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Program Support Notes

23 mins

Drugs Facts and Fiction

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Drugs – Facts and Fiction

For Teachers:

Introduction

How harmful or harmless is drug use and abuse really? Drugs come in a variety of forms, both legal and illegal, and are used by almost all people at some stage in their lives; from drinking tea or coffee to taking prescribed medication or harder drugs like amphetamines and heroin. Adolescence tends to be a time where experimentation with drugs is the most likely.

This program seeks to explore what drugs are, legal and illegal drugs, the effects of drugs on a persons health and wellbeing, what to do in a crisis, and prevention and treatment strategies for those affected by drug use and abuse.

The program features case studies of two young adults who have been negatively affected by drugs and also features commentary from Chris Morley, a drug and alcohol worker with the Youth Substance Abuse Service in Melbourne.

Program Timeline

00:00:00	Copyright VEA Splash
00:00:00	Introduction
00:01:16	What are Drugs
00:04:54	Drugs and their effects: Legal Drugs
00:09:30	Drugs and their effects: Illegal Drugs
00:14:01	What to do in a Crisis
00:17:18	Prevention and Treatment
00:21:38	Conclusion
00:22:11	Credits
00:22:43	End program

Website References

<http://www.oxygen.org.au/>

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/policy_initiatives_reviews/key_issues/drug_education/nsdes.htm

<http://www.rethinkingdrinking.org.au/>

<http://druginfo.adf.org.au/about>

<http://www.adf.org.au/>

<http://www.drugs.health.gov.au/>

<http://www.quitnow.info.au/>

<http://www.drinkingnightmare.gov.au/internet/DrinkingNightmare/publishing.nsf>

http://www.adin.com.au/content.asp?Document_ID=2

Other Relevant Programs available from VEA

STI's – Facts and Fiction

Teenage Drinking – Facts and Fiction

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Student Worksheet:

Before Viewing the Program

1. Brainstorm on butchers paper the following:
 - What is a drug?
 - List as many drugs as you can.
 - What are the three classifications of drugs?
 - List reasons that can affect people's choices about whether to use a drug or not.
 - Identify drug-related situations where adult or medical help may be required.
 - List some possible sources of help for someone with a drug use problem or associated emotional health problem.
2. Survey a number of students about their perceptions on drug use among teenagers/adolescents. Use Microsoft excel or a similar program to graph your findings.
 - a) In pairs or trios create a survey that incorporates 5 – 10 questions around drug use. The aim is to find out how young people perceive drugs and the effects of drugs on health. You could focus on a specific drug or use the term drug to encompass both legal and illegal drugs.

Below are some sample questions to get your started. Check the survey questions with your teacher prior to conducting the survey.

- Age: 12 – 14, 15 – 16, 17 – 18, 18-19 years. Please circle the age group that applies.
- Gender: M / F
- How would you define the term 'drug'?
- List at least 5 drugs that you know of.
- Why do you believe young people use and abuse drugs?
- Identify the 3 categories of drugs.
- Do anti-smoking or anti-alcohol TV advertisements affect your perception of drug use? Explain your answer.
- Describe how tobacco smoking affects a person's health.
- Describe how binge drinking affects a person's health.
- Describe how the use and abuse of illegal drugs such as ecstasy, cannabis or ice can affect a person's health.

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- b) Conduct the survey with others students in your school or local community. Remember to introduce yourself to the person you are wanting to survey, state the reason for conducting the survey and then offer them the option to participate.
 - c) Tally up the results from the survey.
 - d) Collaborate with one other group to compare results.
 - e) Graph your findings using Microsoft excel or a similar program. Use a mixture of graphs such as pie charts for gender or bar graphs for the types of drugs listed.
 - f) Type up a 200 word report that documents your findings.
3. Myth or fact?
- Coffee or greasy food helps sober people up.
 - Cannabis is natural so is not harmful.
 - You cannot become addicted to or dependent on cannabis.
 - Calling an ambulance for someone affected by drugs means that the police will also become involved.
 - Alcohol is a drug that causes more deaths among young people than any other drug.
 - All drugs can be harmful if not used properly.
 - Approximately 50% of teenagers smoke tobacco.
 - Cannabis can be detected in the body for up to a month after use.
 - Alcohol is a stimulant.
 - Cannabis is both a hallucinogen and a depressant.
 - Tobacco causes more deaths than any other drug in Australia.
 - Effects of drugs can differ from person to person due to gender, body size, amount and concentration of the drug taken and general health of the person.

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4. How risky is that?

Consider the following scenarios around drug use and rank them in order from least risky to most risky. Rank from number 1 being what you view as being least risky and 15 being what you view as being most risky.

Share your top three risks and bottom three risks with the rest of the class indicating why you ranked the scenarios the way you did.

SITUATIONS	Risk Rank: 1 least risky to 15 most risky.
Trying a cigarette at a party.	
Allowing a friend to pour your drinks.	
Accepting a lift home from an adult driver who has had too much to drink.	
Having one drink with dinner whilst out with your family.	
Taking pain killers every four hours over a period of a week because you have had a sport injury.	
Drinking several energy drinks such as Red Bull to help you stay awake to complete an assignment.	
Taking antibiotics prescribed for you by the doctor.	
Taking a pill you have bought from a stranger at a rave party.	
Providing unlimited beer and wine at a 21 st birthday party.	
Drinking alcohol with the purpose of getting blind drunk.	
Drinking 5 or more cups of coffee each day.	
Having one standard alcoholic drink and then driving home 15 minutes later on 'L' or 'P' plates.	
Walking home alone after a party where you have consumed alcohol.	
Adding a few extra shots of alcohol to your friends drink without them knowing.	
Accepting medications prescribed for another person to help you deal with stress.	

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While Viewing the Program

1. What is meant by the term 'drug use'?

2. List the three categories of drugs. For each category describe the effect it has on the body and identify one example.

Category of drug	Effect on the body	Example

3. Illicit drugs are commonly termed as _____ drugs whereas non-illicit (licit) drugs are those that are _____ drugs.

4. Provide examples of illicit and licit drugs:

- Illicit drugs include:

- Licit drugs include:

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5. What percent of Australian students aged 14-19 years have:

- Used alcohol in the past 12 months? _____
- Taken illicit drugs in their lifetime? _____

6. What are the most common illicit drugs used?

7. Discuss what is meant by addiction/dependence?

8. Outline the effects of tobacco smoking on a person's health?

9. Identify the strategies available to reduce the harms associated with tobacco smoking.

10. What is meant by the term 'binge drinking'?

11. Briefly outline the effects alcohol can have on a person's health and general life.

12. What % of young people aged 14-19 years have tried alcohol at least once. _____

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13. Why is alcohol use and abuse particularly harmful for the health and development of teenagers?

14. For the following illegal drugs discuss the effect each has on a person's health (physically, socially or emotionally/psychologically).

Illegal drug	Impact on health (physical, social and emotional/psychological)
Cannabis	
Amphetamines	
Heroin	

15. What are the legal ramifications of using or trafficking illegal drugs?

16. Name two blood-borne diseases that are more commonly contracted as a result of injecting drug use.

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17. What are the signs that indicate that a person who has taken drugs might need medical help?

18. Calling an ambulance should be a priority in a crisis situation.

a) The phone numbers for emergency services in the UK, the United States of America and Australia are:

- UK – _____
- United States of America – _____
- Australia – _____

b) Why do some young people resist calling for an ambulance when a person is under the influence of drugs?

c) Explain Chris Morley’s party safe tips.

- Look out for your mates

- Don’t take anything you are unsure of

- Plan ahead

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- Communicate

d) Family and _____ groups can have an impact on one another's drug and _____ use through _____ through _____ each others behaviours, asking people how they are travelling and _____ each other at difficult times.

e) Identify examples of prevention and treatment options available to help young people reduce the harms associated with drug use and abuse.

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After Viewing the Program

1. Research Activity

In pairs select one drug from the following list to undertake further research on and then present your information on a poster, PowerPoint presentation, web page or other format as discussed with your teacher.

- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Cannabis/Marijuana
- Crystal Methamphetamine (Ice)
- Ecstasy
- Heroin

For the drug selected find current information based on the following questions:

- a) Describe the drug you have chosen. Include information such as what the drug is, what the drug looks like, street names for the drug and how the drug is taken.
- b) Find current statistics on the use of this drug in Australia. Specifically investigate the following:
 - What percentage/proportion of males and females have ever used the drug?
 - What percentage/proportion of males and females use this drug regularly?
 - Is the use of this drug more common in some population groups? For example, compare statistics on drug use between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians or people of low socio-economic status compared to those of high socio-economic status.
 - Mortality/Morbidity data – what percentage/proportion of deaths and/or illness in Australia can be attributed to the use of this drug?
 - How much money does the Australian government spend on treating or preventing health issues associated with this drug?

Provide graphs and tables in this section.

- c) Outline how use and abuse of the chosen drug can impact on a person's short and long term health. Consider the physical, social and emotional health implications from using the drug.
- d) Describe any treatment and support options available to assist individuals to reduce the harm and risks associated with drug use. Consider people, healthcare facilities or support lines.
- e) Investigate and discuss the laws governing the use of your drug in Australia.
- f) Give a short 5 minute presentation to your classmates on the drug you have researched.

Recommended websites for research:

<http://druginfo.adf.org.au/>

<http://www.drugs.health.gov.au/internet/drugs/publishing.nsf/Content/Information-about-drugs>

<http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/> - click on fact sheets A – Z.

<http://ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au/NDARCWeb.nsf/page/Fact+Sheets>

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2. Debate

Debate Question – Illegal drugs like cannabis should be decriminalised.

Three students will argue for decriminalization and three students will argue against decriminalization of illegal drugs.

The following website provides a guide on how to run a debate.

<http://www.woodbridgecollege.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/help-HowToRunADebate.html>

3. Health Promotion Activity

- a) Brainstorm the strategies or programs you know of that are directed towards reducing the harms associated with the use of both legal and illegal drugs. For example – there is ‘Quit Now – The National Tobacco Campaign’.
- b) View the following health promotion advertisements on tobacco and alcohol:
 - <http://www.quitnow.info.au/internet/quitnow/publishing.nsf/Content/smokescreen-lp>
 - <http://www.drinkingnightmare.gov.au/internet/drinkingnightmare/publishing.nsf/Content/television-commercials>
 - Do you think these anti-smoking and anti-binge drinking advertisements are effective? Why or why not?
- c) Design your own health promotion advertisement based on a drug of your choice. This could be a pamphlet, poster, radio segment or TV advertisement.

Plan your health promotion advertisement by completing the following:

- What drug am I going to focus on for my health promotion advertisement?
- What message do I want to convey to the audience?
- Who is the target audience for my advertisement?
- What factors should I consider in the design of my health promotion advertisement?
- What method of advertising am I going to use? Poster, pamphlet, radio segment or TV advertisement.
- What materials will I need?

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4. Drug use – to use or not to use

How can we handle situations involving drugs so that we protect our own health?

- In groups of 4-5 collect one of the following scenarios.
- Appoint one person in the group to read the scenario to all students.
- As a group, spend 5 minutes discussing how you could handle the situation so that potential harms are reduced or eliminated.
- Swap scenarios with another group and repeat the process.
- At the end of the discussion process groups share back with the rest of the class some of the strategies they came up with. All students are to respect different strategies and differences of opinion.

Scenario 1:

You are at a party with 5 of your closest friends. Some people you don't know are popping pills such as ecstasy and have offered you and your friends some to try. You know that your friends are not that interested in trying pills.

Scenario 2

Your best friend has just begun dating a new person who smokes cigarettes. As a result your friend has started smoking socially but insists that he/she is not addicted. You are aware that he/she is now buying cigarettes and you think he/she is crazy for taking up the habit.

Scenario 3

You are at a party and quite a few people are drunk. Fights are erupting so you are not feeling safe. Your designated driver on the other hand is not yet ready to go home.

Scenario 4

Your cousin has been skipping school regularly and you are concerned that they are becoming dependent on cannabis and driving whilst under the influence.

Scenario 5:

You are out at a club when one of your friend's behaviour changes quite erratically. She can hardly stand, is feeling sleepy and has been sick. She has only had a couple of drinks so this behaviour is not usual.

Suggested Student Responses

Before the Program

3. Myth or Fact?

- Coffee or greasy food helps sober people up. **F**
- Cannabis is natural so is not harmful. **F**
- You cannot become addicted to or dependent on cannabis. **F**
- Calling an ambulance for someone affected by drugs means that the police will also become involved. **F**
- Alcohol is a drug that causes more deaths among young people than any other drug. **T**
- All drugs can be harmful if not used properly. **T**
- Approximately 50% of teenagers smoke tobacco. **F**
- Cannabis can be detected in the body for up to a month after use. **T**
- Alcohol is a stimulant. **F**
- Cannabis is both a hallucinogen and a depressant. **T**
- Tobacco causes more deaths than any other drug in Australia. **T**
- Effects of drugs can differ from person to person due to gender, body size, amount and concentration of the drug taken and general health of the person. **T**

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While Viewing the Program

1. What is meant by the term 'drug use'?
Taking any kind of substance that alters the functioning of the body in any way.
2. List the three categories of drugs. For each category describe the effect it has on the body and identify one example.

Category of drug	Effect on the body	Example
Stimulant	These drugs speed up the functioning of the body and the central nervous system.	Caffeine, Nicotine
Depressant	These drugs slow down the functioning of the body and the central nervous system.	Alcohol, Cannabis
Hallucinogen	These drugs affect the way the brain functions and alters the person's sense of reality.	Cannabis, Magic mushrooms

3. Illicit drugs are commonly termed as **illegal** drugs whereas non-illicit (licit) drugs are those that are **legal** drugs.
4. Provide examples of illicit and licit drugs:
 - Illicit drugs include:
Heroin
Cocaine
Cannabis
 - Licit drugs include:
Caffeine
Nicotine
Prescription medications

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5. What percent of Australian students aged 14-19 years have:
 - Used alcohol in the past 12 months? **71%**
 - Taken illicit drugs in their lifetime? **23%**
6. What are the most common illicit drugs used?
Marijuana and ecstasy are the most commonly used illicit drugs
7. Discuss what is meant by addiction/dependence?
Addiction/Dependence is where a person uses a drug for a desired effect and over time they build up a tolerance to the drug so that they need to take a greater quantity to achieve the same effect. Severe withdrawal effects may result if they do not use the drug such as restlessness, anxiety and/or depression. Dependence is where a person needs to use the drug to feel 'normal'.
8. Outline the effects of tobacco smoking on a person's health?
Increases the risk of suffering respiratory illness e.g. asthma, emphysema, lung cancer and cardiovascular disease e.g. heart disease, stroke and hypertension.
9. Identify the strategies available to reduce the harms associated with tobacco smoking.
Quit campaigns, visit to a GP who can prescribe medications or nicotine replacement therapies (NRTs) such as patches or gum.
10. What is meant by the term 'binge drinking'?
Binge drinking is consuming huge/large quantities of alcohol on a single occasion.
11. Briefly outline the effects alcohol can have on a person's health and general life.
**Damage to internal organs e.g. heart, kidneys and liver
Affects brain functioning
Relationship issues
Financial issues
Problems being able to attend school and/or work**
12. What % of young people aged 14-19 years have tried alcohol at least once. **90 %**
13. Why is alcohol use and abuse particularly harmful for the health and development of teenagers?
Alcohol is the drug most responsible for premature death among teenagers in the UK, the United States and Australia. The brain is still developing in people aged 15 – 25 years. Alcohol use and abuse can affect the parts of the brain responsible for motivation, impulse control and avoidance of addictions as these are still developing.

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14. For the following illegal drugs discuss the effect each has on a person's health (physically, socially or emotionally/psychologically).

Illegal drug	Impact on health (physical, social and emotional/psychological)
Cannabis	<p>Cannabis is a depressant that can come in a range of forms and is a drug that makes people feel relaxed as it slows down the central nervous system.</p> <p>Just like tobacco, smoking cannabis affects a person's respiratory system – the ability to breathe.</p> <p>The long term use of cannabis may lead to social exclusion as people tend to withdraw from usual social activities and can cause problems with families and friends.</p> <p>It has also thought to be a trigger for psychotic illnesses (i.e. Schizophrenia) in those already with a predisposition to mental illness.</p>
Amphetamines	<p>Amphetamines are stimulants and they speed up the central nervous system. They can cause excitability, agitation, increased heart rate, sweating, a loss of inhibitions, inability to sleep and anxiety. They can also impact on social relationships by causing a breakdown in communication. They may affect a person's ability and motivation to attend school or work.</p>
Heroin	<p>In the short term, heroin slows down the respiratory system and causes people to feel very relaxed. In some cases this can lead to an overdose.</p> <p>In the long term it can affect lifestyle factors such as the ability to function on a daily basis, participate in relationships and attend school or work.</p>

15. What are the legal ramifications of using or trafficking illegal drugs?

Penalties for use or trafficking of illegal drugs could include: juvenile detention or prison sentences. These factors can impact on future career choices.

16. Name two blood-borne diseases that are more commonly contracted as a result of injecting drug use.

Injecting drug use increases the risk of contracting a number of blood-borne viruses including: hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS.

17. What are the signs that indicate that a person who has taken drugs might need medical help?

Loss of consciousness and acting irrationally are signs that a person who has taken drugs may need medical help.

18. Calling an ambulance should be a priority in a crisis situation

a) The phone numbers for emergency services in the UK, the United States of America and Australia are:

- UK – **999**
- United States of America – **911**
- Australia – **000**

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- b) Why do some young people resist calling for an ambulance when a person is under the influence of drugs?
Some young people are scared to call for emergency help as they fear the police will also come and they could face prosecution for using drugs.
- c) Outline further what each of Chris Morley's party safe tips involve
- Look out for your mates
If you have any concerns about friends using drugs call for help from an ambulance, family members or a medical centre.
 - Don't take anything you are unsure of
When going to a party don't take anything you are unsure of. Just say no.
 - Plan ahead
Make sure you have a means to get home and ensure parties are well organised.
 - Communicate
With family, friends, a trusted teacher.
- d) Family and **peer** groups can have an impact on one another's drug and **alcohol** use through **communication** through **questioning** each others behaviours, asking people how they are travelling and **supporting** each other at difficult times.
- e) Identify examples of prevention and treatment options available to help young people reduce the harms associated with drug use and abuse.
- **Family**
 - **Friends**
 - **School counsellor**
 - **Teacher**
 - **Friends parents**
 - **Drug and alcohol telephone support lines**
 - **Websites**