

Substance Use Education

Stage: Senior	Lesson: Cannabis, What's the Harm?
Resources Required for Lesson: A4 card, pens, flipchart paper	
Main Activities: Begin by asking the young people what might be some of the risks of using cannabis. Ask them to mind map their thoughts, in small groups. Are there any potential benefits of cannabis use? Add to mind map. Next, ask young people to categorise the following scenarios according to risk on a continuum of 'High Risk' to 'No Risk'. These could be placed on the wall, floor, or young people could hold card with the names and scenarios written on them. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rob has been feeling very low for months. He has started to smoke cannabis daily. 2. Linda has never smoked cannabis before; she's at a party and is passed a joint. 3. Angus has been feeling really anxious and nervous. He starts smoking skunk (a strong form of cannabis). 4. John has smoked cannabis for years. He hasn't worked since leaving school, so to get money he has started to sell cannabis. 5. Peter has been smoking cannabis all evening, and feels really stoned. He picks up his car keys to go to drive home. 6. Helen eats three hash brownies. 7. Carol is on a night out; she's had six vodka and cokes. Afterwards, she starts smoking cannabis. 8. Jane has been dancing all night at a rave. She's had some ecstasy. After the rave she smokes some cannabis. 9. Gillian has had chest infections recently. She smokes cannabis regularly. 10. Dan and Jo have been together for a while. They're home alone and get stoned. They don't have any condoms. To prompt discussion, process these questions: What helped to make this decision? What harm could come from the situation? How likely is it that harm will happen in this situation? What skills do the young people need to make informed decisions? Are there any other scenarios the young people would like to add? Discuss what makes some cannabis-related situations more risky than others, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strength / potency / components of cannabis being used (and how do you know what you've got?) • using cannabis with other drugs, including alcohol and prescription medication • the amount taken, in what way (method), and how often • age, gender, physical and mental health status and other variables • previous experience • where people are and what they are doing at the time 	