

Drug education

KS5/Post-16, Lesson 3: Managing influences and seeking support



Managing influences and seeking support

This is the third of five lessons for key stage 5 on understanding the risks and consequences of substance use, and making informed decisions about alcohol and other drugs. This lesson explores influences that can affect decision making related to alcohol and other drugs, the consequences of substance use on reputation, career and relationships, and how to seek help and support related to substance use.

Learning objective

To learn how different influences can affect decision making related to alcohol and other drugs.

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- assess how internal and external influences can affect decision making
- analyse the impact of substance use, including on reputation, career, and relationships
- assess the challenges and benefits of seeking support in relation to substance use, and evaluate sources of support

Resources required

- Box or envelope for questions
- Resource 1: *Text exchange* [1 per student]
- Resource 2: *Scenarios* [1 per pair]
- Resource 2a: *Scenarios – alternative* [support option, as required]
- Resource 2b: *Scenarios – answers* [1 copy for teacher reference]
- Resource 3: *Sources of support* [1 per pair]

Climate for learning

Make sure you have read the accompanying teacher guidance notes before teaching this lesson. These include relevant subject knowledge for this topic, guidance on creating a safe learning environment, and curriculum links.

Baseline assessment

Baseline assessment activity (Slide 10, 10 mins)

Ask students to complete **Resource 1: Text exchange**, reading the messages between two friends after a party, and responding to the four questions. As this is a baseline assessment, students should do this on their own, without any additional explanation or prompting.

Take feedback and draw out any common ideas from the class, as well as any misconceptions that students may have about alcohol and other drugs, resisting pressure, or seeking support. Ask students not to note down any new ideas at this stage, as they will return to this activity at the end of the lesson.

Use this assessment to adapt the lesson, if necessary, for example spending more time on activities exploring how to overcome barriers to seek support or resist pressure to use alcohol or other drugs.

Introduction (Slide 11-12, 5 mins)

Introduce the learning objective and outcomes and explain that today's lesson will be exploring influences that can affect decision making related to substance use, the long and short-term consequences of these decisions, and overcoming barriers to seeking help for substance use.

Use slide 12 to revisit ground rules and remind students about the question box.

Core activities


Identifying influences and assessing consequences (Slides 13-14, 15 mins)


Ask students what they understand by the term 'internal and external influences', before sharing the definitions on slide 13.

Then, in pairs, ask students to complete **Resource 2: Scenarios**. Explain that they should read the three scenarios and complete the table, identifying any internal and external influences each character might be experiencing, and considering what the risks and consequences of each character's actions might be. For example, they might describe how the characters' relationships with others could be affected, how their reputation might change, or how their studies or career might be impacted.

Take feedback, using **Resource 2b: Identifying influences – answers** to help support discussion.

Explain that sometimes people can experience a combination of internal and external pressure. For example, someone might feel that making a particular decision will help them to fit in with a group (internal influence), but the group's behaviour might also put pressure on that person to change their behaviour (external influence), as in Eden's case. If someone can identify that they are experiencing external influence, they can evaluate whether it benefits them to act on it or not, and make more independent decisions. If they recognise that the influence is mainly internal, they might be encouraged to seek support and take steps to reduce the impact of any long-term consequences of their actions.

 **Support:** Give students **Resource 2a: Identifying influences – alternative**, which includes prompts to help students answer the questions. You may also wish to share some example answers from **Resource 2b: Identifying influences – answers**.

 **Challenge:** Ask students to identify any possible positive influences on the characters and discuss the effects these influences might have.

Overcoming challenges (Slides 15-17, 10 mins)

Explain that although asking for help for concerns relating to alcohol, tobacco, vaping, and other drug use (whether the person is asking for themselves, or for someone they know) is not always easy; how much someone shares and when they share it, is always up to the individual.

Drawing on the characters' experiences in the previous scenarios, ask students to mind map their thoughts to the two questions on slide 15, working in small groups: firstly, considering why people might find it difficult to seek support if they have questions or concerns about substance use, and then discussing what the benefits of doing so might be.

Ask volunteers to share their responses with the class, noting down any additional ideas from their peers on their own sheets.

Students might suggest:

- *Barriers to/challenges of seeking help and support may include: feeling shame or fearing judgement from others, including from friends or peers (for example, Eden or Izaak); embarrassment due to stigma and stereotypes about people who experience difficulties with alcohol, tobacco, vaping, or other drug use; a lack of knowledge or understanding about sources of support and what help is available; worries about getting into trouble with family or others, such as an employer (for example, Tim); not wanting to damage their professional or personal reputation; not wanting to appear 'weak' (for example, Izaak); not recognising that someone may need support; not feeling that their concerns are significant enough to warrant help.*
- *Explain that stereotypes about who experiences problems with substances (e.g. 'addicts') can create an additional barrier to accessing support. It is important to avoid creating a binary in which a person who uses substances either has a substance use disorder or not, as this may contribute to the misconception that support services are only for those people with a substance use disorder, or who may be seen as having an 'addiction'. A single episode of use, 'binge use', mixing of substances, and continued or regular use, can all potentially be harmful and lead to problems – substance use takes place across most segments of society and people should seek support if they need it as early as possible. For more information on challenging misconceptions related to substance use, including challenging stereotypes, see pages 6 to 8 of the teacher guidance.*
- *Benefits of seeking help and support may include: talking to others who have had similar concerns or experiences; feeling less isolated; receiving tailored support for their individual circumstances; receiving support for other areas of their lives which may have been impacted by substance use, such as studying/work, relationships, mental and physical wellbeing.*
- *Emphasise that, whilst there may be barriers, the sooner someone seeks support the more likely they are to be able to reduce the harms and problems they experience as a result of substance use.*

 **Support:** Ask students to focus on the examples of Eden and Izaak as they discuss their answers.


Seeking support (Slide 18, 10 mins)

Explain that if a person does choose to seek help for concerns relating to alcohol, tobacco, vaping, or other drug use, there are a range of support options available. In pairs, ask students to read **Resource 3: Sources of support**, before returning to the scenarios from **Resource 2: Identifying influences**. Ask them to note down who each character could turn to for support, if they made the decision to do so, and why they think these options would be most suitable.

Ask volunteers to share their ideas. As students feedback, ask them to add any ideas to their own work that they had not identified.

Draw out the key learning:

- *Tim might be worried about his reputation at work being damaged, so he might talk to his uncle for support about what he could do in future. He could say, for example, that he made a mistake, but he would like help to make choices that show he is responsible and reliable. He might use humour to diffuse the situation with his colleagues, admitting that he said something he shouldn't have, but asking for it not to be repeated anymore. However, if he is concerned about his relationships with colleagues going forward, or his future at work, he might seek help and advice by finding local or national support services from the FRANK website.*
- *Eden might talk to her friends about her concerns and ask for their support. If she is worried about how her friends will respond, she might talk to trusted adults such as a parent, a teacher, or her GP. If she would prefer to use a support service, she could contact services such as 'Drinkline', or 'FRANK' who can offer support or direct her to local support services. These might give her advice about how to make independent choices and resist external influences related to drinking, as well as how to navigate difficult conversations with her friends.*
- *Izaak might be worried about getting in trouble if he is found in possession of drugs which claim to enhance performance, but he can talk to trusted adults such as a parent or support staff at university, including his tutor or a university counsellor, or a GP. They might help him to differentiate between external and internal influences on his behaviour, and to build strategies to resist influences that encourage him to make riskier choices. For example, Izaak could be supported to create new routines and healthier habits that mean he can reduce the stress on his body from late nights, while having more energy for his studies and sports without using harmful substances. If he would prefer to use a support service, he could contact services such as 'We are with you' or 'Turning point', or a local support service.*

 **Challenge:** Ask students to write the beginning of a short script that the characters could follow, demonstrating what they could say to ask for help and support from a known and trusted adult, or a support service.

Reflection and endpoint assessment

Reflection and endpoint assessment (Slides 19-20, 7 mins)

Remind students of the learning outcomes for the lesson, and ask them to revisit the baseline assessment activity, making any changes and adding any new learning to their responses in a different coloured pen. Then, ask them to write a short text in response to Kam, using the prompts on slide 19.

This is an opportunity for you to gather evidence of students' progress over the lesson and to inform your planning for subsequent learning.

Ask students to reflect privately on their learning, thinking about one key takeaway from this lesson which might be helpful to them in the future. As this is a personal reflection activity, they do not need to share their thoughts with others.

Signposting support

Signposting support (Slide 21, 3 mins)

Answer any questions from the question box that are appropriate to answer in front of the class. If students have written their names, keep the answers anonymous.

Remind students how they can access further advice, guidance and support related to substance use, including:

- Speak to staff in school such as their form tutor, head of year, school nurse, or a member of the safeguarding team
- Speak to another trusted adult such as a parent/carer, or family member, or visit their GP
- Visit Childline, which can be contacted by young people under 19, via www.childline.org.uk; or phone on 0800 1111
- Visit their GP or www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/nhs-stop-smoking-services-help-you-quit/ for help quitting smoking
- Visit FRANK at www.talktofrank.com/get-help/find-support-near-you to find local support services

Extension activity

Top tips (Slide 22)

Ask students to create a mock-up of a social media post with three top tips for young people to follow if they have concerns about themselves or someone else relating to alcohol, tobacco, vaping or other drug use.