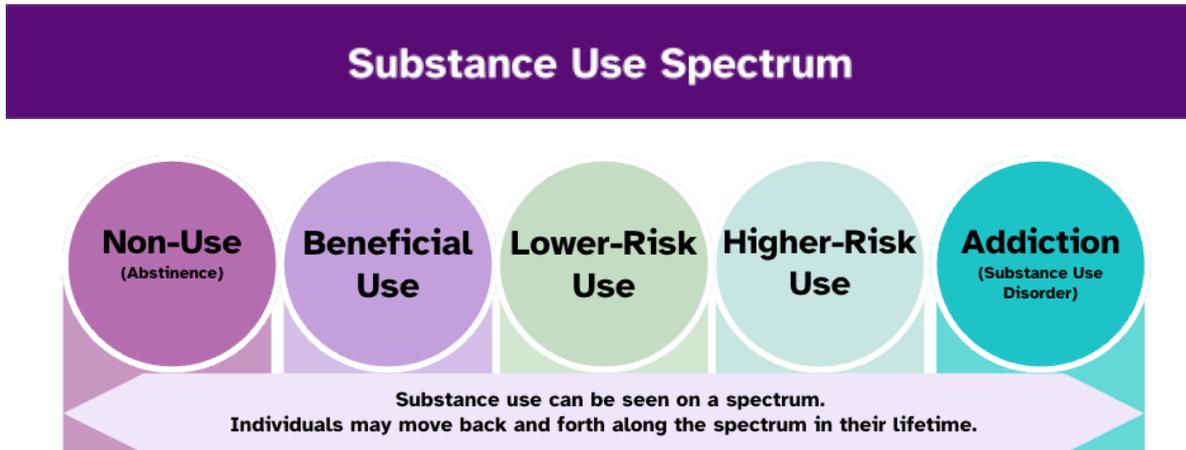


Student Name: _____



Student Instructions:

Using the [Substance Use Spectrum](#) infographic, read through each situation in the activity. For each one, decide where it belongs on the spectrum.

SITUATION	RISK LEVEL
<p>Jay finds it very difficult to get through full days during exams. They know they should be getting more sleep, but they are staying up late to study. They drink an energy drink at lunchtime to get them through the day. He knows this can't go on, but just needs to get through exam week.</p>	<p>Where do you think Jay is on the Substance Use Spectrum?</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Use <input type="checkbox"/> Beneficial Use <input type="checkbox"/> Lower-Risk Use <input type="checkbox"/> Higher-Risk Use <input type="checkbox"/> Addiction (Substance Use Disorder) </p>
<p>Julia was once pulled over and charged with a DUI (driving under the influence) for driving after consuming too much alcohol. She understands that consuming alcohol decreases her ability to make good decisions. She feels lucky that no one was hurt but her bad choice. Since her DUI, she has given up alcohol altogether.</p>	<p>Where do you think Julia is on the Substance Use Spectrum?</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Use <input type="checkbox"/> Beneficial Use <input type="checkbox"/> Lower-Risk Use <input type="checkbox"/> Higher-Risk Use <input type="checkbox"/> Addiction (Substance Use Disorder) </p>

Student Name: _____

<p>Peter and Jayden are excited! They've just graduated from high school and have arrived at an all-inclusive resort in Mexico. Neither of them has ever been there before. They plan to try all the fancy drinks and basically stay under the influence of alcohol for the entire week.</p>	<p>Where do you think Peter and Jayden are on the Substance Use Spectrum?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Use <input type="checkbox"/> Beneficial Use <input type="checkbox"/> Lower-Risk Use <input type="checkbox"/> Higher-Risk Use <input type="checkbox"/> Addiction (Substance Use Disorder)
<p>Nora is afraid of flying. She wants to attend her best friend's wedding, but the only way to get there is by airplane. She goes to see her doctor and is prescribed lorazepam (a benzodiazepine) for the trip. Nora uses the prescription before the flight and feels much more relaxed during the flight. She arrives safe and sound at the ceremony.</p>	<p>Where do you think Nora is on the Substance Use Spectrum?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Use <input type="checkbox"/> Beneficial Use <input type="checkbox"/> Lower-Risk Use <input type="checkbox"/> Higher-Risk Use <input type="checkbox"/> Addiction (Substance Use Disorder)
<p>Stacy started drinking alcohol at age 13, taking liquor from her parent's liquor cabinet on weekends. When she broke up with her first boyfriend in high school, she started drinking every day. She thinks it's okay if she only has a few on weekdays, but drinks alcohol and smokes weed every weekend until she passes out, and her friends have stopped inviting her to parties, so she "parties" alone.</p>	<p>Where do you think Stacy is on the Substance Use Spectrum?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Use <input type="checkbox"/> Beneficial Use <input type="checkbox"/> Lower-Risk Use <input type="checkbox"/> Higher-Risk Use <input type="checkbox"/> Addiction (Substance Use Disorder)

Student Name: _____

Substance Use Vocabulary: Crossword

A crossword puzzle grid with 19 numbered starting points for words. The grid consists of white squares for letters and empty spaces. The numbered squares are:

- 1: Down, 10 squares
- 2: Down, 10 squares
- 3: Down, 6 squares
- 4: Across, 6 squares
- 5: Down, 6 squares
- 6: Down, 6 squares
- 7: Down, 4 squares
- 8: Across, 4 squares
- 9: Across, 4 squares
- 10: Across, 10 squares
- 11: Across, 10 squares
- 12: Down, 6 squares
- 13: Across, 6 squares
- 14: Across, 6 squares
- 15: Across, 4 squares
- 16: Down, 4 squares
- 17: Across, 10 squares
- 18: Across, 14 squares
- 19: Down, 6 squares

Student Name: _____

ACROSS

- 4.** A condition where regular use of a substance leads to unpleasant effects when use is stopped.

- 9.** A lasting emotional response from experiencing a stressful, frightening, or distressing life event or series of events.

- 10.** The complete avoidance of substance use

- 11.** Factors that decrease the likelihood of substance use (2 words).

- 13.** Symptoms that occur when substance use is decreased or stopped once tolerance has developed. It can include physical or psychological effects.

- 14.** A condition where a person cannot stop engaging in a behaviour despite harmful consequences to their health and life.

- 15.** A set of negative attitudes and beliefs directed toward a person or group, which can contribute to exclusion and discrimination.

DOWN

- 1.** In the context of substance use, a strong desire to use a substance

- 2.** A continuum of substance use that includes non-use, beneficial use, lower-risk use, higher-risk use, and substance use disorder.

- 3.** A substance whose production, possession, and use is regulated by the government due to a high potential for addiction (2 words).

- 5.** Factors that increase the likelihood of youth substance use, particularly in the absence of protective factors.

- 6.** A set of strategies that aim to reduce the negative effects associated with substance use (2 words).

- 7.** A return to substance use after a period of abstinence or to a higher level of use after a period of reduced use.

- 8.** Patterns of substance use that can have negative health and social consequences (3 words).

Student Name: _____

17. An effect that occurs when two or more substances react with each other, leading to an unexpected adverse effect (2 words).

12. The need to take increasingly higher doses of a substance over time to obtain the same effect.

18. A pattern of substance use characterized by increased use and cravings, negative health outcomes, and increased tolerance or withdrawal (3 words).

16. The state of being unaffected by a psychoactive substance, and can range from being free from the effects of all substances to abstaining from a particular substance.

19. A life-threatening event caused by overconsumption of a substance or multiple substances.

WORD BANK		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Abstinence ● Addiction ● Controlled Substance ● Cravings ● Dependence ● Substance Use Spectrum ● Tolerance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Drug Interaction ● Harm Reduction ● Overdose ● Problematic Substance Use ● Trauma ● Withdrawal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Protective Factors ● Relapse ● Risk Factors ● Sobriety ● Stigma ● Substance Use Disorder

Student Name: _____

Substance Use Vocabulary: Word Scramble

USE THE CLUES TO HELP UNSCRAMBLE THE TERMS:

1. A condition where a person cannot stop engaging in a behaviour despite harmful consequences to their health and life.

TDONCAIID _ _ _ _ _

2. The complete avoidance of substance use.

EABSTNIENC _ _ _ _ _

3. In the context of substance use, a strong desire to use a substance.

SIANVCRG _ _ _ _ _

4. A substance whose production, possession, and use is regulated by the government due to a high potential for addiction.

NLLDOOTCER AECUNBSST _ _ _ _ _
_ _ _ _ _

5. A condition where regular use of a substance leads to unpleasant effects when use is stopped.

EEENPDNDEC _ _ _ _ _

Student Name: _____

6. An effect that occurs when two or more substances react with each other, leading to an unexpected adverse effect.

GRUD RNCTIAENOTI _ _ _ _ _

7. A set of strategies that aim to reduce the negative effects associated with substance use.

MAHR ENTRCIUOD _ _ _ _ _

8. A life-threatening event caused by overconsumption of a substance or multiple substances.

DOOEVESR _ _ _ _ _

9. Factors that increase the likelihood of youth substance use.

KRSI AOSTRCF _ _ _ _ _

10. Factors that decrease the likelihood of substance use.

TCVIPREETO OFSRTAC _ _ _ _ _

_ _ _ _ _

11. An ongoing process of change where an individual improves their physical, mental, and social well-being. Within the context of substance use disorders, this term can range from total abstinence from substance use, to reducing and moderating substance use, to minimizing harms.

RYOVERCE _ _ _ _ _

Student Name: _____

12. A safe lying position used in first aid to help an unconscious person maintain an open airway to reduce the risk of choking.

YEERCORV IOPTNOSI _ _ _ _ _

_ _ _ _ _

13. A return to substance use after a period of abstinence or to a higher level of use after a period of reduced use.

PELASER _ _ _ _ _

14. The state of being unaffected by a psychoactive substance. This can range from being free from the effects of all substances to abstaining from a particular substance.

YORTSIBE _ _ _ _ _

15. A set of negative attitudes and beliefs directed toward a person or group, which can contribute to exclusion and discrimination.

IGTASM _ _ _ _ _

16. A problematic pattern of substance use characterized by increased use and cravings, negative health outcomes, and increased tolerance or withdrawal.

TANUESSCB UES DROISED _ _ _ _ _

_ _ _ _ _

17. A continuum of substance use that includes non-use, beneficial use, lower-risk use, higher-risk use, and substance use disorder.

NSACUTESB SEU CESPURTM _ _ _ _ _

Student Name: _____

18. The need to take increasingly higher doses of a substance over time to obtain the same effect.

LECANERTE _ _ _ _ _

19. A lasting emotional response from experiencing a stressful, frightening, or distressing life event or series of events.

TMARUA _ _ _ _ _

20. Symptoms that occur when substance use is decreased or stopped and can include physical or psychological effects.

WAARHDTLIW _ _ _ _ _

Student Name: _____

Sharing and Reflection: Understanding the Substance Use Spectrum



Instructions: In this sharing and reflection activity, you will think about different situations in your life where you have observed or experienced different points on the **Substance Use Spectrum**. This could include non-use, beneficial use, lower-risk use, risky use, or substance use disorder.

Examples of substances you might reflect on include alcohol, nicotine (smoking or vaping), caffeine, cannabis, prescription medications, or other drugs. Consider the following 3 questions.

- 1) Think about times when you've seen or perceived "beneficial" use of a substance. What substance was involved? What were the circumstances?

- 2) Think about times when you've noticed lower-risk use. How was the substance being used in a way that lowers the risk of causing harm?

- 3) Think about times when you've noticed risky use or substance use disorder. What were the consequences or impacts?

Student Name: _____

Exploring Influences on Substance Use Decisions

Student Instructions:

1. Review the DECYDE infographics on [Factors Influencing Decision-Making](#) and [Protective and Risk Factors](#).
 - a. Influences include: Media, School & Community, Family, Peer Groups, Knowledge & Experiences, and Self-Concept.
 - b. Each influence can include risk factors (things that increase the chance of substance use) or protective factors (things that reduce risk and support healthy choices).
2. At each station, brainstorm examples of risk and protective factors. Be sure to consider examples at the individual, family, and community levels for each influence.
3. Once you have visited every station, return to your group's final station. Present to the class the top five risk factors and the top five protective factors from that station, making sure to highlight examples at the individual, family, and community levels.
4. After your group's presentation, answer the following **reflection questions**. Your teacher will let you know whether to complete them as a class discussion or in your group using the student worksheet.

Remember: Everyone has a mix of risk and protective factors. By building protective supports at the individual, family, and community levels, risks can be balanced and safer decisions can be made.

Student Name: _____

Exploration Part 1: Lived Experience Spotlight

Darcy's Story: A Parent's Perspective on Raine's Substance Use Journey

Student Instructions: Throughout these lessons, you'll hear real stories from people who have personal experience with substance use. These spotlights are told in their own words, giving you a genuine look into what substance use can be like and how it affects people's lives.

Read the story of Darcy, whose teenager, Raine, developed a Substance Use Disorder and answer the questions that follow as a class discussion.

Your teacher will lead the class discussion. As you take part, you're encouraged to do your own research, look at the [Protective and Risk Factors](#) infographic, and check out the [Substance Snapshots](#) on the substances involved in this story.

Working through this first story together will help you get ready for the other Lived Experience Spotlights in the lesson.

"I took every opportunity to talk to Raine about drugs and the devastating effects on their lives if they did it. Their father has Substance Use Disorder, and seeing what we were going through with him, I prayed it would deter them. Unfortunately, that wasn't the case.

I don't remember when it started, but I know they were around 17 years old, and I believe their peers may have given Raine alcohol and drugs. I didn't see any signs until much later.

I thought it was just marijuana and alcohol, but I learned later that it was cocaine and alcohol, and later in their addiction, it was pretty much anything they could get their hands on to give them that high.

I love my kids more than life and always wanted to make them happy, but my life was spiralling out of control, and my child's addiction took over my every thought. I couldn't concentrate on work, lost my relationship with my husband, my daughter, and pretty much anyone who would try to talk to me about what I needed to do. I wouldn't listen and didn't realize how much I was enabling Raine by giving them

Student Name: _____

Exploration Part 2: Lived Experience Spotlight

Lowen's Journey: Understanding the Realities of Substance Use

Student Instructions: Throughout these lessons, you'll hear real stories from people who have personal experience with substance use. These spotlights are told in their own words, giving you a genuine look into what substance use can be like and how it affects people's lives.

Read this spotlight on Lowen's journey and answer the questions that follow. You may choose to work individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

Feel free to use the [Protective and Risk Factors](#) infographic, and check out the [Substance Snapshots](#) on the substances involved in this spotlight.

"My first experience with substances was when I was in 8th grade. My friend, who was on substances at the time, brought a vape into school. They asked me if I wanted to try, I declined, but they kept asking, and eventually I gave in. I tried it and I didn't like it.

After school, this friend came home with me to hang out and brought their vape. I tried it again and again until I started having fun with it. This was not the end of my substance use. From then on, I started experimenting with alcohol and weed and eventually couldn't stop.

When I think about what may have influenced my use, it was in part because I was frustrated with my family life. At the time, my family was always arguing and my brother was already smoking weed, so I thought it couldn't be that bad, as he seemed to be doing well for himself. Later, I found out he was not.

When I first started to use everything seemed fine, but then I started to use more. After a while, I didn't want to do anything. Nothing I did before was interesting

Student Name: _____

anymore. All I did was stay in my room, sleep, and play games, isolating myself from friends and family.

When my mom found out about my drinking and substance use, she reached out to the mental health center where my brother was staying for help. They told my mom they had a sister location, 4 hours away, for substance use rehabilitation. I stayed there for 2 weeks in their withdrawal management program, which helped me stop using.

The person I feel the most comfortable asking questions or concerns to is my addiction counsellor. I was assigned to her after my stay in rehabilitation. If you don't have a counsellor, the next best place is to call 811. They always helped me when I needed it.

What I wish adults, or just people in general, would understand about substance use is that making someone feel ashamed about substance use doesn't help. It only makes things worse and makes it harder to reach out for help. A lot of people, like me, turned to substances because of other problems in their lives. Some people are looking for an escape.

Substance use fit into my life weirdly. It's different for everyone, I used it as an escape from reality. I wanted not to feel anything bad, but when I am sober, it feels like all the negative emotions I would have felt when I was under the influence are stacked on top of how I already feel. In the end, it only makes me feel way worse than I did before I used it. It's like having a friend who is fun to hang out with but is leading you down the wrong path to unhappiness."

Spotlight Questions:

1. At what age did they start using? How do you think starting this impacted their trajectory around substance use?

Student Name: _____

2. What factors might have put Lowen at greater risk of developing a substance use disorder?

3. What protective factors might have helped support Lowen?

4. How did developing a substance use disorder affect Lowen?

5. What are some potential long-term impacts of alcohol use disorder?

Student Name: _____

Sharing and Reflection: What Influences My Decisions?

Throughout this lesson, you have learned about:



- The Substance Use Spectrum
- The factors that influence decision-making
- Risk factors and protective factors

For this reflection activity, you will think about what influences your decision-making. Consider the following:

- The factors that influence your own decision-making.
- The protective factors that are present in your life.
- The ways these protective factors help guide you in making decisions, especially about substance use.

Be creative and thoughtful in showing how influences and protective factors shape your choices. Choose **one way** below to express yourself:

- Create an infographic
- Create a Venn diagram
- Write a short story or poem
- Create a presentation
- Design a pamphlet
- Make a comic strip

Student Name: _____

Pre-Activity: Fact-Fiction-Fix

Student Instructions: Read each statement. Decide if it is Fact or Fiction. If it's fiction, correct or 'fix' the statement to make it a true statement.

1. Dopamine only increases when people use drugs or alcohol.	<input type="checkbox"/> Fact <input type="checkbox"/> Fiction
Fix:	
2. The brain's dopamine levels stay the same no matter what kind of day you're having.	<input type="checkbox"/> Fact <input type="checkbox"/> Fiction
Fix:	
3. Alcohol and drugs can create much higher dopamine spikes than natural rewards.	<input type="checkbox"/> Fact <input type="checkbox"/> Fiction
Fix:	
4. Substance use can rewire the brain to prioritize drugs over other healthy activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Fact <input type="checkbox"/> Fiction
Fix:	
5. Once the brain is rewired, people can keep getting the same "high" with enough drug use.	<input type="checkbox"/> Fact <input type="checkbox"/> Fiction
Fix:	

Student Name: _____

6. Over time, the brain may reduce its natural dopamine production, making it harder to enjoy things.	<input type="checkbox"/> Fact <input type="checkbox"/> Fiction
Fix:	

7. People with substance use disorder may keep using drugs just to feel normal rather than to feel high.	<input type="checkbox"/> Fact <input type="checkbox"/> Fiction
Fix:	

8. Drug cravings are about the same intensity as cravings for food when hungry.	<input type="checkbox"/> Fact <input type="checkbox"/> Fiction
Fix:	

9. Recovery is not possible once the brain has been changed by substances.	<input type="checkbox"/> Fact <input type="checkbox"/> Fiction
Fix:	

10. Millions of people are living in recovery today.	<input type="checkbox"/> Fact <input type="checkbox"/> Fiction
Fix:	

11. Substance use disorder only impacts certain types of people.	<input type="checkbox"/> Fact <input type="checkbox"/> Fiction
Fix:	

Student Name: _____

12. Talking openly about substance use and recovery can help reduce stigma and support healing.	<input type="checkbox"/> Fact <input type="checkbox"/> Fiction
Fix:	

Student Name: _____

Exploration: Lived Experience Spotlight

Katie's Experience with Substance Use

Instructions: Throughout these lessons, you'll hear real stories from people who have personal experience with substance use. These spotlights are told in their own words, giving you a genuine look into what substance use can be like and how it affects people's lives.

Read the spotlight story below and answer the questions that follow.

"I did not become addicted. For me, I always had a curious nature for as far back as I can recall. During my teens some of my peers began to experiment with various substances. I suppose I looked at it as if I didn't want to go through life thinking I was missing out on something.

I initially tried weed and felt like it just wasn't for me. This largely remained the same heading into my early 20s, at which point I found myself experiencing a lot of stress and anxiety as a result of various work and relationship struggles. Slowly, I began experimenting with weed use more regularly, finding that it could help quiet the ongoing noise inside my head. Eventually, this developed into smoking regularly aside from my working hours. This pattern then persisted for well over a year before I began to recognize that it was impacting other aspects of my life.

Initially, I felt as though it was a net positive for me, particularly mentally. I generally felt happier and less stressed. The issue became when I began looking at smoking as a bonus to any activity/event. Simple things I previously enjoyed while sober, like getting out for a walk with the dog, taking part in hobbies like performing music or playing sports, or socializing with friends, slowly started to seem 'boring' without me being high. Eventually, it began to feel as though I couldn't enjoy any experiences without being stoned. I began to slip into a pretty sedentary lifestyle as well, often resorting to lazing around for the evenings outside of my daily work duties. Because my work was not directly impacted, I failed to see how it could have been an issue. Eventually, I noticed some of my relationships began to deteriorate. My girlfriend at the time felt as though we were no longer communicating effectively, peers reported me being 'distant' and my parents informed me that they felt like I was drifting out of their life.

Student Name: _____

Ultimately, I did not aim to completely remove cannabis use from my life, but rather significantly reduce my dependency on it. First and foremost, I had to want that for myself. There were some attempts early on where I didn't take it seriously, only to slip back into the same lifestyle a few days later. In time, I was willing to open up to my inner circle, consisting of my partner, friends, and family, about the severity of my use and my worries around its impacts on my life. While initially it was a very difficult conversation to have, it was also as if a weight had been lifted off my shoulders in some ways. My girlfriend opened my mind to the thought of exploring counselling, and from there I also availed of some substance use-centred counselling. It was definitely a team effort, with a lot of folks involved to work toward a common goal.

In the end, I was able to get to a place with cannabis use where I no longer feel a dependency on it. I have learned that I was more or less numbing a lot of experiences, rather than 'enhancing' them as I once thought. It was a very rewarding (albeit at times, heavy) experience to truly feel my emotions once again."

Spotlight Questions:

1. What reasons did Katie give for starting to use substances?

2. Where would you currently place Katie's cannabis use on the Substance Use Spectrum, and how did it change over time?

Student Name: _____

Exploration: Lived Experience Spotlight

Adair's Story: Understanding the Impact of Stigma

Student Instructions: Throughout these lessons, you'll hear real stories from people who have personal experience with substance use. These spotlights are told in their own words, giving you a genuine look into what substance use can be like and how it affects people's lives.

Read the story of Adair, who faced challenges with substance use. As you read it, think about how stigma may have shown up at different points in Adair's life, such as during childhood, teenage years, or adulthood.

Afterwards, answer the questions that follow. You may be asked to work in groups, pairs, or individually.

As you work, you may refer to the [Stigma](#), [Caregiver Substance Use](#), and [Protective and Risk Factors](#) infographics as well as explore the relevant [Substance Snapshots](#).

"I grew up in a home with two parents who had alcohol use disorder. I swore to myself that I would never live the way they lived, and I would never do to my future children what was done to me mentally and emotionally.

I hung around with an older group of people than myself. We played a lot of sports, and drinking was a big part of that. I remember how much I loved the way alcohol made me feel, and I knew from the first drink that I was dependent. The drug use didn't come along for many years later. I knew I couldn't hide alcohol use, but I thought if I was using pills, I would be able to hide it. For the first little while, I was able to use only pills, but shortly after, my alcohol use disorder came back with a vengeance.

I started out with alcohol in my late teens. When I was 17, I was prescribed a benzodiazepine for severe anxiety and became dependent on it pretty quickly. As an adult, I started using Percocet, Ritalin and Cocaine along with my benzos and alcohol. I also used Tylenol 3's, Tylenol 8's and pretty much anything with codeine in it.

When I was using it, my life was in complete chaos. I worked to pay for my habits

Student Name: _____

until my substance use had complete control over my life, and I was unable to work anymore. I lost my children, my family, my business and any friend I had at the time. I lost my home and ended up walking the streets until I found somewhere to live. I had zero self-respect, I lost the ability to make any rational decisions for myself, and I almost lost the will to live.

After months of being on my own and feeling completely defeated, I went to see my family doctor and asked for a referral to go to a treatment center. I ended up going to an inpatient treatment facility for a 28-week treatment program and a community addiction centre for a 12-step program. I continue to attend my Narcotics Anonymous program and enjoy doing service work to help others with addiction. This also helps me in my recovery. I now know that I should have reached out to get help earlier. I've reconnected with my family and friends, and they are a good support for me. I have a job and an apartment, and I am now happy with my life. I know I'll always struggle with addiction, but I feel like I'm in a much better place now, and I know who to reach out to for help."

Spotlight Questions:

1. How do you think growing up with parents who had alcohol use disorder influenced Adair's risk for substance use? How might stigma around their parent's substance use impact Adair?
2. What types of stigma do you think Adair experienced during their teen years?
Given an example of structural stigma, social stigma, and self-stigma.
 - Structural stigma:
 - Social stigma:
 - Self-stigma:

Student Name: _____

3. What types of stigma do you think Adair experienced when they were an adult?
Given an example of structural stigma, social stigma, and self-stigma.

- Structural stigma:

- Social stigma:

- Self-stigma:

4. How might experiences with stigma have affected Adair's choices, relationships, or ability to get help?

5. How might growing up with parents who had alcohol use disorder have influenced Adair's own risk for substance use? In what ways could stigma toward their parents' substance use have affected Adair's experiences or choices?

6. How might Adair's opportunities or choices look different if they didn't experience stigma?

Student Name: _____

Sharing and Reflection: Breaking the Stigma Around Substance Use

Student Instructions:



Choose **one way** to share what you've learned in this lesson about stigma and substance use:

- Write a newspaper article or blog post
- Create a poster or infographic to share anti-stigma messages
- Write a short personal reflection or opinion column from the perspective of a peer wanting to promote understanding

Use the guiding questions below to help guide your work. You don't need to answer each one directly, but you may use them to shape your message and ideas.

Guiding Questions

- How can we overcome the stigma in our society regarding Substance Use Disorder?
- How might stigma stop someone from reaching out for help or treatment?
- What could schools, families, and peers do to reduce stigma and create a more supportive environment?

Student Name: _____

Exploration: Reaching Out Guide

Instructions: For this activity, you will be designing a one-page guide or poster that helps young people understand how to recognize when someone might need help, how to reach out safely, and where to find support. Your guide should be creative and include the following information:

1. Recognizing the Signs:

- List or illustrate signs that someone's substance use might be becoming harmful.
- You may refer to the [Substance Use Spectrum](#) and [Substance Use Disorder](#) infographics, or other online resources.

2. Starting the Conversation:

- Describe safe and compassionate ways to approach someone you're worried about.
- Include examples of what you could say to show care and support without judgment.
(e.g., "I've noticed you haven't seemed like yourself lately—do you want to talk?")
- You may refer to the [Stigma](#) infographic or other online resources.

3. Finding Help:

- Identify trusted people youth could turn to (e.g., parents, teachers, school counsellors, coaches, friends).
- Research 2–3 youth-friendly support services (local, online, or national).
For each, include:
 - Who the service is for
 - What kind of help they offer (e.g., counselling, harm reduction, crisis support)
 - How to contact them (phone, text, chat, or in-person)
- You may refer to the [Support Resources Page](#) on the DECYDE website or other online resources.

Your guide should include visuals, short phrases, or positive messages that reduce stigma and encourage help-seeking.

Student Name: _____

Sharing and Reflection: Circles of Support Map



Instructions: In this activity, you will create a **Circles of Support Map** to show the different people and resources you can turn to for help. These may include:

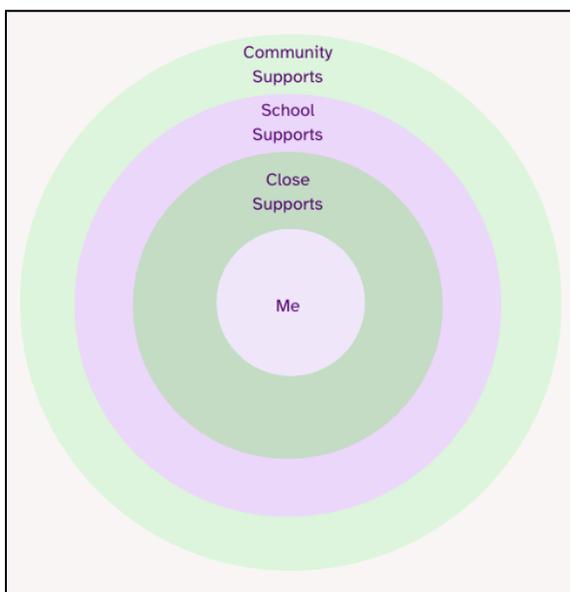
- **Close supports** – e.g., friends, family, or caregivers
- **School supports** – e.g., teachers, counsellors, coaches
- **Community supports** – e.g., health centres, helplines, youth programs

How to Create Your Map

You can choose to draw your map using any format such as paper, Canva, Google Slides, etc.

1. **Start with yourself:** Draw a circle in the centre and write your name inside.
2. **Add your closest supports:** In the first circle around you, include the names of family or friends who give you strong personal support.
3. **Expand outward:** In the next circles, add other people or organizations who can help, such as teachers, counselors, neighbours, coaches, healthcare providers, or online support.

Example:



Think about different kinds of support:

Some people help emotionally (listening, comfort), while others provide practical or professional help (guidance, treatment, information).

