

Substance Use Education

Stage: Senior	Lesson: Substances and the Media
<p>Resources Required for Lesson: Flipchart paper and pens, newspaper / magazine articles or headlines, social media posts of articles, news reports etc (gather over week or so before lesson). Language Guide.</p> <p>Main Activities: Divide young people into small groups and ask each group to draw or describe one of the following: Someone who - smokes tobacco / drinks alcohol / smokes cannabis / uses cocaine / uses heroin. It's fine to repeat these options as different groups come up with different responses.</p> <p>Ask the groups to share their images or descriptions to the whole group. What informed their pictures / descriptions? How did they know what to draw / write? What helped them decide how to portray this person? Do all people who use that substance look the same? Have they stereotyped these people? What impact might that have?</p> <p>Next, use a range of media sources to discuss how tobacco, alcohol and drug use is presented. This could be done in small groups or in plenary. Consider the language used in reference to people using substances. What is the implication of this? Do differences exist in reporting of different substances? Are there gender differences in reporting? Do the examples reflect the true situation? Are these sources of information trustworthy? Do they have another agenda?</p> <p>Ask the young people to discuss how stereotypes can affect our attitudes to substance use, and people who use substances. How does the media inform their attitudes and beliefs towards people who use substances?</p> <p>Are there any words within articles they would swap for other words? Use the Language Guide to re-write the article using non-stigmatising language, that is 'person first'.</p> <p>If it hasn't already come up, highlight that stigmatisation of people who use substances and who require help and support, is a barrier to them accessing that help.</p> <p>Close with a round of: "One thing I have learnt from this session is ..."</p>	