Positive Choices
Drug and Alcohol Information
Get informed, stay smart, stay safe

Quick activity

Rate the Risks: 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: Alcohol, Cannabis

Tags:

Time Allocated: 1 lesson

Links to National Curriculum:
ACPPS091 (Yr 9–10), ACPPS095 (Yr 9–10)

Origin: Australian

Cost:
Free

Attachments

Rate the risks Rate the risks posters

Developers

Previously known as Climate Schools, **OurFutures** was developed by researchers based at the Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use at the University of Sydney, Australia. See the OurFutures website for more information.

Format

Class activity.

Preparation

- Print off one copy of the scenarios for yourself "Rate the risks".
- Print and display "Rate the risks posters" around the classroom.

Activity

The aim of this activity is to encourage students to accurately assess risk by considering all types of consequences in a given situation. Three corners of the room are designated to a level of risk – low risk, medium risk and high risk. The teacher needs to stick the label for the appropriate level of risk in each corner of the classroom.

Try to use this activity to:

- Demonstrate that people see the level of risk differently from one another.
- Assist the students to think more broadly about the types of risks that may be associated with the activity.

PART A
Step 1: Teacher reads out the first scenario from the attached 'scenario sheet' to the students.

Step 2: Students are asked to congregate in the corner of the room which they see as matching the level of risk associated with the scenario. That is, is it a low, medium or high risk activity?

Step 3: Once students are in their chosen corner of the room, the teacher goes around the class asking students to suggest why they have chosen that level of risk rather than another level. Get feedback from the students in the other corners as to why they agree or disagree with the other student's assessment of risk.

Step 4: Ask the students to try to think more broadly about the types of risks that may be associated with the scenario. This can be done by putting the following list of headings on the board and asking students to brainstorm together about what consequences may occur in each category in relation to the scenario.

Step 5: On completion of the brainstorming session, instruct students to move to a different corner if they have revised their assessment of the level of risk, based on the discussion and previous activity. As students move, reinforce that sometimes we are not fully aware of the consequences associated with an activity and for this reason, it is really useful to consider the activity carefully and obtain as much information as possible in order to make an informed decision.

Below is an example of potential consequences for scenario 2.

Scenario 2: A friend asks you if you can get them some cannabis. You know where to get some and think about adding your own costs to the sale.

Category	**Short-term consequences**	**Long-term consequences**
Physical Health	Meeting with dealer could result in physical danger.	
Mental Health	Stress.	Depression, guilt.
Family	If you get caught, parents likely to be disappointed and embarrassed.	Family members may lose trust in you.
Close friends	May be upset that you are trying to profit from them.	Loss of friendship.
Community	Health costs associated with cannabis use.	
Educational Occupational	If you get caught may have to attend criminal proceedings, which would be disruptive to school communities.	If you get a criminal record, you will be limited in employment. You are unable to do certain jobs with a criminal record.
Hobbies and interests	Could get caught by police and charged.	Criminal record could limit future travel opportunities. Can't travel to certain countries with a criminal record.

PART B

Repeat Steps 1 to 5 for four more of the scenarios provided. Alternatively, you can ask students to come up with difficult situations they have heard that other people may have encountered. Remind students that if they wish to suggest a scenario, it is important that they talk in third person and that they do not implicate themselves in the scenario. This is because in many schools, if students disclose illicit drug use, it must be reported.

PART C

To conclude this activity, it is useful to have a discussion with the students about what categories of risk they were least likely to consider. Contrast this with the categories of risk they believe are very obvious. Use this final discussion to reinforce that:

- Different people may assess the level of risk differently.
- It is sometimes difficult to be aware of all of the types of risks associated with an activity.
- Some people will continue to do an activity even if it is high risk and potentially has serious negative consequences. That is, we all have a different threshold of risk that we are prepared to entertain.
- Despite some activities being associated with high levels of risk, some people don't take it very seriously as they believe that 'it will never happen to them'.
- If people decide to participate in any activity, it can be useful to think of the consequences and ways in which they could reduce the level of risk.
- An important step in reducing risk is being aware of the actual risks involved.
- Any other points pertinent to your student group.

Benefits

- Students practice critical assessment of risk across a range of scenarios.

Evidence Base

Secondary teachers reviewed this and other activities from the OurFutures: 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 OurFutures has not been examined. The benefits of implementing the entire 6 session OurFutures program has been supported by multiple research studies, see OurFutures: Cannabis & Psychostimulant Module.

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