

# Cannabis Use and Health Effects

## Activity

**Resource:** Cannabis Education Resources

**Grade(s):** 7

## Overview

- Students use popular media as a tool to become youth advocates for educating their peers.
- Students explore the links between mental health and problematic cannabis use, analyze personal and societal issues arising from cannabis use, and identify school and community resources that can provide support for students dealing with situations involving cannabis.
- Students create an infomercial for social media to educate their peers.
- This activity may be used as part of a unit of learning or at the end of a unit of learning to support students in demonstrating their understanding of the links between mental health and cannabis use, personal and societal issues related to cannabis use, and sources of support for students dealing with situations involving cannabis.

## Curriculum Expectations

A1.6, D1.2, D3.2

## Materials Needed

- Chart paper and markers
- Information about links between mental health problems and problematic cannabis use. Examples of resources for information:

- Addressing the possible effects of cannabis on brain development in youth (see Kids Help Phone's [Cannabis: Important Things to Know](#), and the Government of Canada's [Health Effects of Cannabis](#))
  - Understanding how problematic cannabis use can affect a person (see the Government of Canada's Health Effects of Cannabis)
  - Recognizing societal issues related to cannabis
  - Knowing school and community resources for individuals dealing with mental health concerns related to substances such as cannabis (see Kids Help Phone's Cannabis: Important Things To Know)
  - Graphic Organizer for groups to record information they will share with their peers
- Phones, tablets or computers for students to gather information and create their media texts (optional)

## Learning Goals

- We are learning about the links between mental health and problematic use of substances such as cannabis.
- We are learning about how using cannabis use can affect a person's health and well-being and how it can affect brain development in youth.
- We are learning how cannabis use can affect our society.
- We are learning about school and community resources that can support a person who is dealing with a mental health concern related to cannabis use.
- We are learning how to apply our critical and creative thinking in order to make connections between substance use and mental health and to educate our peers.

## Sample Success Criteria

- I can identify how a mental health problem can be linked to problematic use of a substance such as cannabis.
- I can describe how using cannabis can affect a person.

- I can describe the potential effects on brain development for youth under 25 years of age.
- I can describe how cannabis use can affect our society.
- I can identify school and community sources of support to help a person dealing with a mental health concern that is related to cannabis use.

## Opportunities For Assessment

- During the **Minds On**, use the Gallery Walk activity to assess what students know and need to learn concerning the links between mental health problems and problematic cannabis use, cannabis use and brain development, social and personal implications of problematic cannabis use, and sources of support in the school and community for individuals dealing with situations involving cannabis.
- At the end of the **Action**, use the Graphic Organizer activity to assess students' thinking skills.
- At the end of the **Consolidation**, use the group-generated messages to assess students' understanding of the links between mental health problems and problematic cannabis use, effects of cannabis on brain development, social and personal implications of problematic cannabis use, and sources of support in the school and community for individuals dealing with situations involving cannabis.

## Minds-On

- Share the Learning Goals with students, and co-construct the Success Criteria clarifying terminology with students such as problematic substance use.
- Create a Gallery Walk with 5 stations. Place chart paper and markers at each station. Place the following questions on the chart paper, with one question per chart paper:
  - Who would you go to in our school or the community for support when you are dealing with a personal problem?
    - Possible responses: Parents/guardians/caregivers, older siblings, friends, a trusted adult, a community elder, a school counsellor, a public health service, a youth help centre, Kids Help Line
  - Who might someone talk to or where might someone go in our school or in the community to get help when dealing with a mental health problem related to using a substance such as cannabis?

- Possible responses: trusted adults at school, guidance counsellors, public health services, community elders, help lines
  - What are some of the ways that problematic cannabis use can affect a person, particularly a younger person whose brain is still developing?
    - Possible responses: family relationships, loss of friendships, personal reputation, physical health, mental health, school performance, work performance, legal problems if underage, impairment of brain development leading to problems with memory, concentration, thinking, learning, handling emotions, decision making ability
  - How do issues relating to using substances such as cannabis affect our society?
    - Possible responses: violence in relationships, risk-taking behaviours leading to injuries of self and others, property damage, legal implications
  - What are some effective ways to engage your peers to educate them about the links between mental health problems and problematic cannabis use, how it can affect an individual and our community, and where to get help in the school or in the local community?
    - Possible responses: social media sites they access, public announcements in schools, posting in community facilities, visual media such as infographics
- Divide the class into 5 equal groups and have each group start at a different Gallery Walk station.
- Have all groups rotate through each station, discuss the question at the station, and generate ideas in response to the question(s) on each chart paper.
- Keep the Gallery Walk stations posted for the remainder of the activity.

## Action

- Keep the same groups from the Gallery Walk or reassemble students in different and/or smaller groups.
- Assign each group one of questions 2, 3, 4, or 5 from the Gallery Walk to investigate further. More than one group may be assigned the same question to investigate if needed, but be sure each question is

covered by at least one group.

- Provide each group with additional information related to the question they have been assigned, such as:
  - The links between mental health problems and problematic cannabis use
  - Facts about cannabis use and the developing brain
  - How cannabis use can affect a person
  - Social issues related to cannabis use
  - School and community resources for individuals dealing with mental health concerns related to use of substances such as cannabis
- Suggested resources include Kids Help Phone's [Cannabis: Important Things to Know](#), and the Government of Canada's [Health Effects of Cannabis](#).
- Provide groups with sufficient time to gather additional information about their assigned question.
- Once groups have found sufficient information to answer their assigned question, have them return to the Gallery Walk station with their assigned question and add to the information that was generated by groups during the **Minds On**.
- Have groups share their information with the class.
- Once all groups have reported to the class, have them reassemble in their smaller group and answer the following question: Of all the information gathered by the class, what is the most important and relevant information from each chart that is important for your peers to know about?
- Make sure to provide some information about each of the following areas:
  - The links between mental health problems and problematic cannabis use
  - How cannabis may affect brain development in youth
  - How substance use can affect any individual and our society
  - Where to get help in the school or in the local community
- Provide students with a Graphic Organizer, such as a chart, to record the information they have decided to include from the Gallery Walk stations in formulating their message to their peers.

- Using Gallery Walk question 6 as a guide, have groups determine the medium they will use to engage their peers and convey their message.

## Consolidation

- Have groups create the message they want to share to educate their peers using their medium of choice. Their message should contain information about the links between mental health problems and problematic cannabis use, the effects of cannabis on brain development, the effects that using substances such as cannabis may have on an individual and society, and sources of support for individuals dealing with a mental health concern related to use of a substance use such as cannabis.
- Have students share their message with the class.

## Ideas For Extension

- Have the class generate ideas about the best locations in the school and/or community to display the group-created media messages to educate their peers.
- Have groups share their message in the community, at a school event, or in an open space at the school.

## Notes To Teachers

Providing opportunities for students to explore concepts from multiple perspectives and through a variety of lenses enriches their learning.

- Consider integrating this activity into the Grade 7 Language curriculum: Writing 1. Developing and Organizing Content, Writing 2. Using Knowledge and Form and Style in Writing, and/or Media Literacy 3. Creating Media Texts, by having students create media texts such as a poster, YouTube message, or infomercial.
- This activity focuses specifically on mental health issues related to cannabis use. Additional learning related to the link between mental health issues and addictive behaviours, such as dependence on technology, tobacco, vaping, alcohol and binge drinking, and the use of performance-enhancing drugs as well as personal and social implications related to substance use is recommended to fully address the intended learning as articulated in curriculum expectations D1.2 and D3.2. These concepts may be

addressed within this activity or as a follow-up activity.

- Substance Use, Addictions, and Related Behaviours curriculum expectation D2.3 is not addressed in this activity and should be addressed within another unit of learning.