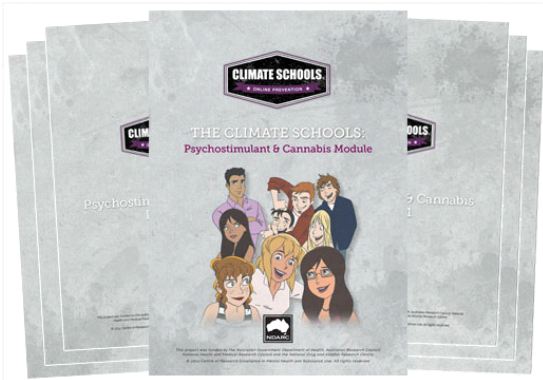




# Drugs and Alcohol Information

Get informed, stay smart, stay safe

## Influences and Reasons for Drug Use: Class Activity



### Evidence ratings: ★

This resource has undergone expert review. See our [Help/Q&A section](#) for more details.

**Year:** Year 9–10

**Targeted Drugs:** **Drugs (General)**

**Tags:**

**Time Allocated:** 1 lesson

**Links to National Curriculum:**

**ACPPS092 (Yr 9–10), ACPPS095 (Yr 9–10), ACPPS098 (Yr 9–10)**

**Origin:** Australian

**Cost:**

Free

### Attachments

📄 [Worksheet: Reasons Teenagers Do and Don't Use Drugs](#)

## Developers

**Climate Schools** was developed by researchers formerly based at the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC), School of Psychiatry, and the NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in Mental Health and Substance Use at UNSW Sydney, and currently based at the Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use at the University of Sydney, Australia. See [Climate Schools](#).

## Format

Small group work, followed by class discussion.

## Preparation

- Print attached class worksheet **Reasons teenagers do or don't use drugs** for each group.

## Activity

The aim is to encourage students to consider some of the reasons why young people use drugs and some of the alternatives to drug use. A second aim is to reinforce the low prevalence of cannabis use in 12-17 year olds.

Students complete the worksheet in groups of 4-5 students. It is important that students are divided into groups with other students who are not part of their usual friendship group.

This worksheet examines the reasons why some teenagers choose to use drugs and the reasons why some choose not to use drugs. It also asks students to develop a list of drug free activities which may alternatively help to satisfy some of the reasons young people choose to use drugs. For example, if they have listed 'thrill seeking', an alternative activity may be 'abseiling'. The final questions on the sheet aim to reinforce the low prevalence of cannabis use among 12-17 years.

Once students have completed the worksheet, facilitate a class discussion in which students share their responses and discuss alternatives to drug use.

## Background Information

### Some of the reasons why some teenagers use drugs:

- To try something new
- To experiment
- To have fun
- To escape from bad feelings
- To fit in with their friends
- To relax
- To experience a 'high'.

### Some of the reasons why some teenagers do not use drugs include:

- It is illegal
- Some people do not like the feeling it produces
- Concern about the negative effects of drugs
- To avoid the potential for addiction
- Financial reasons
- Health reasons
- Religious reasons.

**Many drug-free activities exist which can satisfy the same motive/s that may exist for drug use. A number of examples are listed below.**

**To escape from bad feelings:**

- Talk to a friend
- Listen to music
- Talk to the school counsellor
- Call the kids helpline
- Talk to your parents or a relative
- Exercise
- Do something you enjoy and haven't done in a while
- Plan something you would like to do on the weekend.

**For social concerns such as fitting in:**

- Plan and have a party
- Suggest going to the movies
- Do something you enjoy with your friends, anything from shopping to sport or bush walking
- Go somewhere interesting together with friends.

**For relaxation:**

- Listen to music
- Talk with friends or family
- Do some exercise
- See a movie
- Read a good book
- Practice slow breathing or meditation.

**To experiment:**

**Begin something new you have been curious about, such as:**

- Adventure sport (e.g., abseiling, white water rafting)
- Belly dancing
- Hiking
- Crafting jewellery
- Climbing
- Cycling.

**What percentage of 12–17 year-olds have ever tried cannabis?**

According to the 2017 Australian Secondary school students' survey, 17% of 12–17 year-olds have every tried cannabis. Adolescents often decide to try a drug because they believe that the majority of other teenagers are also using a drug and want to fit in with their peer group. For this reason, it is very important to stress that 83% of young people have not used cannabis.

**Benefits**

- Students gain an understanding of some reasons that teenagers use cannabis, and consider alternative options.

**Evidence Base**

Secondary teachers reviewed this and other activities from the Climate Schools: Psychostimulant & Cannabis Module, with 80% rating these activities as good or very good. This particular activity was among the most popular activities selected for implementation by teachers.

The benefits of implementing individual activities from the Climate schools has not been examined. The benefits of implementing the entire 6 session Climate schools program has been supported by multiple research studies, see **Climate Schools: Psychostimulant & Cannabis Module**.

Page last reviewed: 8 May 2019.