

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 1: Case Study - Cannabis and Psychosis Part 2: Video - Cannabis and Mental Illness

To aid in this activity, refer to the [Cannabis](#) substance snapshot and the [Protective and Risk Factors](#) infographic.

### Part 1: Case Study - Cannabis and Psychosis

Listen to the first 15 minutes of the podcast: White Coat, Black Art: The Toll of Cannabis-Induced Psychosis and respond to the following questions:

Podcast Link: [The Toll of Cannabis-Induced Psychosis](#)

1. How does Kalpit deal with his psychosis diagnosis?

2. What were some stresses that Kalpit may have been experiencing before developing psychosis?

3. What is an example of a protective factor that Kalpit has in his life?

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4. What were Kalpit's risk factors for psychosis? In other words, what increased the risk of Kalpit developing psychosis?

5. How did Kalpit feel when he was diagnosed with psychosis?

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## Part 2: Video - Cannabis and Mental Illness

Watch the following video from the BC Schizophrenia Society on Cannabis and Mental Illness and respond to the following questions:

Video Link: [Cannabis and Mental Illness](#)

1. The brain develops until what age?

2. What is the active ingredient in weed (cannabis)?

3. What is psychosis?

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**Research:**

4. Imagine you are giving a presentation to a grade 7 class on the health effects of cannabis. How would you discuss the risk of developing cannabis-induced psychosis in that age group?

5. Why are younger males more likely to develop psychosis than younger females?

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## Sharing and Reflection: Cannabis Labelling



Think about the Exploration Activity you just completed about the link between cannabis use and psychosis.

Do you think that cannabis labels should warn about cannabis-induced psychosis? Why or why not?

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## Exploration: Lived Experience Spotlight

### Aria's Experience: Using Substances to Cope

**Student Instructions:** Throughout these lessons, you'll hear real stories from people with lived and living experience. 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 through Aria's Experience: Using Substances to Cope, and answer the discussion questions as a class. As you work, you may refer to the [Stigma](#), [Stress](#) and [Protective and Risk Factors](#) infographics as well as explore the relevant [Substance Snapshots](#).

"My first experience with substance use was when I was 10. I started experimenting with alcohol first. I had been at my friend's house, where I was offered whiskey. I thought after that night I wouldn't do it again since my parents have a history with substances I don't like. But I yearned for the feeling of it, and from then on, it continued to build, leading me down a very dark path of using other substances for several years.

What influenced my decision to use substances was my lack of health care, because I was left undiagnosed for years, and I'd often self-medicate with substances to cope with my mental health and home life.

What helps me feel safer when using substances is the precautions I take before I do so. I make sure I'm with at least one person in case something happens, and that I'm always carrying a naloxone kit with me that we both know how to use.

When I first started using, nothing changed, but as I used more and more, I started to notice I was missing important things in my life. I never wanted to go to anything revolving around my family or hobbies, and would skip out on a lot of things. I was nauseous and depressed most of the time. I never had any energy, and after a while, instead of it helping me cope with my mental health, it made it decline.

When my friends began to notice that my substance use was harming me, they spoke to me, and I decided to seek help. From the recommendation of my friend, I discovered Hope

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Valley Youth Centre in Grand Falls-Windsor. I am scheduled to attend the two-week withdrawal management program starting soon.

The people I feel the most comfortable asking concerns or questions to are 811, they are always there no matter the time and have several resources and solutions available for anyone.

What I wish people would understand more about substance use is that it doesn't make you a disgusting or a horrible person. It is not something that you should be ashamed of. I've had people act like I was a completely different person once they found out about my substance use and it isn't a nice feeling. Most people who struggle with substance use are going through something difficult, and it isn't fair to be treated badly for trying to find a way to cope.

Substance use, unfortunately, was something that easily fit into my life. In some strange way, I think that substances helped me when I didn't feel I had any other options. For a while, it made me feel normal. It helped me cope with everything that was happening in my life, and I thought numbing everything was the solution. But in the long term, after everything wore off, I realized I just felt worse and was suppressing everything I was feeling, which wasn't healthy and made my mental health worse."

**Discussion Questions:**

1. How might mental health challenges lead someone to use substances?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Why might using substances to cope with stress or difficult feelings work in the short term but cause harm in the long term?





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## Sharing and Reflection: Peer Message



**Instructions:** In this lesson, you explored the connection between mental health and substance use. Using what you've learned and searching for additional information, create a message for your peers that shares information about this relationship and encourages informed, healthy choices.

Some topics to include are quality of life, stigma, barriers to getting help for mental health and substance use, and how substance use (such as alcohol or cannabis) can affect the development of the teenage brain. Use one of the following methods to deliver your message.

- Slide Presentation
- Poster
- Poem
- Infographic
- Video
- Story Book
- Comic Strip
- Other creative approach

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## Introduction: Stressed or Stretched?

**Instructions:** In this activity, you will learn to identify the difference between positive (eustress) and negative (distress) forms of stress, and recognize how stress affects the body, mind, and emotions by developing a short self-care and support plan.

### Step 1: Understanding Stress

As a class, review examples of **positive stress (eustress)** and **negative stress (distress)** from the DECYDE [Stress](#) Infographic. Some examples of positive stress include studying for a test, trying out for a team, or starting a new job. Examples of negative stress include ongoing pressure, lack of sleep, or relationship issues.

Working in pairs, brainstorm and write down two (2) situations where stress helped you grow, and two (2) situations where stress felt harmful.

Stress Helped

- 1.
- 2.

Stress was harmful

- 1.
- 2.

### Step 2: Emotions and Regulation

Using the [Understanding Emotion](#) infographic, identify supportive emotions (e.g., excitement, pride) and challenging emotions (e.g., anxiety, anger). Then complete this quick reflection:

- “When I’m feeling stressed, I usually feel \_\_\_\_\_.”
- “One healthy way I can regulate my emotions is \_\_\_\_\_.”

Next, as a class you will brainstorm examples of co-regulation and write down 2

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examples below:

- 1.
- 2.

### **Step 3: Self-Care and Supports**

- Review the [Self-Care](#) infographic strategies, then list 3-5 self-care actions you are already doing to help manage stress and emotions.
- Identify two (2) formal supports you can use and access should you need to.

Refer to the [DECYDE Mental Health and Substance Use Support Page](#) for a list of formal supports.

### **Step 4: Reflection**

- What is one sign that you might be feeling too stressed?
- Which self-care strategy or support helps you the most?
- How does taking care of your mental health help you manage emotions better?

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## Songs of Support: Exploring Mental Health Through Music

### I Gotcha (Cooper Alan)

**Instructions:** You will watch a music video together as a class. As you watch, follow along with the lyrics below and listen closely to the emotions, thoughts, and struggles the artists express through their words and performance.

When the song ends, answer the questions that follow the lyrics.

#### [Verse 1]

Sometimes the days come in waves  
And life gets heavy on you  
End of your rope and nobody's noticin'  
What you're going through  
But I do and I see the heart underneath  
Still beating strong  
You think you're alone but you ain't alone  
'Cause here's something you can count on

#### [Chorus]

When you can't hold on longer  
When the wind gets cold  
And blows right through your armor  
When the walls are falling in and crashing on ya  
I gotcha

#### [Verse 2]

All of the heavy  
Why don't you let me carry that for awhile  
I'm right here ain't going nowhere  
Every step, every second, every mile

#### [Chorus]

And when you can't hold on longer  
When the wind gets cold  
And blows right through your armor  
When the walls are falling in and crashing on ya  
Oh I gotcha

#### [Post-Chorus]





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## Songs of Support: Exploring Mental Health Through Music

### Leave a Light On (Tom Walker)

**Instructions:** You will watch a music video together as a class. As you watch, follow along with the lyrics below and listen closely to the emotions, thoughts, and struggles the artists express through their words and performance.

When the song ends, answer the questions that follow the lyrics.

#### [Verse 1]

The second someone mentioned you were all alone  
I could feel the trouble coursing through your veins  
Now I know it's got a hold  
Just a phone call left unanswered had me sparkin' up  
These cigarettes won't stop me wonderin' where you are  
Don't let go, keep a hold

#### [Pre-Chorus]

If you look into the distance, there's a house upon the hill  
Guidin' like a lighthouse  
To a place where you'll be safe to feel our grace  
'Cause we've all made mistakes  
If you've lost your way

#### [Chorus]

I will leave the light on x4

#### [Verse 2]

Tell me what's been happenin', what's been on your mind  
Lately, you've been searchin' for a darker place to hide  
That's alright  
But if you carry on abusing, you'll be robbed from us  
I refuse to lose another friend to drugs  
Just come home, don't let go  
See upcoming pop shows  
Get tickets for your favorite artists

#### [Pre-Chorus]

If you look into the distance, there's a house upon the hill  
Guidin' like a lighthouse  
To a place where you'll be safe to feel our grace





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## Songs of Support: Exploring Mental Health Through Music

### Wishing Well (Juice WRLD)

**Instructions:** You will watch a music video together as a class. As you watch, follow along with the lyrics below and listen closely to the emotions, thoughts, and struggles the artists express through their words and performance.

When the song ends, answer the questions that follow the lyrics.

#### [Intro]

Mm-mm, mm-mm-mm-mm, mm-mm-mm, uh  
I can't breathe (Chopsquad), I can't breathe, 999  
Waiting for the exhale  
I toss my pain with my wishes in a wishing well

#### [Chorus]

I can't breathe, I'm waiting for the exhale  
Toss my pain with my wishes in a wishing well  
Still no luck, but oh, well  
I still try even though I know I'm gon' fail  
Stress on my shoulders like a anvil  
Perky got me itching like a anthill  
Drugs killing me softly, Lauryn Hill  
Sometimes I don't know how to feel

#### [Verse 1]

Ring-ring, phone call from depression  
You used my past and my memories as a weapon  
On the other line, I talk to addiction, huh  
Speaking of the devil, all the drugs, I miss them  
This can't be real, is it fiction?  
Somethin' feels broke, need to fix it  
I cry out for help, do they listen?  
I'ma be alone until it's finished.

#### [Pre-Chorus]

This is the part where I tell you I'm fine, but I'm lyin'  
I just don't want you to worry  
This is the part where I take all my feelings and hide 'em  
'Cause I don't want nobody to hurt me

#### [Chorus]

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I can't breathe, I'm waiting for the exhale  
Toss my pain with my wishes in a wishing well  
Still no luck, but oh, well  
I still try even though I know I'm gon' fail  
It's stress on my shoulders like a anvil  
Perky got me itching like a anthill  
Drugs killing me softly, Lauryn Hill  
Sometimes I don't know how to feel

**[Verse 2]**

Sometimes I don't know how to feel  
Let's be for real  
If it wasn't for the pills, I wouldn't be here  
But if I keep taking these pills, I won't be here, yeah  
I just told y'all my secret, yeah  
It's tearing me to pieces  
I really think I need them  
I stopped taking the drugs and now the drugs take me

**[Pre-Chorus]**

This is the part where I tell you I'm fine, but I'm lyin'  
I just don't want you to worry  
This is the part where I take all my feelings and hide 'em  
'Cause I don't want nobody to hurt me

**[Chorus]**

I can't breathe, I'm waiting for the exhale  
Toss my pain with my wishes in a wishing well  
Still no luck, but oh, well  
I still try even though I know I'm gon' fail  
It's stress on my shoulders like a anvil  
Perky got me itching like a anthill  
Drugs killing me softly, Lauryn Hill  
Sometimes I don't know how to feel

**Questions:**

1. What emotions or struggles is the singer expressing in this song?



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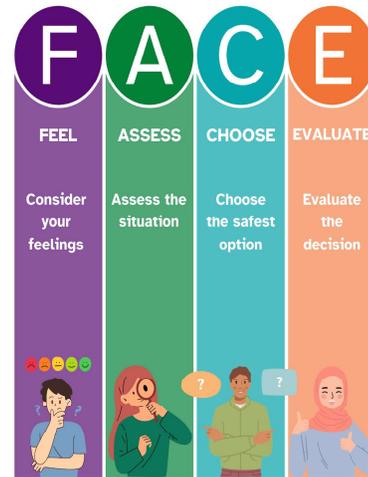
7. If this were a message to someone going through a hard time, what would it say?

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## Exploration Part 1: FACE Decision Making

### Blake's Experience: Feeling Overwhelmed

Blake, a grade 11 student, has been feeling constantly overwhelmed. Between part-time work, sports practice, homework, and helping out at home, their schedule feels non-stop. Even when Blake tries to stay organized, they struggle to focus, get easily distracted, and often leave tasks unfinished. Lately, they've been sleeping less, skipping meals, and relying on energy drinks and coffee to stay alert.



At first, the caffeine seemed to help Blake stay focused, but now they feel anxious, restless, and tired all the time. They're irritable with friends, falling behind in class, and starting to feel like no matter how hard they try, they can't keep up. Blake hasn't talked to anyone about what's going on and isn't sure if the problem is stress, burnout, or something else.

#### How should Blake FACE this situation?

*Note: You may refer to the [Stress](#) and [Health and Wellness](#) infographics to help guide your answers.*

#### **FEEL:**

1. How do you think Blake may be feeling physically and emotionally?

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2. What signs show that Blake is becoming stressed or stretched too far?

3. Why might Blake feel pressure to keep doing everything, even when it's exhausting?

**ASSESS:**

4. What are some positive (eustress) and negative (distress) stressors in Blake's life?

5. Which dimensions of wellness seem out of balance?

- Physical:
- Mental:
- Emotional:
- Social:
- Spiritual:

6. What coping strategies is Blake currently using? Are they helpful or harmful?

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**CHOOSE:**

7. What healthy self-care or coping strategies could help Blake manage stress better?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Who could Blake reach out to for support?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. If you were helping Blake, what advice would you give?

**EVALUATE:**

10. How might these new strategies help Blake feel more balanced and focused?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. What could happen if Blake continues to ignore signs of stress?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. What can we learn from Blake's experience about caring for our own mental health?

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## Exploration Activity Part 2: Blake's Next Steps

### Blake's Next Steps: Getting Support and Building Balance

After weeks of feeling exhausted and unable to focus, Blake decided to talk to the school guidance counsellor about what was going on. The counsellor listened, asked questions about school, mood, and sleep, and encouraged Blake to see their family doctor. After an assessment, Blake was diagnosed with ADHD. Learning this helped explain some of the struggles they'd been having for years, including difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness, and racing thoughts that added to their stress.

Blake and their doctor discussed treatment options, including possible medication. At the same time, Blake wanted to focus on other ways to build balance by implementing things that could support attention, motivation, and emotional well-being. With help from the peer wellness support team, Blake is developing a social prescription: a plan for healthy routines, supports, and lifestyle strategies to complement their medical care.

#### **Instructions:**

You are part of your school's peer wellness support team. Your goal is to create a social prescription for Blake. A social prescription is a plan that focuses on non-medical supports, self-care, and lifestyle strategies to help Blake thrive in all areas of health.

#### **Note:**

- You may refer to the [Factors Influencing Decision-Making](#), [Self-Care](#) and [Health and Wellness](#) infographics to help guide your answers.
- Blake is exploring medication with a health-care provider — your focus is on everything else that can support their well-being.



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Family	
Peer Groups	
School and Community	
Media	

**Step 3: Develop a Social Prescription (Focus on Self-Care and Dimensions of Wellness)**

Create a plan that helps Blake strengthen each dimension of health and wellness through social prescribing and self-care strategies.

Write down at least one idea for each dimension below:

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Dimension of Health and Wellness	Possible Self-Care/ Social Prescribing Strategies
Mental Health	
Physical Health	
Emotional Health	
Social Health	
Spiritual Health	

#### Step 4: Share and Reflect

- Present your “social prescription” to the class or in small groups.
- Explain how your plan complements Blake’s medical care and supports all dimensions of wellness.
- **Reflect:** Which of these ideas could also help you manage stress or build resilience?

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## Sharing and Reflection: My Mental Health & Wellness Toolkit



Create your own **Mental Health & Wellness Toolkit** by checking in on your well-being, identifying your supports, listing self-care strategies, and setting personal goals for your mental health.

### Step 1: My Wellness Check In

Think about how you take care of yourself across the five (5) dimensions of wellness. Refer to the [Health and Wellness](#) and [Self-Care](#) infographics to help guide your responses. The [support resources](#) listed on the DECYDE website may also help with your responses. Fill in something you already do and one new idea you would like to try.

Dimension of Wellness	What I Do Now	What I Could Try
Mental (focus, mindset)		
Physical (sleep, movement, nutrition)		
Emotional (feelings, self-expression)		
Social (connection, belonging)		
Spiritual (meaning, reflection, purpose)		

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### Step 2: Identify Circle of Supports

Who can you turn to when things feel hard? List people, places, or programs that can help. You may want to consider some of these [support resources](#) listed on the DECYDE website.

Type of Support	Examples	Who I Can Reach Out To
Personal	Friends, family, teammates, etc.	
School	Teacher, guidance counsellor, coach, etc.	
Community	Youth centre, recreation program, cultural or faith group, etc.	
Professional	Doctor, counsellor, mental health helpline (811), etc.	

### Step 3: Coping and Self-Care Strategies

List a few things that can help you manage stress or boost your mood in healthy ways. Refer to the [Self-Care](#) infographic to help guide your answers.

When I feel stressed, I can:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

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-

**Things that make me feel calm, happy, or grounded:**

- 
- 
- 
-

#### **Step 4: My Mental Health Goals**

Choose one small goal to try this week to promote your well-being:

- Get more sleep
- Eat regularly
- Move my body
- Talk to someone I trust
- Take screen breaks
- Spend time outside
- Practice gratitude
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Step 5: Reflection**

1. Which self-care strategy helps you the most right now?

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2. Who is someone you could reach out to for support if things feel difficult?

3. What is one small change you will make this week to take care of your mental health?

**Remember:** Taking care of your mental health is an ongoing process. Building connections, setting healthy routines, and reaching out for help are all signs of strength, not weakness.