

TEACHER DISCUSSION GUIDE

Exploration: FACE Scenarios



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 (Example): Riley: Hitting the Pen - Will I Feel Better?

Riley is a Grade 8 student who loves watching movies and playing sports with their close friends. Riley's friends have recently started hanging out with a new, larger group. This has made socializing feel more stressful and overwhelming instead of enjoyable. Riley has been feeling pressure to fit in with the bigger group and went looking for ways to help with stress. While exploring social media, Riley hears an influencer explain that cannabis can help with stress, so they decide to give it a try. They managed to get a cannabis vape pen and found that it helped reduce their feelings of anxiety in social settings. Now they are using cannabis regularly and have started to lose interest in hanging out with friends at all. Riley's friends are wondering what is going on and why Riley rarely wants to hang out anymore. Riley worries their friends are disappointed and feels guilty about vaping, but they're afraid to talk about it. What should Riley do?

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Feel

How do you think Riley was feeling before they started vaping cannabis? How are they feeling now?

- Before: They enjoyed hanging out with their friends but were feeling stressed and overwhelmed now that new kids had joined the group
- After: Since they've started vaping cannabis, they feel less interested in hanging out with friends, feel guilty and worried they're disappointing their friends

Who else might have feelings about Riley's situation?

- Riley's friends may be concerned that something is wrong, worried about Riley as this behaviour is out of character for them
- They may be frustrated or mad that Riley is not hanging out with them and won't talk about why
- Riley's parent(s) might be wondering why Riley is not out with their friends like they normally would be

Assess

What are Riley's choices?

- Talk to their friends about how they're feeling
- Talk to a trusted adult (e.g., guardian, teacher, coach, guidance counsellor) about how they're feeling
- Not tell anyone and continue to vape withdraw/isolate themselves from friends
- Stop vaping
- Reduce the amount they are vaping (less frequently)
- Try hanging out with friends in smaller groups without vaping and see how they feel
- They can call the Kids Help Phone or Lifewise Peer Support to talk to someone anonymously

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How could Riley's choices affect them or others?

- Riley's friends might be upset at first but come around eventually
- Their friends might be understanding and relieved that the issue wasn't more serious/concerning
- Riley's guardians may be upset and discipline Riley for vaping cannabis
- Others might praise Riley for talking to them about what they're feeling and trying to find a healthier solution
- Riley may feel relieved that they are getting help

What are some ways that cannabis may be impacting Riley's health and wellbeing?
What are some possible long-term effects if they continue to vape?

- Short-term
 - Worsening mental health
 - Making them feel withdrawn, losing interest
- Long-term
 - Impacts brain development (especially since they're less than 25 years old)
 - Interferes with memory and learning
 - Heart and lung problems
 - Dependence

Choose

What are some possible next steps Riley could make?

- Talk to one of their closest friends
- Speak to a trusted adult
- Reach out for help (e.g., supports, guidance counsellor, Kids Help Phone, Lifewise Peer Support)
- Try to reduce or stop vaping cannabis
- Try to engage in healthier activities

What are some suggestions you could make to help Riley reduce their stress and anxiety in a healthier way?

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- Talk to their doctor or other healthcare professional
- See a counsellor
- Tell a family member or other trusted adult
- Talk to a friend
- Participate in healthy activities, such as going for a walk/exercise to help calm anxious thinking, participating in sports or arts-based activities
- Get good sleep, reduce social media use, eat healthy
- Speak to Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868, consult Bridge the Gapp for resources for youth about anxiety, or call Lifewise Peer Support at their Warmline (10AM-12AM Daily): (EN) 1-855-753-2560 (FR) 1-833-753-5460

Evaluate

What do you think Riley could learn from the choices they made?

- There are people that can help, such as close friends, adults, and other supports.
- Friends can be supportive, or potentially not
- Cannabis may have been affecting Riley (withdrawn, worsening stress)

Scenario 2: Brady: Is Alcohol the Answer?

Lately, Brady finds it hard to focus during class. He thinks a lot about things that are happening at home. Brady's father drinks a lot of alcohol, and lately has been drinking in the shed every evening while Brady's mother works night shifts. When Brady's father comes in after drinking, he is usually in a bad mood, so Brady avoids him by spending most of his time alone in his room. He wonders if he started drinking, would it help him forget about the stress at home? He sneaks a bottle of his dad's vodka into his room and starts drinking it before bed to help him fall asleep. Drinking the vodka helps Brady forget about things for a while and calms his mind down enough for him to fall asleep. However, the mornings after Brady drinks, he feels sad and sick to his stomach, and often ends up skipping school, which only adds to his stress. After a couple of weeks and several missed classes, Brady's homeroom teacher mentions his absence and asks him if everything is okay. What should Brady do?

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Feel

How do you think Brady was feeling before deciding to drink the vodka? How might Brady feel since he started drinking alcohol?

- Before:
 - Stressed, sad, anxious, lonely
 - Worried about his home-life
- After:
 - Immediately:
 - Relaxed, less anxious, less stressed, sleepy
 - Guilty about stealing vodka
 - Next day:
 - Sad and stomach-sick
 - Long-term:
 - Still feels stressed
 - Worried about missing school
 - Worried about home life with parents

Who else might have feelings about this situation?

- Brady's mom might be worried or upset if she finds out that Brady has been drinking, or that the dad is drinking while he is home with Brady
- Brady's mom might be concerned about Brady being alone and stressed
- Brady's dad might not know that Brady knows about his drinking. He might be angry or worried about Brady telling his mom.
- Brady's teacher might be concerned for Brady's wellbeing since he has been skipping school
- Brady's friends might be concerned about him

Assess

What are Brady's choices?

- He can hide his drinking and not tell anyone

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- He can talk to his parents about how he is feeling
- He can talk to his friends about what is going on
- He can talk with his teacher or other trusted adult
- He can reach out to another family member (e.g., aunt, uncle, cousin)
- He can stop drinking alcohol or reduce the amount of alcohol he is drinking
- He can look for healthier ways of coping (e.g., getting out of the house, getting involved in other activities)
- He can call the Kids Help Phone or Lifewise Peer Support to talk to someone anonymously

What are the harms of alcohol that Brady should be aware of? Consider both immediate and long-term effects.

- Can interfere with healthy brain development, impair memory
- Mental health issues, such as worsening anxiety (unhealthy coping, not dealing with the stressful situation)
- Nausea/vomiting
- Impaired judgement
- Poor coordination- higher risk of accident or injury
- Dependence
- Skipping school, missing obligations
- Stress from hiding his use
- Stealing the alcohol from his dad could cause issues if he were to find out
- Long-term: Liver damage, Risk of cancer and heart disease, Brain damage

How could Brady's decision affect him or his family?

- If Brady decides to talk to his parents, they may be able to get help for his dad's alcohol use (and Brady's as well)
- Things at home could get worse (his parents could start fighting or his dad could get more angry)
- Talking to a trusted adult (such as a teacher) about these issues could be helpful, but the teacher might have to report the issues at home if they suspect abuse or neglect (Duty to Report)
- Brady's friends might be supportive and offer to have him come over to hang out and get away from the stress at home
- If Brady doesn't tell, and conceals his drinking, he could develop a dependence on alcohol, which could lead to serious health effects
- He can talk to the Kids Help Phone or Lifewise Peer Support anonymously (but still have a Duty to Report)

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Choose

What are some possible next steps Brady could make?

- Talk to one of his closest friends
- Speak to a trusted adult or other family member
- Talk to a teacher or guidance counsellor
- Try to reduce or stop alcohol
- Talk to their doctor or other healthcare professional about their alcohol use
- See a mental health professional
- Speak to Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868, consult Bridge the Gapp for resources for youth about anxiety, or call Lifewise Peer Support at their Warmline (10AM-12AM Daily): (EN) 1-855-753-2560 (FR) 1-833-753-5460
- Try to engage in healthier ways to reduce stress

What are some healthier ways that Brady could cope with the stress he is experiencing?

- Participate in healthy activities, such as going for a walk/exercise to help calm anxious thinking, participating in sports or arts-based activities
- Get involved in other activities to get out of the house
- Try to find a support group of peers to share
- Get good sleep, reduce social media use, eat healthy
- Try to engage in healthier ways to reduce stress

Evaluate

What are some potential consequences of Brady's choice?

- Mom and Brady could move out of the house
- Dad gets help and things are better at home
- Mom sides with dad and things are worse for Brady
- Brady teacher (or trusted adult) advocates for Brady and he gets help for his

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- drinking as well as his home situation
- Brady doesn't seek help and continues to drink which doesn't deal with the underlying issue

Scenario 3: Casey: Perfecting the Latest Video Game - Non-prescription Methylphenidate

Casey is excited because a new video game came out today, which she has been looking forward to for months. It is Friday and Casey's friends plan to get together online to break in the new game. Casey is exhausted from a long week at school and is worried she won't be able to stay awake late into the night and that her friends will continue to play without her. She does not want to miss out on gaming with her friends. Casey's sister has ADHD and takes a prescription medication (methylphenidate, also known as Concerta) to help her focus and stay alert. Casey decides to try some of the medication to see if it might help her stay focused so she can stay up all night gaming.

Casey takes a methylphenidate pill before signing on to join the game. About an hour later, her stomach hurts, she is dizzy, and she feels nervous and jittery. Casey can no longer focus on the video game and is worried about what her friends might think if she stops playing. Casey starts to feel more and more anxious and wants to tell someone but does not want to get in trouble for taking her sister's medication. What should Casey do?

Feel

What do you think led Casey to make the decision to take methylphenidate?

- Casey is worried about not being able to stay up late
- Casey's sister takes methylphenidate and it helps her concentrate and stay awake, Casey may assume that as her sibling, she will experience the same benefits
- She thought she understood how ADHD medication worked and did not realize that it affects people differently
- Worried that her online friends might make fun of her for being tired and she does not want to miss out

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How do you think Casey was feeling before she took the methylphenidate? How might she be feeling now?

- Before:
 - Excited to try the new game, tired from a busy week
 - Felt confident that the medication would be helpful in keeping her awake
 - Guilty about stealing her sister's medication
- After
 - Dizzy, upset stomach
 - Nervous, jittery
 - Worried about getting in trouble from sister or guardians
 - Worried about disappointing her friends
 - Upset that she couldn't continue with game

Assess

What are Casey's choices?

- Tell a trusted adult (e.g., call guardian or family member)
- Tell a friend
- Tell her sister
- Call 911 or 811
- Go to bed and not tell anyone (could be harmful)

Why did taking methylphenidate make Casey feel anxious when it helps her sister?

- Casey does not have ADHD so it does not work the same for someone without ADHD
- The dose of medication that Casey's sister takes may not be the right dose for Casey (e.g., different weight, other medical conditions, other medications)

Choose

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What are some possible next steps Casey could make?

- Get help (e.g. talk to adult, call 911 or 811)
- Tell her sister/guardians that she took the pill
- Tell a close friend what is happening
- Speak to Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868, consult Bridge the Gapp for resources for youth about anxiety, or call Lifewise Peer Support at their Warmline (10AM-12AM Daily): (EN) 1-855-753-2560 (FR) 1-833-753-5460

What are some healthier choices Casey can make next time?

- Have a nap before the games started
- Get a good night's sleep the night before
- Eat a healthy meal so she is not feeling as tired
- Have a caffeine drink (not more than the recommended serving) (e.g., energy drink, coffee)
- Tell her friends she's tired and may not stay up late
- Get good sleep, reduce social media use, eat healthy
- Suggest to play Saturday morning instead of Friday night

Evaluate

What do you think Casey could learn from the choices she made?

- Don't take other people's medication
- Methylphenidate may have undesirable or dangerous effects for someone who does not have ADHD
- Methylphenidate can have side effects
- There are healthier ways to improve focus and energy