with alcohol, tobacco, other drugs or gambling, a history of use problems in the family, family conflict and poor school connection.

300
Points

- Q.** Schools can make a valuable difference in preventing substance use and gambling problems.
- A.** True. Research shows that participation in extracurricular activities, positive relationships between youth and adults in the school setting, and high social and academic expectations are critical factors in preventing substance use and gambling problems.

400
Points

- Q.** Young people may turn to substance use or gambling when they cannot express their feelings in a healthy way.
- A.** True. As people grow older, bottled up feelings will continue to cause pain. Some people try to relieve the pain through substance use or gambling.

500
Points

- Q.** It is helpful for an adult to tell a youth how to replace feelings of sadness with feelings of happiness.
- A.** False. A young person needs to know that it is okay to talk honestly about feelings or to feel sad, confused and vulnerable at times. Adults can show they care by listening and understanding.