

# My Influences, My Skills, and My Choices

## Activity

**Resource:** Cannabis Education Resources

**Grade(s):** 9

## Overview

- Students use a **Placemat** Graphic Organizer and information to identify the social factors that may influence substance use, such as cannabis.
- Students use scenarios to explore effective decision-making and communication skills that may be used to respond to social factors that might influence substance use.
- This activity may be used as part of a unit of learning. It may also be used as a follow-up to the Grade 9 Cannabis Education Activity 1: My Factors, My Resilience, and My Choices.

## Curriculum Expectations

1.3, 1.5, C3.4

## Materials Needed

- **Graphic organizers**
- Information about the social factors that may influence substance use, such as:
  - **Canadian Youth Perceptions of Cannabis** (report, available via Canadian Centre on Substance Use's website)
- Electronic devices for researching and gathering information

- Factors influencing cannabis use scenarios

## Learning Goals

- We are learning about the social factors that might influence cannabis use.
- We are learning about how decision-making and communication skills can be used to respond effectively to influences related to cannabis use.

## Sample Success Criteria

- I can describe some social factors that may influence an individual to use cannabis.
- I can explain how decision-making and communication skills can be used to respond effectively to influences related to cannabis use.

## Opportunities For Assessment

- During the **Minds On**, use the group discussion about social influences to assess students' understanding of social factors that might influence cannabis use.
- During the **Action**, use the class generated list of social reasons that may influence substance use to assess students' understanding of social factors that might influence cannabis use.
- During the **Action**, use the [Elbow Partner](#) activity to assess students' understanding of effective communication styles.
- During the **Consolidation**, use the student analysis of scenarios to assess students' understanding related to the Learning Goals and Success Criteria.

## Minds-On

- Share the Learning Goals with students and co-create Success Criteria.
- Have students form groups of 3–4.
- Provide each group with a graphic organizer to record their ideas, such as a Placemat Graphic Organizer, and pose the question, *“What types of social influences or pressure do youth face related to cannabis use?”*

- Explain to students that they will have five minutes to individually respond to the question on their section of the graphic organizer and then be asked to share their ideas with their group.
- Before individual students share their responses, ask that one member of each group take responsibility for recording the most common responses in the middle of the group's graphic organizer.
- After all individuals have shared their response, have groups identify their collective responses as either "Direct social influences" or "Indirect social influences." Groups may sort their responses by using two different-coloured markers or highlighters, underlining direct influences and circling indirect influences, or any other method they choose to differentiate the responses.
- Have groups define and identify the characteristics of both types of influences.

## Action

- Have students remain in their groups from the **Minds On**, and provide groups with information about the social factors that may influence substance use (for example, see Canadian Youth Perceptions of Cannabis) or with an electronic device they can use to search for this information.
- Have groups use the information they gathered and add to their original list of social influences.
- Have each group share their list of social factors with the whole class to generate a class list of social factors that may influence substance use.
- Have students work with an elbow partner to generate ideas about why having good decision making and communication skills are important to effectively respond to these types of social influences.
- Have elbow partners share their thoughts with the larger group.
- Show students video clips from popular media that demonstrate different communication styles (e.g., passive, aggressive, and assertive) being used in a situation involving conflict.
- Have students continue to work with their elbow partners to identify each style of communication, analyze how effective the communication style was in resolving the conflict, and decide on the communication skills they might use in the same situation (e.g., *"Will the communication style used have a positive or negative influence on the conflict situation? How could each character have communicated more effectively to resolve the conflict?"*).

- Alternatively, have students generate a list of conflicts that youth might be involved in (e.g., friends, peers, parents/guardians/caregivers, authority figures, fellow employees) and have volunteers perform a role-play about attempting to resolve the conflict using different communication styles. Have the class determine how each character might have communicated more effectively to resolve the conflict.

## Consolidation

- Explain to students that they will be given a scenario in which someone is being influenced to use cannabis and uses their decision making and communication skills to effectively respond to the situation.
- Provide students with the following scenarios or have them generate a scenario of their own based on the social influences that the class identified during the **Minds On** :
  - You are meeting up with friends during break and one of your friends says, “Let’s go smoke some weed instead of going to class.”
  - You are sitting with several of your friends at lunch when one friends says, “Hey, let’s bring some alcohol on that school trip tomorrow. It will make it so much fun.” Your other friends agree with the idea.
  - You are heading to a party with your close friend who has some cookies that are laced with cannabis. Your friend suggests taking them to the party to share with everyone without telling them what’s in them. He or she wants you to try one before you go to the party.
  - You are about to write your final exam and are very nervous. Your friend offers you some weed and says it will help you relax and concentrate better.
- Have students select one of the scenarios and complete the following tasks:
  1. Identify the social factors that might influence you to use cannabis.
  2. Identify the decisions that you could make and the pros and cons of each decision.
  3. Formulate three possible responses that you might use – one that is passive, one that is aggressive, and one that is assertive – and explain what makes each response a realistic response and which response is most likely to resolve the conflict in an effective way.
  4. Articulate how you might use your communication skills to effectively respond to the situation.
- Consider providing students with a graphic organizer to record their thinking.

- Have students reassemble in their groups or create new groups and have them act out one of the scenarios, providing groups with a variety of options for responding to the scenario, such as writing, performing, or video recording.

## Ideas For Extension

- Have groups use the information gathered about social factors that influence drug use and the importance of decision making and communication skills to create a social media message (e.g., for posting on Twitter or Instagram) for their peer group.
- Have groups share their social media message/campaign with the school community via the school's social media networks and/or public spaces.

## Notes To Teachers

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

- Explore cross-curricular opportunities, such as students reading literature related to youth struggling with situations involving cannabis as part of their English course.
- Encourage students to develop critical thinking and inquiry skills, including questioning, predicting, analyzing, synthesizing, examining opinions, identifying values and issues, detecting bias, and exploring alternatives to help guide effective decision making about the use of cannabis and other drugs.
- Encourage personal reflection on the power of social factors on youth and cannabis use.