

TEACHER DISCUSSION GUIDE

Substance Snapshot Jigsaw Activity

CATEGORY 1: CANNABINOIDS (e.g., Cannabis)

Use the [Cannabinoids](#) substance snapshots to help guide your discussions and answer the questions below. You may also need to reference the [Substance Use Laws in Canada](#) infographic and other reliable online sources to answer the questions.

Questions:

1. What are the two main cannabinoids and what effects do they have?
 - a. THC - psychoactive, causes “high”
 - b. CBD - non-intoxicating, calming effect
2. What is the legal age of cannabis consumption in Canada?
 - a. The legal minimum age varies by province: 19 in NL, NB, NS, ON, etc., and 18 in AB and QC.
3. List 2 short-term effects of cannabis.
 - a. Answers may vary: Altered mood (euphoria or anxiety/paranoia)
 - b. Impaired coordination and slower reactions, making tasks like driving dangerous
 - c. Increased appetite
4. List 2 potential long-term effects of cannabis.
 - a. Regular use could lead to substance use disorder/addiction
 - b. Mental health concerns: Regular THC use may increase the risk of anxiety, depression, or psychosis, particularly in youth.
 - c. Breathing problems (if using inhaled)
5. What is one way to stay safer when using cannabis?
 - a. Avoiding use is the best way to stay safe
 - b. Avoid using it before work, school, or driving. May impair reaction time and concentration.
 - c. Start low and go slow (e.g., use lower concentrations of THC)
 - d. Avoid inhaled cannabis
 - e. Use legal supply
6. What are the driving under the influence laws for cannabis?

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- a. Zero tolerance under the age of 22 for any substance, including cannabis
 - b. 5 ng/1mL blood in 22+
7. List 2 signs of cannabis overdose.
- a. Severe anxiety or panic attacks, including paranoia
 - b. Nausea, vomiting, dizziness, anxiety, panic; this is sometimes called greening out
 - c. Rapid heart rate or chest pain
8. What should you do if someone overdoses on cannabis?
- a. Dial 911 for emergency help if the person is unresponsive or unconscious, has trouble breathing or chest pain, having a seizure or experiencing severe confusion or psychosis, or if you are unsure what else they may have taken (e.g., mixing cannabis with alcohol or other drugs).
 - b. Stay calm and provide reassurance. Help the person feel safe and comfortable.
 - c. Move to a quiet, low-stimulation environment. Reduce noise, light, and crowding.
 - d. Offer water and let them lie down; monitor for any breathing or mental health issues.
9. List one interesting fact about cannabinoids.
- a. Answers may vary

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CATEGORY 2: DEPRESSANTS (e.g., Alcohol, Benzodiazepines, Opioids)

Use the [Depressants](#) substance snapshots to help guide your discussions and answer the questions below. You may also need to reference the [Substance Use Laws in Canada](#) infographic and other reliable online sources to answer the questions.

Questions:

1. How do depressants affect the central nervous system?
 - a. Depressants slow down brain activity in the central nervous system
2. Name 3 examples of substances that are classified as depressants
 - Ex. alcohol, prescription sedatives, opioids, nicotine, benzodiazepines, sleeping pills
3. List 2 short-term effects of depressants.
 - a. slowed reaction time, impaired coordination, drowsiness, lowered inhibitions
 - b. Reduce or stop breathing (esp with opioids)
 - c. Memory loss (esp with benzodiazepines)
4. List 2 potential long-term effects of depressants.
 - a. Developing dependence or substance use disorder
 - b. Can cause damage to memory or organs like liver, heart or brain.
 - c. Withdrawal effects (e.g., seizures with alcohol withdrawal)
5. List 2 regulated depressants and 2 unregulated depressants
 - a. regulated: alcohol, prescription sedatives like benzodiazepines, nicotine
 - b. Unregulated: some opioids like heroin or fentanyl, date rape drugs
6. What is one way to stay safer if using depressants?
 - a. Avoiding use is the best way to stay safe
 - b. Never mix depressants (such as alcohol and opioids)
 - c. Plan ahead by arranging a ride or being with a buddy
 - d. Avoiding use is the best way to stay safe
 - e. Have naloxone available in case of overdose (for exposure to opioids)
 - f. Start low and go slow
7. List 2 signs of overdose to depressants.

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- a. Slowed or stopped breathing
 - b. Loss of consciousness
 - c. Difficulty walking or talking
 - d. Blue skin, lips, or nails
8. What should you do if someone overdoses on depressants?
- a. Call 911 immediately, especially if they are unconscious, breathing slowly, or unresponsive.
 - b. Put them in the recovery position on their side to prevent choking if they vomit.
 - c. Administer naloxone if suspect opioid overdose.
9. List one interesting fact about depressants.
- a. Answers may vary.

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CATEGORY 3: HALLUCINOGENS (e.g., LSD, Psilocybin, PCP, Ecstasy)

Use the [Hallucinogens](#) substance snapshots to help guide your discussions and answer the questions below. You may also need to reference the [Substance Use Laws in Canada](#) infographic and other reliable online sources to answer the questions.

Questions:

1. What are hallucinogens and how do they affect peoples' senses and perception?
 - a. Also called psychedelics, they cause changes in perception, mood, and thinking. They affect the brain and can cause people to see, hear, or feel things that aren't really there, or distort how they perceive time, space, and their own body. This is called a hallucination.
2. List two types of hallucinogens
 - a. LSD, Psilocybin (magic mushrooms), ketamine, DMT, ecstasy or MDMA, salvia, DM
3. List 2 short-term effects.
 - a. Altered senses, hallucinations, intense emotions
 - b. Can cause loss of reality, increasing risk of accidental injuries
 - c. Intense anxiety
 - d. Dehydration (esp. With ecstasy or MDMA)
4. What are some potential long-term mental health concerns associated with hallucinogen use?
 - a. Primarily psychological risks, including intense anxiety, paranoia, and flashbacks
5. What is one way to stay safer if using hallucinogens?
 - a. Avoiding use is the best way to stay safe
 - b. Use with a trusted, sober person present (sometimes called a trip sitter) in a safe, familiar environment to reduce the risk of panic, confusion, or injury.
 - c. Don't mix with other substances.
 - d. Know your risk factors, such as a family history of psychiatric illness.
 - e. Stay hydrated (esp with ecstasy or MDMA)
6. What are some signs of overdose or a "bad trip"?

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- a. Feeling a loss of identity, extreme paranoia, disturbing hallucinations, psychosis. Ketamine can cause slow heart rate, breathlessness, and seizures.
7. What should you do if someone overdoses on hallucinogens?
 - a. Stay with the person and keep them safe.
 - b. Provide calm, simple reassurance. Speak gently and avoid confrontation.
 - c. Call 911 if they are a danger to themselves or others, or if they experience seizures, extreme agitation, or lose consciousness.
 8. What risks are there regarding the quality and contents of unregulated hallucinogenic substances such as LSD.
 - a. LSD and other unregulated hallucinogenic substances may be laced or mixed with other substances which may cause bad trips, unpredictable results, or serious harm.
 9. List one interesting fact about hallucinogens.
 - a. Answers may vary.

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CATEGORY 4: STIMULANTS (e.g., Caffeine, Nicotine, Amphetamines, Cocaine)

Use the [Stimulants](#) substance snapshots to help guide your discussions and answer the questions below. You may also need to reference the [Substance Use Laws in Canada](#) infographic and other reliable online sources to answer the questions.

Questions:

1. How do stimulants generally affect the central nervous system?
 - a. Stimulants speed up processes in your body, like messages to the brain.
2. Describe 2 short-term physical effects of stimulant use on the body.
 - a. Raises blood pressure and heart rate
 - b. Can make you feel more alert, restless, or hyper.
3. What are some potential negative effects of stimulants on a person's mood and behavior?
 - a. In some cases, can make people feel paranoid and aggressive
 - b. High doses can over-excite brain and lead to anxiety and seizures
 - c. Difficulty sleeping
4. List 2 regulated stimulants and 2 unregulated stimulants.
 - a. Regulated:
 - i. Caffeine, prescription stimulants such as methylphenidate (if prescribed to the person), pseudoephedrine
 - b. Unregulated
 - i. Cocaine, amphetamines (e.g., crystal meth), unprescribed methylphenidate
5. What is one way to stay safer if using stimulants?
 - a. Avoiding use is the best way to stay safe
 - b. Choose oral over injecting, snorting or smoking
 - c. Plan for safety - arrange for a ride, bring condoms if sex is a possibility
 - d. Start low and go slow
 - e. Don't mix with other substances
6. List 2 signs of stimulant overdose.

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- a. Shortness of breath
 - b. Chest tightness
 - c. Confusion/psychosis/hallucinations
 - d. Uneven heart rate
7. What should you do if someone overdoses on stimulants?
- a. Call 911 right away, especially if there are chest pains, seizures, or overheating.
 - b. Help them cool down. Use a fan, remove extra clothing, and offer water (if conscious).
 - c. Reassure and monitor them. Keep them calm, seated or lying down, and watch for signs of worsening symptoms.
8. List one interesting fact about depressants.
- a. Answers may vary.