

Substance Effects Match-up

Goal

- To discuss the desired effects and potential risks of different substances.

Senior 1-4 Education Curriculum Connections

This activity contributes the following Student Specific Learning Outcomes:

Physical Education

- *K.5.S1.D.2 Examine the use and abuse of substances and potential consequences on personal health and well-being.*
- *K.5.S2.D.1 Analyze issues concerning the use and abuse of legal and illegal substances.*
- *11.SU.1 Explain ways in which drugs and other substances are classified.*
- *11.SU.4 Use reliable information in making healthy decisions for helping self and/or others regarding substance use and abuse.*

Instructions

- Tell the youth that most substances can be classified in one of five categories because of how they work in the body. We're going to go through five of them to explore what the potential desired effects (what people might want from taking the substance) and potential harms (risks or side effects) may be.

Option A: Substance Effects Matching Game Group Activity

- Use this option for a large group, either by using one set of cards. (Can be copied from following pages, make sure to cut along dotted lines) and calling on volunteers to place them. For a more collaborative activity, print several sets of cards (below) for small groups to work on together and compare results at the end as a large group. To increase challenge or for groups with a lot of existing substance information, separate the Desired Effects and Potential Harms by cutting into two cards instead of one sheet.
- Place signs for “Downers,” “Uppers,” “Cannabis” “Hallucinogens” and “Inhalants” on whiteboard or wall or distribute to groups if doing small group version of this activity.

- Hand out “desired and potential risks” cards and have youth place them in the sections where they feel the cards belong.

Option B: Substance Effects Matching Game Handout

- Use this option for a more reflective activity. Print enough copies of the “Substance Effects Matching Game” (follows card activity) for your group. Have youth complete the matching game individually or in small groups. Compare the final answers as a large group and use information below for debrief.
- **Answer key for matching game:** Inhalants (D&G), Downers (E&J), Uppers (B&F), Cannabis (A&H), Hallucinogens (C&I)

Debrief

- Use the following info about substances, listed by category, to talk about the substances with youth in as much or as little detail as suits your group.

DOWNERS: alcohol, pain-killers, heroin, fentanyl, etc.

Desired effects: Slow the body down, create a feeling of calm, help a person relax or sleep (sedative), reduce physical and/or emotional pain. Alcohol in small doses can make people feel energetic and happy.

Potential harms: Downers are called depressants because they slow down the central nervous system and this sometimes blocks messages getting to our brains.⁴ Alcohol lowers inhibitions and impairs judgment, changing the things we do, changing what we think of as safe or unsafe, the greatest risks often come from the things people do when they are drunk. The more alcohol is consumed, the more people can find themselves becoming increasingly sad, angry, uncoordinated and/or slowed down. **Alcohol poisoning is when a person drinks more alcohol than their body can handle. “What are the signs of alcohol poisoning?”** Signs of alcohol poisoning are vomiting, clammy skin, shallow breathing and passing out. An overdose can lead to a coma or death. Taking in amounts quickly, puts us at a higher risk of alcohol poisoning.

⁴www.afm.mb.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/woocommerce_uploads/2013/03/AlcoholBTB.pdf, accessed July 30, 2015.

Taking too much of any downer can result in overdose because the body slows down too much and a person's heartbeat or breathing can stop.

UPPERS: cocaine, caffeine, crystal meth, speed, etc.

Uppers or stimulants work by increasing dopamine levels in the brain.

Desired effects: May feel alert, happy or "high," excited, and an increased tolerance to pain.

Potential harms: With all uppers, there's a crash at some point. At this time people can feel depressed, upset, mad, or really tired. **"What might someone be tempted to do at this point to deal with how they are feeling?" Take more.** That's what can make uppers so addictive. If a person uses too much of an upper (especially cocaine or speed/amphetamines), they can overdose by having a heart attack. There is also a risk of nausea, headaches, racing heart, anxiety, mood swings, paranoia, severe depression and violent behavior.

CANNABIS: pot/weed, dried buds, hash, oil, edibles, shatter/dab, etc.

Desired effects: It can cause someone to feel relaxed, have a sense of well-being and a slowed sense of time, pain relief.

Potential harms: THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) is one of the more prominent drugs in cannabis. It is hard to guess how strong it will be because THC levels vary from plant to plant. This means that it can be hard to predict what the effect a particular batch will be. Some people can experience panic, paranoia and memory problems and it can lead to lung problems when smoked. **"How could Cannabis affect someone's driving?"** Since cannabis distorts thinking, people may think they are driving fine when they are high, even though they are not. Effects like slower reaction time, distorted perceptions of time and distance, decreased alertness, and increased drowsiness all make driving dangerous under the influence of weed.⁵ "Greening out"⁶ is a term used to describe a situation where a person may feel sick after using cannabis. Although not fatal, a person may go pale and sweaty, feel dizzy with "the

⁵AFM, 2.5.3 Cannabis and Driving, 2006.

⁶www.medicaldaily.com/drunken-and-high-science-explains-some-side-effects-come-mixing-alcohol-and-marijuana-278486, accessed November 2017.

spins,” feel nauseous, and may even start vomiting. In Canada, the use of cannabis is now legal if over the age of 19.

HALLUCINOGENS: magic mushrooms, LSD (acid), ecstasy/MDMA, peyote, etc.

Hallucinogens change the way people think, see, and hear things. With hallucinogens, in general, the high depends on where you are, who you’re with, and how you’re feeling. **Ecstasy** (or MDMA) can be considered both a Hallucinogen and an Upper.

Desired effects: Include feelings of openness, euphoria, increased energy, and hallucinations. Some Indigenous cultures have teachings about specific medicines that are considered to be hallucinogens for ceremonial purposes to obtain information, knowledge or purpose.⁷ These ceremonies are guided by a traditional healers, medicine people, and knowledge keepers.

Potential harms: With mushrooms, **“bad trips” can happen.** This is where someone could feel fear, panic, and even terror. Other harms can be upset stomach and confusion (which has led to accidental injury and death).⁸ Hallucinogens may cause lasting perception changes (streaking or flashbacks) or persistent psychosis. These effects may last for years.⁹ For people with a pre-existing mental illness there is a possibility that both **hallucinogens** and **cannabis** could aggravate the illness.¹⁰ **Ecstasy** side effects can include grinding of teeth and jaw clenching, increased heart rate and body temperature, anxiety and paranoia. There is also a risk of liver/heart failure due to dehydration and hyperthermia (severely high fever).

INHALANTS: solvents and gasses (not intended for human consumption)

Desired effects: Can make a person feel euphoric, light-headed or dizzy, and lose inhibitions.

Potential harms: Memory loss, loss of hearing and sense of smell, changes in personality, irreversible brain damage, death from either passing out or from

⁷www.scribd.com/doc/3937611/The-Scientific-Investigation-of-Ayahuasca-A-Review-of-Past-and-Current-Research, accessed November 2017.

⁸AFM, *Alcohol and Other Drug Use In Manitoba Youths*, May 2005.

⁹AFM, *Beyond the Basics: Magic Mushrooms Pamphlet*, afm.mb.ca/publications/beyond-the-basics-series-magic-mushrooms/, accessed July, 2015.

¹⁰George, T., & Vaccarino, F. (Eds.) *Substance abuse in Canada: The Effects of Cannabis Use during Adolescence*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse. Pg 36. 2015.

sudden sniffing death where the heart stops. **Stigma:** Harm can also include being judged negatively. Often in our society people make negative assumptions about people who use inhalants whereas if someone is using a different substance (like alcohol for example) they may not be judged in the same way. **Negative assumptions are called stigma and that stigma may make it more difficult for someone to get help if they felt that their substance use was becoming problematic.**

Additional Activities

Ideally, this activity can be followed by:

- “Partying Safer” Brainstorm

DOWNERS

ALCOHOL, PAIN-KILLERS, HEROIN, SLEEPING PILLS...

UPPERS

COCAINE, CAFFEINE, CRYSTAL METH, SPEED, ECSTASY...

CANNABIS

POT/WEED, DRIED BUDS, HASH, OIL, EDIBLES, SHATTER/DAB...

HALLUCINOGENS

MAGIC MUSHROOMS, ACID, ECSTASY/MDMA, AYAHUASCA, PEYOTE...

INHAALANTS

SOLVENTS AND GASSES (NOT INTENDED FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION)

Desired effects:

- Slows the body down
- Makes you sleepy
- Pain relief (physical and emotional)

Potential harms:

- Lowered inhibitions: taking more risks
- Overdose
- Addiction/ problematic use

Desired effects:

- Alert and awake
- Happy or “high”
- Increased tolerance to pain

Potential harms:

- Crash (feeling depressed, upset, mad or really tired)
- Overdose
- Addiction/problematic use

Desired effects:

- Quick and fast high
- Giddy and lightheaded or dizzy
- Immediate escape from Reality

Potential harms:

- Memory loss, loss of hearing and sense of smell
- Brain damage
- Changes in personality

Desired effects:

- Seeing/hearing things that others don't
- Openness and sense of well-being
- More energy

Potential harms:

- Bad trip
- Nausea (upset stomach)
- Confusion and accidental injury

Desired effects:

- Feeling chilled out and giggly
- Calms upset stomach
- Slowed sense of time

Potential harms:

- Panic or paranoia
- Slowed reaction time/
less alert
- Greening out

Substance Use Info Matching Game!

Draw a line from each desired effect (what people want from using) & potential harm (side effects or risks) on the left to the correct substance category on the right.

POTENTIAL HARMS	DESIRED EFFECTS
	A) Feeling chilled out and giggly, calms upset stomach, slowed sense of time.
	B) Alert and awake, happy or "high," increased tolerance to pain
	C) Seeing/hearing things that others don't, openness and sense of well-being, more energy
	D) Quick and fast high, giddy and lightheaded or dizzy, Immediate escape from reality.
	E) Slows the body down, makes you sleepy, pain relief (physical and emotional)
	F) Crash (feeling depressed, upset, mad or really tired), overdose, addiction/problematic use
	G) Memory loss, loss of hearing and sense of smell, brain damage, changes in personality
	H) Panic or paranoia, slowed reaction time/ less alert, greening out
	I) Bad trip, nausea (upset stomach), confusion and accidental injury
	J) Lowered inhibitions: taking more risks, overdose, addiction/problematic use

Substance Categories:

Inhalants

Solvents and gasses not intended for human consumption (i.e. gasses, cleaning products)

Downers

Alcohol, pain-killers, heroin, sleeping pills...

Uppers

Cocaine, caffeine, crystal meth, speed, Ecstasy...

Cannabis

Pot/weed, dried buds, hash, oil, edibles, shatter/dab...

Hallucinogens

Magic mushrooms, Acid, ecstasy/mdma, ayahuasca, peyote...