

Abstinence Activities Scenario Cards & Brainstorm

Goal:

- To create a list of protective factors (activities/friends/projects) that can decrease the chances of harmfully using substances.

Have Ready:

- Flipchart paper and markers, or white board
- Scenario cards (optional)

Instructions:

- Break youth into smaller groups and give each group a scenario card (see below), flipchart, and markers.
- Have youth brainstorm all the things the person in the scenario could do instead of using.

Abstinence Scenarios:

Scenario 1:

Jared has started new medication to treat depression. He wants to get back to doing the things he loves and his health has become a major priority. His Dr. has told him that he needs to stay away from alcohol because it could stop his medication from working well. List some fun and safe activities he can do.

Scenario 2:

Sky has just been released from the Manitoba Youth Centre after being there for 4 months. One of the conditions for her probation is no drugs or alcohol. If she is caught using them she may have to go back to the youth centre. She does not want to go back and wants to avoid drugs and alcohol. Make a list of fun and safe activities for her to do.

Scenario 3:

Erik has been playing hockey since he was seven. He wants to play for a Manitoba junior hockey team. He realizes that smoking and drinking on the weekend affects his game so he wants to cut back. List some fun and safe activities he can do.

Scenario 4:

Joe spent the night at the nursing station after drinking a lot of alcohol and smoking pot. He had severe alcohol poisoning because the pot stopped him from puking. He wants to take a six month break from drinking and smoking pot. Make a list of fun and safe activities for him to do.

Scenario 5:

Sam and her friends have been experimenting with various drugs over the past year. She found out she was pregnant several weeks ago and decided she's going to parent. She wants to stop using. List some fun and safe activities she can do.

Sample Flipchart:

Things to Do

- sports/activities/hobbies
- spend time in the bush
- movies/video games
- hang out with friends and family who are not using
- go to the community centre/hockey rink
- parties/dances
- community events
- cook/bake
- write, draw, paint
- get a part-time job
- get more involved with your community (volunteer, join or start a community garden, hang out with neighbors)
- consider if your friends are pressuring you to use
- drive around
- practice saying no/use only on special occasions

Debrief:

- Let youth know that having other activities that are meaningful and fun for them in their lives decreases the likelihood of becoming dependant on a substance and increases the likelihood of being able to cut down.
- When choosing other activities instead of using substances, it can be helpful to find an activity that has the same desired effects. So for example, if someone is using to get a rush of adrenaline, spending time playing a fast-paced video game or listening to loud music would be a better substitute than reading or meditating.
- It is also worth remembering that if we have been using for a while, it can take a considerable amount of time to adjust to being sober.
- Ask youth, **“Can someone who’s not using any substances make a list like this?”** Of course, someone doesn’t necessarily have to have a “problem” to want to reduce their usage. Anyone can decide to focus on meaningful activities, whether or not they are using. People may even want to help a friend reduce usage.
- Partying could be on the list. If someone wanted to cut down on drinking ask youth, **“Would going to a party where other people are drinking necessarily be easy?”** (No) A lot of times, there is pressure for everyone to join in.
- Ask youth, **“What could people say if they don’t want to use in this situation?”** I’m driving, I have to babysit later, I have a big game/test tomorrow, or no thanks are all possible ways to resist pressure.

Additional Activities:

Ideally, this activity can be followed by:

- Refusal Skills
- Partying Safer
- Decisional Balancing