

Teacher Discussion Guide: Factors that Influence Substance Use: FACE-ing the Situation

Scenario 1: Jordan and Vaping

Note: When discussing the scenarios, be mindful of language or assumptions that may reinforce stigma toward people who use substances. Refer to the [Stigma infographic](#) for guidance on using respectful, non-judgmental language.

Scenario 1: Jordan and Vaping

Students will read the situation with Jordan and consider how they would FACE the situation. They will examine the possible choices, determine the influential factors, and highlight the potential consequences. Students will apply the FACE Decision-Making Model as they work through the scenario. Teachers may refer to the [Nicotine](#) Substance Snapshot to help inform the discussion.

Lately, Jordan's home has been filled with the tense atmosphere of his parents' frequent arguments, adding stress to his daily life and disrupting his ability to get a good night's sleep. To cope with this, Jordan finds comfort in watching his favorite streamer on social media who uses nicotine vaping for relaxation. Faced with his own stressors, Jordan wonders whether trying nicotine vapes could offer him similar relief. What decision should Jordan make?

Scenario 1: Jordan and Vaping

Feel:

How might Jordan feel in this situation?

- He might feel tired
- He might feel stressed
- He might want to feel better
- He might feel unsure
- He might feel envious of his favourite Twitch streamer

Why might Jordan feel this way?

- He might feel tired because he is not sleeping very well
- He might feel stressed because he is in a potentially hostile environment

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- He might feel unsure because he doesn't know the effects of vaping
- He might feel envious because the Twitch streamer seems really cool

Who else might have feelings about this situation?

- Parent/guardian
- A trusted adult (extended family member, coach, babysitter)
- Friends

Assess:

What are Jordan's choices?

- Jordan could try vaping
- He could wait to talk to a trusted adult about how he is feeling

What factors or influences might affect Jordan's decision?

- Knowing that his parent/guardian may be disappointed if he decides to try vaping
- Knowing that vaping has many unknown long-term effects and can affect him negatively in the short term
- Knowing that he may develop a dependence to vaping
- Knowing his friends' opinions on vaping

Who can help them make this choice?

- A guidance counselor
- A trusted family member
- A trusted teacher
- A friend

Choose:

What is the safest choice Jordan can make?

- Wait to talk to a trusted adult
- Choose healthier ways to manage this stress (e.g. exercising, meditation, talking to somebody about it)
- If he decides to vape, he could choose lower nicotine concentrations

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Evaluate:

How might Jordan's choice impact himself and others?

- May put harmful chemicals into his body if he chooses to vape
- May increase the risk of becoming addicted to nicotine
- May cause friends to think of him differently if he vapes
- May disappoint parents/caregivers (or another adult he looks up to)

Who could Jordan talk to about the choice they made?

- A guidance counsellor or trusted teacher
- A trusted friend
- A caregiver
- An extended family member (e.g. cousin, aunt/uncle)

What factors or influences might change Jordan's decision?

- Knowing that his parent/guardian may be disappointed if he decides to try vaping
- Knowing that vaping has many unknown long-term effects and can affect him negatively in the short term
- Knowing that he may develop a dependence to vaping
- Knowing his friends' opinions on vaping

Scenario 2: Alex and Cannabis Gummies

Teacher Discussion Guide: Factors that Influence Substance Use: FACE-ing the Situation **Scenario 2: Alex and Cannabis Gummies**

Students will read the situation with Alex and consider how they would FACE the situation. They will examine the possible choices, determine the influential factors, and highlight the potential consequences. Students will apply the FACE Decision-Making Model as they work through the scenario. Teachers may refer to the [Cannabis](#) Substance Snapshot to help inform the discussion.

Alex has struggled to make friends since they moved to a new school. He was excited when Finley, from school, invited him to the movies! At the theatre, Finley offers Alex a cannabis gummy that he found in his older brother's room. Alex has never tried cannabis before but doesn't want to disappoint Finley. What decision should Alex make?

Scenario 2: Alex and Cannabis Gummies

Feel:

How would Alex feel in this situation?

- He might feel anxious
- He might not want to be seen as a loser if he doesn't take a gummy
- He might feel afraid
- He might feel unsure

Why would Alex feel this way?

- He might feel anxious because he doesn't want to seem 'uncool' if he does not take a gummy
- He might feel afraid because he doesn't want to lose a new friend
- He might feel unsure because he doesn't know how cannabis will make him feel

Who might also have feelings about this situation?

- Caregivers or a trusted adult
- Other friends
- His new friend Finley

Assess:

What are Alex's choices?

- Take a gummy
- Try a piece of the gummy
- Say no

What factors or influences might affect Alex's decision?

- Knowing that his parent/guardian may be disappointed if he chooses to try cannabis
- Knowing that he may have a bad experience with cannabis if he takes the gummy
- Knowing that his friend may not want to hang out with him anymore if he chooses to say no, but may think he is cool if he chooses to say yes

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Who can help Alex make this choice?

- Wait to speak to his parents
- Wait to speak to another trusted person, like an older sibling, teacher, or coach

Choose:

What is the safest choice Alex can make?

- Wait to talk to a trusted adult before trying cannabis, and avoid taking the gummy because he does not know the strength of it
- He could take a small piece of the gummy rather than the entire gummy if he chooses to try cannabis

Evaluate:

How might Alex's choice impact themselves and others?

- May increase the risk of becoming addicted to cannabis if he takes the gummy
- The choice may cause Alex harm because he doesn't know the dose or where it came from
- May cause Finley to think of him differently
- May cause his other friends to think of him differently
- May disappoint guardians, family, and/or caregivers (or another adult he admires/looks up to)

Who could Alex talk to about the choice they made?

- Talk to a Guidance counsellor
- Talk to a trusted friend
- Talk to parents, guardians, and/or caregivers
- Talk to another trusted adult (e.g. coach, cousin, aunt/uncle)

What factors or influences might affect Alex's decision?

- Peer influences
- Family
- Knowledge: Curiosity
- Self-esteem: Self-confidence
- Community: Where did his brother get the gummies?

Scenario 3: Taylor and Drinking Alcohol

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Scenario 3: Taylor and Drinking Alcohol

Students will read the situation with Taylor and consider how they would FACE the situation. They will examine the possible choices, determine the influential factors, and highlight the potential consequences. Students will apply the FACE Decision-Making Model as they work through the scenario. Teachers may refer to the [Alcohol](#) Substance Snapshot to help inform the discussion.

Taylor is invited to Casey's place for a sleepover. Casey is popular but is also known for bullying people. Casey's parents are out of town. This is a big deal for Taylor since it is the first time without adults around. Casey tells Taylor that they are planning a fun night and want to try some of their parent's alcohol. Taylor is feeling anxious because she's never had alcohol before, but wants to get invited to more sleepovers. On top of that, she is worried that if she say no, she might get bullied by Casey. What decision should Taylor make?

Scenario 3: Taylor and Drinking Alcohol

Feel:

How would Taylor feel in this situation?

- She might feel cautious
- She might feel nervous about trying alcohol
- She might feel unsure
- She might feel worried

Why would Taylor feel this way?

- She might feel unsure because she wants to fit in
- She might feel nervous about not being invited to other sleepovers
- She might feel cautious because she doesn't know how alcohol will affect her

Who might also have feelings about this situation?

- Parent/guardian/trusted adult
- Older sibling(s)
- Friends
- Teachers

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- Coach

Assess:

What are Taylor's choices?

- Try some of the alcohol at the sleepover
- Do not try some of the alcohol
- Talk to somebody she trusts about the dilemma

What factors or influences might affect Taylor's decision?

- Knowing that she may get in trouble if she decides to try alcohol.
- Knowing that she is unsure about how alcohol will affect her.
- Knowing that alcohol can negatively affect her health.

Who can help Taylor make this choice?

- A trusted adult, older sibling, or friend

Choose:

What is the safest choice Taylor can make?

- She could wait to talk to someone she trusts before making a decision
- If she chooses to try any, she could take one or two sips rather than drinking an entire glass and they could follow safe drinking guidelines.

Evaluate:

How would Taylor's choice impact herself and others?

- May increase the risk of accidentally hurting herself or others if she drinks alcohol
- May cause her friend to think of her differently depending on what she decides
- May make parents disappointed

Who could Taylor talk to about the choice she made?

- A guidance counsellor
- A trusted friend
- Parents or guardians
- Another trusted adult (e.g. Coach, cousin, aunt/uncle)

What factors or influences might change Taylor's decision?

- Peer influences
- Family
- Knowledge: Curiosity
- Self-esteem: Self-confidence

Scenario 4: Robin and Methylphenidate

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Scenario 4: Robin and Methylphenidate

Students will read the situation with Robin and consider how they would FACE the situation. They will examine the possible choices, determine the influential factors, and highlight the potential consequences. Students will apply the FACE Decision-Making Model as they work through the scenario. Teachers may refer to the [Methylphenidate](#) Substance Snapshot to help inform the discussion.

Robin is really passionate about video games. A highly anticipated video game has just been released, and it seems like all of Robin's friends have already purchased it. Unfortunately, Robin doesn't have the money to buy it. They do not want to bother their family since money has been tight lately. Purchasing this video game seems impossible. Robin takes methylphenidate to focus on school. They remember viewing a video on social media where someone was selling their methylphenidate to get money for clothes. This sparks an idea. Maybe Robin can sell some of their medication to get enough money for the video game. Robin is trying to weigh the short-term gain versus the potential harm. What decision should Robin make?

Scenario 4: Robin and Methylphenidate

Feel:

How would Robin feel in this situation?

- They might feel conflicted: between the desire for the new video game and the consequences
- They might feel unsure
- They might feel scared
- They might feel left out

Why would Robin feel this way?

- They might feel conflicted because they want the video game, but they don't want to harm others
- They might feel left out because their friends have the video game and they don't
- They might feel scared to get in trouble by selling medication

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Who might also have feelings about this situation?

- Parent/guardian/trusted adult
- Older sibling(s)
- Friends
- Teachers or coach

Assess:

What are Robin's choices?

- Sell some of the methylphenidate
- Save up money in other ways to buy the videogame
- Ask their parents to buy the videogame
- Talk to somebody about the dilemma

What factors might change Robin's choice?

- Knowing they can get into legal trouble if they are caught selling medication
- Knowing that they may not have enough medication for themselves to help them focus in school if they do sell it
- Knowing that it may take a longer to get the videogame if they choose to get enough money through other means
- Knowing that selling medication can harm others

Who can help Robin make this choice?

- Parent/guardian/trusted adult
- Older sibling(s)
 - Friends
- Teachers
- Coach

Choose:

What is the safest choice Robin can make?

- Save up money in other ways to buy the videogame

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Evaluate:

How would Robin's choice impact themselves and others?

- Selling medication may harm others around them (people may misuse it or self-mediate without being assessed by a healthcare professional)
- Affect their future because of legal troubles
- May give a sense of accomplishment if they choose to earn the money in a legal manner
- May make friends think of them differently
- The choice may disappoint their caregivers (or another adult that they admire/look up to)

Who could Robin talk to about the choice they made?

- Guidance counsellor
- A trusted friend
- Parents, guardians, or caregivers
- Another trusted adult (e.g. Coach, cousin, aunt/uncle)

What factors or influences might change their decision?

- Peers
- Family
- Knowledge (Understanding the harm that methylphenidate may have on others especially if not prescribed for that person)
- Knowledge (Understanding the consequences. It is illegal to sell your prescribed medication)
- Feelings such as guilt or concern
- Past experiences: Possibly heard of others doing the same and getting in trouble

Scenario 5: Kai and Smoking

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Scenario 5: Kai and Smoking

Students will read the situation with Kai and consider how they would FACE the situation. They will examine the possible choices, determine the influential factors, and highlight the potential consequences. Students will apply the FACE Decision-Making Model as they work through the scenario.

One day, after an extra help class at school. Kai and Avery find themselves waiting outside for their rides. To Kai's surprise, Avery pulls out a cigarette and suggests they give it a try, mentioning that she's been taking them from her mom, who smokes in order to lose weight. Kai is wondering how it would feel to smoke, and if it would also help her lose weight. Feeling conflicted, Kai hesitates - admittedly, she wants to look good, especially for boys, but she's worried about the potential harm from smoking. What decision should Kai make?

Scenario 5: Kai and Smoking

Feel:

How would Kai feel in this situation?

- She might feel curious
- She might feel conflicted or confused
- She might feel self-conscious
- She might feel worried or scared

Why would Kai feel this way?

- She might feel curious about the connection between smoking and weight loss
- She might feel conflicted — she would want to look good but fears the harms of smoking
- She might feel self-conscious about her body
- She might feel worried her family might find out

Who else might have feelings about this situation?

- Avery

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- Avery’s mom
- Kai’s friends
- Kai’s family

Assess:

What are Kai’s choices?

- To take the cigarette
- To refuse the cigarette

What factors might influence Kai’s decision?

- Knowing the harms
- Her peers
- Her family
- Her self-esteem

Who can help Kai make this choice?

- Friends
- Siblings

Choose:

What is the safest choice Kai can make?

- Not to smoke

Evaluate:

How would Kai’s choice impact herself and others?

- Her family may be upset
- Her friends may not approve of her decision
- Her friends and family may not like being around second-hand smoke

Who could Kai talk to about the choice she made?

- A guidance counsellor
- A trusted friend
- Parents, guardians, or caregivers
- Another trusted adult (e.g. Coach, cousin, aunt/uncle)
- Talk to Avery

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What factors or influences might change Kai's decision?

- Knowing the harms
- Peers and family
- Self-esteem
- Media messages