

## Substance Use Education

**Stage:** Senior

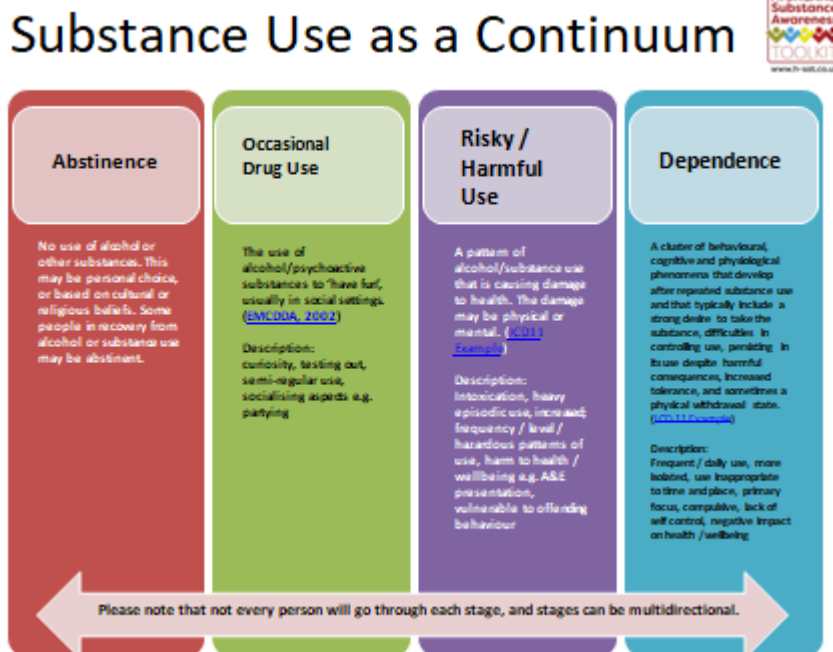
**Lesson:** Substance Use Continuum

### Resources Required for Lesson:

Projector to show supporting slide

### Main Activities:

Display Substance Use as a Continuum slide and talk through the different levels. Highlight the information within the arrow.



Ask the young people to discuss the following points:

- What types of drugs do you think a person at each stage might use?
- At each stage, how might the person behave; what might their life be like?
- How would they feel? What about their self esteem?
  - Could their mental health be affected, i.e. depression, paranoia,
  - Could their relationships be affected?
- What skills would they need to reduce any potential harm?
  - Assertiveness, ability to make choices and decisions for themselves
  - Ability to confidently ask for appropriate support or advice

Know where to / how to ask for that support

- What would they need to know?
  - Harm reduction, substance information, where to go for help
- What support would they need?
- Family/friends, GP, counselling, checkout the HADP service directory and the Prevention and Intervention Model on the H-SAT, Know the Score, Talk to Frank. Who / what else?

Next, read out following case studies and get pupils to discuss where they think the person would be on the continuum.

1. Rory has been feeling very anxious. Before leaving home he has two cannabis joints to try to feel calmer before the day starts. [Risky / Harmful – impact on mental health]
2. Sarah's friends have fallen out with her. She had been drinking heavily, and feels she needs to have more to get the same effect as before. Sarah has started drinking on most days, otherwise she feels shaky, nauseous and anxious. [Dependence]
3. Andy lives in the country and has been drinking vodka on some school nights. He's missed the school bus a few times because of how he feels the next morning. [Risky / Harmful – impacts school]
4. Janet is in the early stages of the first pregnancy. She's stopped smoking. When her friends get together they have a few glasses of wine. [Risky / Harmful – could result in Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) in baby]
5. Lizzie loves going out to socialise but has never liked the taste or effect of alcohol and now doesn't drink at all. [Abstinence]
6. Peter is at a party, he's been drinking alcohol and has taken some cocaine. [Occasional]
7. Karen has a small group of friends, and they drink alcohol and have experimented with NPS. [Occasional]
8. Tom had been using heroin a few times a week. Recently, he has been using it every day. He feels shaky and flu-like when he hasn't had any for a while. [Dependence]
9. Joanna used to be dependent on alcohol and prescription pain medication. After cutting down with support, she no longer drinks alcohol or uses the pain medication. [Abstinence]

In small groups, get the young people to create posters or leaflets about staying safe when drinking alcohol or using drugs. What could reduce the risk of harms? Who could help? What practical tips and advice could help protect the young people in the scenarios?

Reputable sites such as Know the Score, Talk to Frank, Crew 2000, and others via the H-SAT can help to inform this activity.

Ask young people to present their resources to the rest of the group.