

Substance Use Education

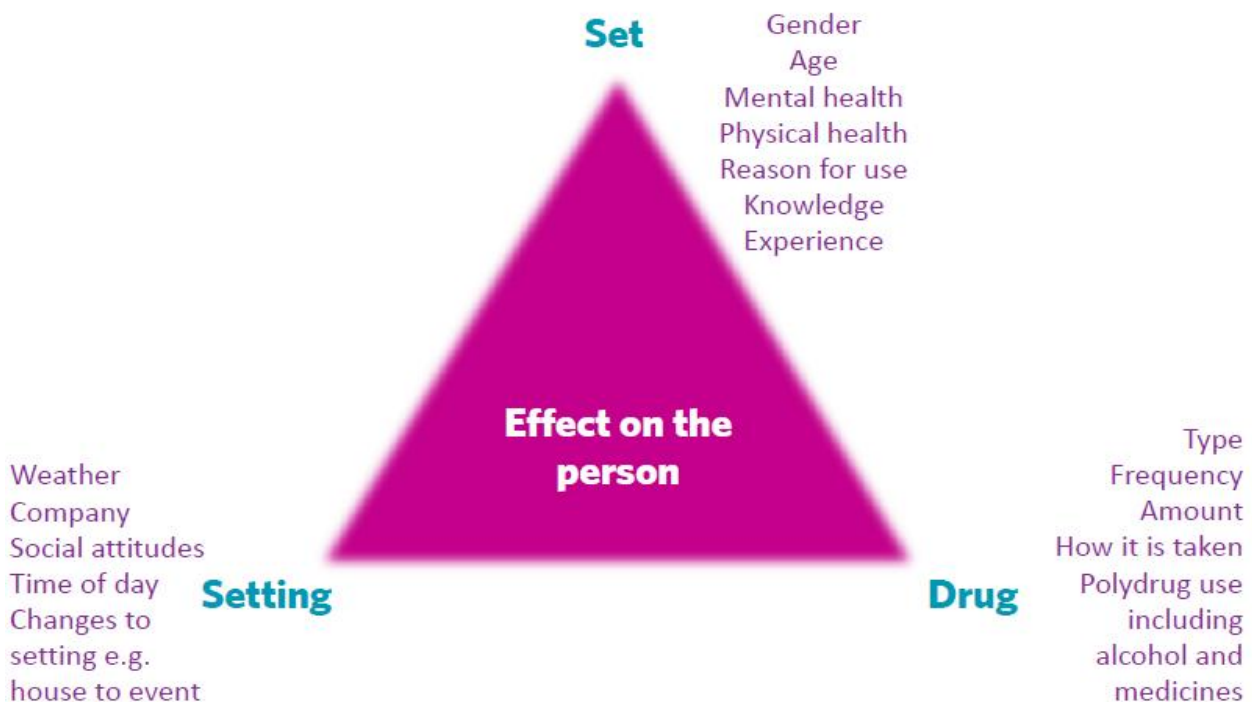
Stage: Senior	Lesson: Drug, Set and Setting
Resources Required for Lesson: Flip chart paper, post-it notes. Projector to show supporting slide	
Main Activities: Begin by asking the young people what might affect experiences of substance use. Gather responses on flip chart paper or post-it notes. Discuss the following; There are several factors which have a bearing on the way drugs are used and experienced. People often request information on the effect taking a particular drug will have on a person's behaviour. Whilst many of the basic physiological effects of drug use can be predicted, there are numerous possible variables, which can affect the experience. These are categorised into 'Drug, set and setting' (Zinberg, 1984). Use the supporting slide to discuss this with the young people. Drug The effect of the drug itself. It's type: stimulant, a depressant or a hallucinogen. The dose used. For example people may use a depressant drug such as alcohol in quantities that overcome shyness or inhibition – allowing them to become more sociable and outgoing. In other situations the depressant effects of alcohol can be used for the short-term lessening of pain. As well as the type of drug and the dose, another significant factor is the route of administration, whether it has been swallowed, snorted, smoked or injected. Set This refers to how a person thinks and feels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy or sad? • Relaxed or anxious? • Expecting a particular effect from the drug? • Counteracting the experience of withdrawal? All these factors are very likely to influence the subjective experience of drug use. For some drugs, particularly hallucinogenic, a person's emotional state prior to taking it can be critical to the nature of their subsequent experience. For example a person who is tired, sad and anxious is extremely unlikely to enjoy their experience of LSD.	

Setting

There are several factors involved in the setting in which a drug is taken which can influence how it's effects are perceived, including:

- Where is the drug taken? – e.g. alcohol use at a party vs. alcohol use alone
- Who is the drug taken with? – e.g. smoking cannabis with friends vs. smoking cannabis with strangers. Drinking with the friends or with family
- What is the prevailing atmosphere? – e.g. Friendly and welcoming vs. 'edgy' and hostile

Considerations



Do the young people have any experiences of this concept that they're willing to share? Have they ever seen someone be happy after having alcohol, but sad another time they'd had alcohol? Have a whole group discussion.

End with a random round of 'one thing I learned was...'