TEACHER DISCUSSION GUIDE

Exploration: Pax and Zara: FACE Case Study

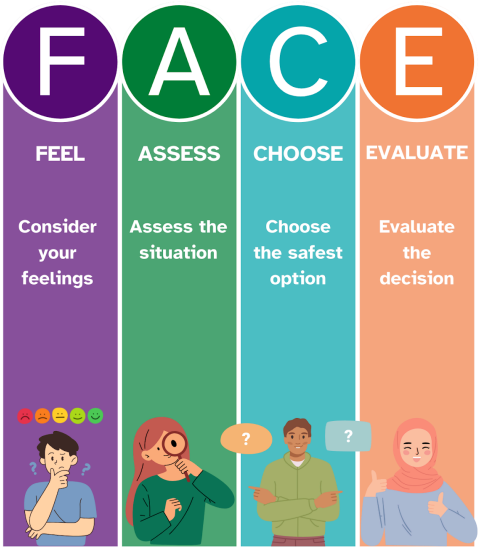

Table of Contents

CASE STUDIES	PAGE NUMBERS
Part 1	Pages 2-4
Part 2A	Pages 5-6
Part 2B	Pages 7-8
Part 2C	Pages 9-10

Copyright 2025 Cannabis Health Evaluation and Research Partnership. All Rights Reserved. September 2025.

TEACHER DISCUSSION GUIDE

Part 1: Pax and Zara: Different Choices, Different Outcomes

Pax, a grade 10 student, has an older sister, Zara, who is in grade 12 at the same school. Pax and Zara have usually been pretty close; however, Zara has made new friends recently and has been spending more time with them. Their parents have a lot of trust in them, so they haven't noticed that Zara has been coming home stoned on weeknights and partying almost every weekend. She's been missing a lot of school and her grades are slipping, and she told Pax that she doesn't know if she'll have good enough grades to get into the program at the local college she was planning to attend. Pax is worried about his sister and wants to tell his parents about his concerns, but he knows he may cause problems between himself and Zara if he does.

How should Pax FACE this situation?

FEEL

1. Describe how Pax is feeling in this situation?
• Worried about his sister. • Uncertain about what to do: he wants to help his sister, but he doesn't want to lose her trust. • Stressed that he knows all of this while his parents don't.

2. Why do you think he's feeling this way?
• He wants the best for his sister, but he doesn't want to lose her trust. • He probably feels stressed that he is withholding important information about his sister's health and wellness from his parents.

Copyright 2025 Cannabis Health Evaluation and Research Partnership. All Rights Reserved. September 2025.

TEACHER DISCUSSION GUIDE

ASSESS

3. Who could Pax talk to about this situation?
• He could choose to talk to Zara about it directly. • Ask friends for their advice. • Speak to a trusted adult like a teacher, guidance counselor, coach, another family member. • He could speak with his parents.

4. What are the pros and cons of telling his parents about the concerns he has about his sister?
• Pro: He can help his sister, he wouldn't be keeping secrets from his parents, Zara might be able to go to the college program she wants to if she can get her grades back up, he wouldn't be worried so much about her. • Cons: His sister might be mad, he may lose her trust, his parents might get mad at Zara for using drugs, they might get mad at him for keeping this secret for so long.

CHOOSE

5. What should Pax do in this situation? Why?

• Answers may vary.
• Potential answers:
  ○ Talk to Zara first in a calm, private moment. Pax might begin by sharing that he's worried about her well-being and future. This gives her the chance to talk openly and feel supported instead of judged.
  ○ Encourage Zara to speak to a trusted adult or seek support. Pax could suggest she talk to someone like a counselor or teacher and even offer to go with her.

Copyright 2025 Cannabis Health Evaluation and Research Partnership. All Rights Reserved. September 2025.

TEACHER DISCUSSION GUIDE

- If things get worse or Zara refuses to get help, Pax should tell a trusted adult. Pax's concern is valid, and if Zara's substance use is impacting her health, safety, or future, he might need to let a parent or another trusted adult know—even if it risks upsetting her.
- Remind himself that caring doesn't mean keeping secrets. Pax can still be a supportive brother while also making sure Zara is safe and getting help.

EVALUATE

6. Sometimes it can be challenging to have difficult conversations about a person's substance use. What are some ways you can respectfully have these conversations without hurting others?

- Avoid this conversation when they are actively using or high/drunk (you should be sober as well).
- Have this conversation privately, away from any interruptions or distractions.
- Be open and non-judgmental.
- Allow them to talk and listen to them actively.
- Don't blame them, act compassionately.
- If they are ready to stop using drugs or decrease use, help them to create a plan to achieve this goal.

Copyright 2025 Cannabis Health Evaluation and Research Partnership. All Rights Reserved. September 2025.

TEACHER DISCUSSION GUIDE

Part 2A: Pax and Zara: Different Choices, Different Outcomes

Pax spoke to Zara about his concerns, and she assured him that she was doing ok.

Even though he was really worried about Zara, Pax decided not to tell his parents how concerned he was about how substance use and partying were affecting her. One Saturday night, their mom received a phone call that Zara had been admitted to the hospital because she accidentally overdosed on opioids. Luckily, one of her friends carried a naloxone kit, so they used that on her while they waited for the ambulance. After a very scary night at the hospital, the staff told Zara's family that she would be ok. What should Pax do?

How should Pax FACE this situation?

FEEL

1. How do you think Pax felt when he heard his sister had overdosed?
• Upset, worried, anxious, scared.

ASSESS

2. Do you think Pax would have chosen not to tell his parents if he knew what would happen to his sister?
• Answers may vary. • Most likely, students will reply that Pax would've told his parents if he knew what would happen to Zara.

Copyright 2025 Cannabis Health Evaluation and Research Partnership. All Rights Reserved. September 2025.

TEACHER DISCUSSION GUIDE

CHOOSE

3. What could have been done to potentially avoid this situation?
• Pax could have told his parents. • Pax could have encouraged Zara to talk to their parents. • If he had told another adult, maybe they would've been able to talk to Zara about the dangers of taking opioids (or other drugs) that haven't been prescribed to you.

EVALUATE

4. What do you think Pax learned from this experience?
• Pax learned that even though he respected her wishes and did not tell her parents, Zara had a very close call and could have passed away from the overdose. This would most likely be a very upsetting realization for Pax and probably feels guilty for not sharing the information, however also relieved that his sister is ok.

Copyright 2025 Cannabis Health Evaluation and Research Partnership. All Rights Reserved. September 2025.

TEACHER DISCUSSION GUIDE

Part 2B: Pax and Zara: Different Choices, Different Outcomes

Pax was so worried about Zara that he decided to tell his parents that he was concerned about how his sister's partying and substance use was affecting her. Their parents approached Zara and talked to her, and she admitted that she was using cannabis daily and using different substances on the weekends at parties with her friends. She had missed a bunch of school and her grades were dropping. Their parents were concerned about her, so they decided to keep a closer watch on where she was going and who she was hanging out with. After her parents found out, Zara stopped smoking cannabis and only went to a couple parties the rest of the school year. Zara also improved her grades and will be attending college in September. Even though Pax thought he did a good thing, it's been a couple months since Zara has spent any time with him and they have a very strained relationship.

How should Pax FACE this situation?

FEEL

1. How do you think Pax feels in this situation?

- He probably feels relieved that his sister has stopped smoking cannabis daily, started partying less, and will be going to college in the Fall like she planned.
- However, he most likely feels a little upset that there is distance between them now.

ASSESS

2. Do you think Pax regrets this decision? Why or why not?

- Answers may vary.
- Possible responses include:

Copyright 2025 Cannabis Health Evaluation and Research Partnership. All Rights Reserved. September 2025.

TEACHER DISCUSSION GUIDE

- Pax may not regret saying something because Zara is doing better, but he also might regret it because now they have a strained relationship.

CHOOSE

3. Pax's decision to tell his parents about Zara affected their relationship. How can their relationship get back to where it used to be?

- Give her space.
- Pax can tell Zara that when she is ready he would like to speak with her and explain why he told their parents.

EVALUATE

4. Imagine it's one year later and both siblings are doing well, however, Zara still doesn't confide in Pax or spend any time with him. How do you think Pax feels in this situation? What would you do?

- Answers may vary.
- Possible responses include:
  - Upset that their sibling isn't close to them anymore, understanding that she needs time to trust him, mixed feelings because Zara is doing well but they aren't close anymore. In this situation, students may suggest reaching out to Zara and explaining their Pax's decision to her.

Copyright 2025 Cannabis Health Evaluation and Research Partnership. All Rights Reserved. September 2025.

TEACHER DISCUSSION GUIDE

Part 2C: Pax and Zara: Different Choices, Different Outcomes

Pax was so worried about Zara that he decided to tell his parents that he was concerned about how his sister's partying and substance use was affecting her. Their parents became furious and confronted Zara about what Pax told them. Zara admitted that she was using cannabis daily and using different substances on the weekends at parties with her friends. She had missed a bunch of school, and her grades were dropping. After Zara told her parents about what was happening, they forbade her to go out with her friends, threatened to take away her phone, and demanded to search her belongings for any drugs. Even though she was forbidden to spend time with her friends, Zara would sneak out of the house to meet up with them, and Pax still saw Snapchats and Instagram stories of her partying. Even though Pax thought he did a good thing, it's been a couple of months and Zara has become even more distant and will rarely speak with any member of their family.

How should Pax FACE this situation?

FEEL

1. How do you think Pax feels in this situation?

- Relieved that he let his parents know.
- Regret that he told them yet she is still distant and tells him less about her partying/who she hangs out with.

ASSESS

2. Do you think Pax regrets this decision? Why or why not?

Copyright 2025 Cannabis Health Evaluation and Research Partnership. All Rights Reserved. September 2025.

TEACHER DISCUSSION GUIDE

- Answers may vary
- Possible responses include:
    - Ho may regret this decision because of how both his parents and Zara reacted. However, he could feel relieved to finally let his parents know what his sister has been experiencing.

CHOOSE

3. Pax's decision to tell his parents about Zara affected their relationship. How can their relationship get back to where it used to be?

- Pax can try to approach Zara and let her know that he would like to explain his decision to her when she is ready to listen.

EVALUATE

4. Imagine it's one year later and Zara has moved out of their home and still won't speak to Pax. How would you feel in this situation? What would you do?

- Answers may vary
- Possible responses include:
    - If she is willing to speak with me, I would respectfully and calmly let her know my actions came from a place of concern.

Copyright 2025 Cannabis Health Evaluation and Research Partnership. All Rights Reserved. September 2025.