 Impact of drug use on future

Suggested duration: 20 minutes

This activity has been designed to build on the activity *Planning for the future*. This activity has been adapted from activities developed by staff at St Johns Park high school.

This activity invites students to reflect on their goals and future directions, and assess the impact that decisions about drugs and alcohol will have on their ability to achieve goals and fulfil potential. It should be noted that many young people will not use drugs and alcohol. As such, the activities should be approached in a way that students could consider how the use of drugs and alcohol by others including peers, friends and family could impact on their ability to achieve goals.

Course outcomes

1.1 Assess personal strengths and skills to achieve positive outcomes in a range of challenging and changing situations.

1.2 Critically evaluate services and resources to identify sources of reliable information and support.

1.3 Build positive thinking, self-belief and a sense of empowerment to take action to promote meaningful futures for self and others.

What do we want students to know, understand or be able to do?

* Reflect on their personal, education, career, health and wellbeing goals.
* Assess the impact of decisions about drugs and alcohol on their ability to achieve goals and fulfil their future potential.
* Outline the strengths, skills and support required to persist to achieve goals and respect personal values when making decisions about drugs and alcohol.

Suggested content

| Learning context | Content |
| --- | --- |
| Independence  Focus: Building self-concepts and independence | Self-management   * using mind-sets for motivation and achievement, e.g. growth mind-set * managing change and initiating contingency plans * responsibility for self and actions * planning, setting, tracking and modifying goals * strategies for future success |
| Drugs and alcohol  Focus: Drugs and alcohol in different contexts | Addressing drug related issues in the community   * drug use and related harm in the community |

Teaching notes

To complete this activity effectively, teachers are encouraged to explore future aspirations, achievements and goal setting in previous sessions. These issues can be covered in the activity Planning for the future.

Creating a safe and supportive learning environment

There are a number of strategies that can be used to create a supportive learning environment which enables students to feel safe to learn and ask questions. They include:

* making students aware at the beginning of Life Ready sessions that disclosing personal information that indicates they may be at risk of harm will be reported to the school principal in all instances. This includes personal disclosures related to instances of abuse, drug use, neglect or sexual activity under the legal age of consent.
* being aware that some parts of Life Ready can be confronting and sensitive for some students.
* enabling students to withdraw if they find issues personally confronting to protect them from making harmful disclosures. Equally, it is important to be prepared for issues that arise as a result of a student making a public disclosure in the classroom.

More information on creating a safe and supportive learning environment can be found on the [Life Ready website.](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/life-ready)

Evaluating resources before use

Preview and evaluate all strategies, resources and teaching and learning approaches in full before use with students to determine suitability for student learning needs, stage of development and local school context. Consider the age, maturity, cultural background, sexuality, gender, sex, health and other characteristics of students in your care. Apply professional judgements to all strategies, teaching and learning approaches and resources including audiovisual materials (e.g. videos, media clips and YouTube), interactive web-based content (e.g. games, quizzes and websites) and texts.

Use the [resource review flowchart](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/083acd3a-daca-4307-9afe-bc6c888f694a/1/final-resource-flowchart-html5.zip/index.html) to decide about the suitability of teaching and learning resources.

Materials should be reviewed in full and endorsed by the school principal before use in NSW government schools.

Communication with parents and caregivers

Some aspects of Life Ready may be viewed as sensitive or controversial, such as learning about abuse, child protection, drugs, respectful relationships, sexual health, sexuality and violence. Inform parents and carers, prior to the occasion, of the specific details of the Life Ready program, so that parents and caregivers have time to exercise their rights of withdrawing their child from a particular session. In this regard, a parents or caregiver’s wish must be respected.

Establishing how parents and caregivers will be informed about programs and involved in consultation is a school-based decision. Where parents and caregivers indicate they wish to withdraw their child from a program it is useful to negotiate which parts of the *Life Ready* program they are concerned about. A sample information letter is available on the [Life Ready website](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/life-ready).

Learning experiences

Activity one – Impact of drug use on future (20 minutes)

1. Invite students to identify and reflect on their goals across various aspects of their life including education, career, health and wellbeing, relationships, travel and gaining material possessions.
2. Share Handout 1: “impact of drug use” with students*.*
3. Individually, students reflect on and record how exposure to drugs and alcohol through peers or family or personal use of drugs and alcohol could impact on their ability to achieve goals. Suggestions include:

Legal consequences

* Drink driving convictions for self or family and the impact on transport.
* Fines or charges for possession (personal, friends or family) and the impact on education or career, relationships or future travel.
* Use or supply of illicit drugs or alcohol to minors and the consequences of a criminal conviction for self, friends or family members.
* Alcohol related violence incidents including domestic violence and the impact on relationships, safety, wellbeing, and criminal conviction.
* Implications for overseas travel, such as difficulties obtaining visas, legal issues faced for use or possession of illicit drugs in some countries.

Financial implications

* Legal expenses where a criminal case or fines occur.
* Cost of regular drug use including tobacco and alcohol by self, friends or family.
* Impact of drug use on career and education, including absenteeism, loss of job, legal consequences or the impact of a criminal conviction on one’s ability to gain meaningful employment for self or family members.

Physical, mental, social and emotional health impacts, e.g.

* Impact of addiction or dependence on relationships, day to day functioning, employment and study, finances.
* Managing serious health problems.
* Social isolation or negative impact on relationships.

1. In pairs, students reflect on the impact of drug and alcohol use on their future by addressing questions such as:

* what is the connection between your goals and your personal values? For example, assess whether your goals reflect what you consider to be important and meaningful in life?
* how important are goals and values in influencing personal decisions about drug and alcohol use?
* what strengths and skills will assist you to persist with and achieve your goals and respect personal values when faced with decisions related to drug and alcohol use or drug and alcohol related situations?
* what are some examples of support that would enable you to persist and achieve your goals?

Handout 1: Impact of drug use

| Goal areas | Goals | Impact of drug use on these goals |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Education | none | none |
| Health & wellbeing | None | None |
| Relationships | None | None |
| Career | None | None |
| Material possessions | None | None |
| Future travel | none | None |