

Grade 4 Drug Education

Lesson Plan 2: Non-Medical Drug Use

Health Curriculum Outcomes

Drug Education

1. Identify some reasons why people use drugs for non-medicinal purposes.
2. Recognize that nicotine and caffeine are drugs.
3. Identify the reasons why people do or do not smoke.
4. Discuss some of the physiological effects of smoking.
5. Describe the short term and long term effects of smoking.
6. Identify a number of activities to do instead of smoking.
7. Outline the effects of environmental tobacco smoke (ETS).
8. Suggest ways to protect oneself from environmental tobacco smoke (ETS).

Mental Health

1. Identify recreational activities: hobbies, physical activity or creative pursuits

Relationships

1. Realize that one's decisions may affect other people.
2. Outline the steps to follow in decision making.

[Link](#) to Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) Curriculum Outcomes

This document contains a fully developed lesson plan that is aligned to the outcomes listed above, classroom activities, answer keys, and background information to help teachers support delivery of material.

Classroom Activities and Suggested Timing:

- a. Ground Rules (5-10 minutes)
- b. Non-Medical Drug (45-60min)
 - i. Activity 1: Jamboard: Medical vs Non-Medical Drugs (10-15 minutes)
 - ii. Activity 2: Curious About Cigarettes (20-25 minutes)
 - iii. Activity 3: Vaping (20-25 minutes)
- c. Activity 4: Exit Card: Healthy Activities (10-15 minutes)

Background Information

Definition of 'Drugs'

Drugs are substances or chemicals that affect the way our bodies and mind work and carry out our necessary processes. Drugs can be used to help our bodies work properly. Drugs can also be used in unsafe ways and can have negative effects on the way our body develops and functions. Drugs may have various purposes. Some of these drugs may be used as a part of Indigenous culture for ceremonial use. For example, tobacco is considered to have spiritual and healing benefits.

Examples of drugs include:

- Alcohol
- Caffeine (e.g., energy drinks, coffee, tea, soft drinks)
- Cannabis or Marijuana
- Hallucinogens (e.g., LSD, Mushrooms)
- Medications (e.g., puffers, epi-pens, fever medications, anti-nausea medications, anti-anxiety medications)
- Nicotine (e.g., tobacco, cigarettes, nicotine vapes)
- Opioids (e.g., codeine, morphine, fentanyl, heroin)
- Over-the-counter medications (e.g., cough syrup, pain medications)
- Stimulants (e.g., nicotine, amphetamines [e.g., Adderall, crystal meth], methylphenidate [e.g., Ritalin], cocaine)
- Vaccinations (e.g., flu, COVID-19, tetanus)



Our [Substance Snapshots](#) aim to provide educators with information about the various drugs that are incorporated throughout the activities and discussions in the lesson plans. Each snapshot summarizes how it's used, the different effects, when to seek emergency help, and how to stay safe. These documents are intended to support educators in their delivery of drug education and are not for direct student use unless deemed developmentally appropriate.

Key Considerations

Incorporate the following concepts throughout the lesson plans, materials, and activities:



Use a Skills-Based Health Education (SBHE) Approach

SBHE is a learning approach that uses interactive learning methods. This approach is used throughout the lesson plans so students can learn skills that will promote and protect their health and well-being. Refer to our [SBHE infographic](#) for more information on SBHE and examples of interactive teaching methods and evaluation.



Incorporate the FACE Decision-Making Model

Throughout all lesson plans we use the FACE decision-making model to help guide discussions and activities. The questions associated with each step are intended for educator use to probe students during scenario-based activities. Refer to our [FACE infographics](#) for more information.



Consider Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Implement Trauma Informed Practices (TIPs)

ACEs are stressful or traumatic events that occur in youth. Students who experience ACE(s) have an increased susceptibility to try drugs and may have challenges in learning substance use education. Our [ACEs infographic](#) explains the traumatic events that can impact youth and how educators can support them. Incorporating early drug education that incorporates TIPs can serve as a protective factor. Strategies that educators can use to create a learning environment where every student feels safe is outlined in our [TIPs infographic](#).



Support Students Emotional Wellbeing

Discussion about substance use may provoke a range of feelings. Building a positive rapport is vital to effectively engage youth in conversations. Be respectful of students' comments, questions, and concerns surrounding drug use, regardless of your personal opinions. At the beginning of the lesson, acknowledge that strong feelings may arise and that it is ok to feel this way. If needed, encourage students to speak with the school's guidance counsellor or another trusted adult. Additional supports are located on our [DECYDE website](#).



Avoid the Use of Stigmatizing Language

Lead a dialogue that does not create a stigmatizing atmosphere in the classroom as it may discourage students from engaging in conversations or seeking help. Avoid stigmatizing language and use person-first language, such as "person who uses drugs". For more information about stigma and tips for educators, refer to our [infographic on Stigma](#).

Lesson 2: Non-Medical Drug Use

Decision-making related to non-medical drug use.

Associated Materials

- Activity 1: Jamboard: Medical vs Non-Medical Drugs
- Activity 2: Curious About Cigarettes
- Activity 3: Vaping
- Activity 4: Exit Card: Healthy Activities

This lesson plan is the second in a series of lesson plans, which include [Lesson 1: Safe Use of Medications](#) and [Lesson 3: What Influences Drug Use?](#)



a. Ground Rules (5-10 minutes)

Begin the lesson by establishing a list of ground rules together as a class. Allow students to contribute their own ideas for ground rules, while also ensuring that the following key rules are acknowledged:

- Encourage questions and discussion
- Respect each other's opinions
- Keep classroom discussions confidential
- Listen when others are speaking
- Use respectful language
- Avoid using individual names when sharing the experiences of others, instead, use "Someone I know..."
- Use de-stigmatizing language



b. Non-Medical Drugs (45-60 minutes)

During [Lesson 4.1: Safe Use of Medications](#), students were presented with scenarios about the key safety guidelines of using medications. Lesson 4.2 focuses on the idea that there are some drugs that are not used to *help* our bodies and minds work. Reiterate the idea that a drug includes any substance that *changes* the way our bodies and minds work. Emphasize that this means someone is using a drug for another reason other than to help the body or mind work as it should or as a part of a cultural ceremony. People may engage in non-medical drug use *purposefully* or *by accident*. It may be helpful to assess students' understanding by asking if they know of any drugs that are not used for medical reasons.

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Brainstorm a list as a class, or briefly overview drugs that they may have already seen or encountered in their home or community such as:

- Alcohol
- Cannabis
- Nicotine (cigarettes or vaping)
- Stimulants (e.g., caffeine, amphetamines, methylphenidate, cocaine)



Teachers may refer to [Alcohol](#), [Cannabis](#), [Inhaled Nicotine](#), and [Stimulants](#) to help inform the discussion.
Note: Not for direct student use unless deemed developmentally appropriate.

Decision-Making Around Using Drugs for Non-Medical Reasons

You may discuss how these drugs make people feel and what changes they make to our minds and our bodies. Briefly talk about making decisions when using these drugs as a young person. It may be helpful to provide context suited to your class's likes/dislikes, cultural or religious backgrounds, or life experiences.

Key points:

- Your thinking can be affected by drugs, causing you to make decisions you wouldn't usually make. This may place risk on your safety or well-being.
- You may be asked to try a drug from someone you know or someone you don't know. The decisions you make can affect future relationships with those people and others (such as guardians, teachers, and other students).
- An overdose or poisoning can happen if you take too much of a drug than your body can handle. This can be dangerous for your health and may require immediate medical help. It is important to be aware of this, but it is unlikely to occur if you follow directions from a healthcare professional or trusted adult.
- Children may be exposed to drugs for religious or cultural reasons. This is ok when following the traditions and under the guidance of a trusted adult. For example, wine used for First Holy Communion, tobacco used for Indigenous practices.



Activity 1: Medical vs Non-Medical Drugs

Provide students with the [Jamboard: Medical vs Non-Medical Drugs](#). Students should categorize drugs into their respective category. Complete this activity as a class. You may need to review some of the items that are listed on the Jamboard.

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Activity 2: Curious about Cigarettes

Present the following scenario to students:

After a family gathering at your house, you notice that one of the adults left a pack of cigarettes on the kitchen counter. You're curious and want to take a cigarette from the pack and smoke it with your friends. What do you do? Use the [FACE Decision-Making Model](#) to help you make the safest decision.



Teachers may refer to [Inhaled Nicotine](#) to help inform the discussion.
Note: Not for direct student use unless deemed developmentally appropriate.

Provide students with the Jamboard : [Lesson 4-2: Curious about Cigarettes](#). Discuss the scenario in the Jamboard with the class and give time for students to respond to questions independently.

Alternatively, you may use this google forms for students to answer the questions independently or as a group.



Possible answers for Activity 2: Curious about Cigarettes

Feel:

1. How would I feel in this situation?
 - Curious
 - Nervous
 - Excited
 - Indifferent
 - Wanting to fit in or seem more mature
2. Why would I feel this way?
 - Curious to see how it feels
 - Nervous because I know that cigarettes are unhealthy and I am not old enough to smoke
 - Excited to experience something new
 - Indifferent because I have no interest in smoking cigarettes
 - I see people smoking and I want to feel included or like I'm mature

Assess:

1. What are some reasons people do or do not smoke cigarettes?
 - People smoke cigarettes because they are dependent on the nicotine found in them (nicotine is a drug)
 - People smoke cigarettes to fit in, cope, etc.
 - People do not smoke cigarettes because they are unhealthy
 - People do not smoke cigarettes because they can make you feel unwell

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2. What does smoking cigarettes do to the body?
 - Cigarettes contain nicotine which is highly addictive drug that can affect memory and concentration, especially for people under 25 years of age
 - Cigarettes contain substances that can harm your body and your lungs
3. What is the difference between vaping and cigarettes?
 - Both vaping products and cigarettes contain the highly addictive drug, nicotine
 - Cigarettes contain harmful chemicals that are not found in vaping products

Choose:

1. What is the safest choice I can make?
 - The safest choice is to not take the cigarette
 - Inform a trusted adult that someone left cigarettes on kitchen counter
2. How does my choice focus on what is important to me?
 - My health is important to me
 - My family trusting me is important to me

Evaluate:

1. What can I do instead of taking a cigarette?
 - I can talk to a trusted adult about my curiosity around cigarettes
 - I can do an activity that I enjoy and I know isn't unhealthy, such as playing outside, reading, crafts, singing
 - I can try vaping
2. What can I do if I tried the cigarette?
 - I can talk to a trusted adult about what I did
 - I can choose not to smoke again in the future
 - I can speak to a trusted adult if I don't feel well
3. What decision would I make in the future if I was in a similar situation?
 - Choose or not choose to use the cigarette
4. How does smoking cigarettes affect the people around us?
 - Second-hand smoke is unhealthy for people in the same environment as the person who is smoking the cigarette.
5. How can you protect yourself from second-hand smoke?
 - Not spend time around people who are actively smoking
 - Ask people not to smoke around me
 - Leave the area if someone is smoking and not giving you space

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Activity 3: Vaping

This scenario provides students with the opportunity to think critically about vaping and reasons why one chooses to or not to vape. In the scenario, Jack leaves his classroom to go to the washroom. As he enters, Jack notices a strong, fruity smell. He realizes that there are 3 other students vaping in the corner of the washroom. Jack begins to wonder what it might feel like to vape and if he might fit in better if he joined them. He just had an argument with one of his friends and was feeling angry and lonely. What would you do if you were in Jack's situation?

Share activity 3: [Vaping](#)



Possible answers for Activity 3: Vaping

Feel:

1. How would I feel in this situation?
 - Curious, pressured, left out
2. Why would I feel this way?
 - I don't know what it feels like to vape
 - I want to know if it will make me feel better
 - I want someone to hang out with
3. When have I felt this way before?
 - Answers may vary

Assess:

1. What are my choices?
 - I can say "hi" to the other students, use the washroom, and leave
 - I can ask the students questions about vaping
 - I can ask the students if I can try their vape
 - I can use a different washroom
2. How could this choice affect me and others?
 - Vaping could put my physical health at risk
 - Vaping in the bathroom could get me in trouble if a teacher walks in
 - The students could try to pressure me to use the vape if I ask questions

Choose:

1. What is the safest choice I can make?
 - Choose not to vape in the washroom
 - Seek information about vaping from a trusted adult if I am curious
 - Find other ways/places to hang out with my peers
 - Take to a trusted adult about my argument with my friends

Evaluate:

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1. How would my choice impact myself or others?
 - Answers may vary based on the response to the previous question
 - Choosing not to vape would protect my physical health
 - Choosing not to vape would prevent me from getting in trouble at school

2. Who would I talk to about the choice I made and how I was feeling?
 - Answers may vary
 - Parent/guardian, teacher, guidance counsellor, coach, aunt, uncle, older sibling, etc.

**c. Activity 4: Exit Card: Healthy Activities**

Provide students with the [exit card Healthy Activities](#) to conclude lesson. This activity provides students an opportunity to reflect on healthy activities that they enjoy doing alone, with others, outdoors, or indoors.

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Content Created by the Cannabis Health Evaluation and Research Partnership (CHERP) Team at Memorial University

DECYDE stands for Drug Education Centred on Youth Decision Empowerment. Through this project, our Cannabis Health Evaluation and Research Partnership (CHERP) team of pharmacists, educators, researchers, and students at Memorial University who wish to support substance use education for youth. We further collaborate with a diverse panel of youth in Newfoundland and Labrador who collaborate with the team on creating the DECYDE content.

The key goals of our project are to:

- Provide substance use education that emphasizes harm reduction principles.
- Provide youth with information and support the development of decision-making skills about substance use.
- Provide youth with the knowledge and skills to make safe and informed decisions surrounding substance use.
- Provide educators with accessible and easy-to-follow lesson plans that contain valid and reliable information.

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