

Drug Awareness Week

ACTIVITY GUIDE 2010

For groups of young people aged 15 to 21

*Santé
et Services sociaux*

Québec 

With the participation of:
• ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport

Activity 1

Examine the question

Objective

To increase knowledge among young people of their risk and protective factors and the consequences of gambling and consuming alcohol and drugs.

Materials required

- The PowerPoint quiz, to download from dependances.gouv.qc.ca.
- A computer and a multimedia projector.
- A dynamic facilitator!

Format

Divide the group into teams of four or five participants.

Length

30 to 45 minutes.

Description of the activity

- Divide the group into teams of four or five participants.
- Use the PowerPoint quiz (to download at dependances.gouv.qc.ca).
- The teams must take turns answering the questions.
- After each question, the animator concludes by explaining the comments at the bottom of the slide.

Activity 2

The debate!

Objectives

- To help young people find solutions to their problems in ways that do not involve using alcohol or other drugs.
- To ensure that young people don't trivialize the consumption of alcohol or other drugs and can tell the difference between the various types of consumption.
- To help young people understand the consequences of using alcohol or other drugs.

Materials required

The list of subjects provided in Appendix 1.

Format

- Two teams address a specific subject and take turns trying to convince the jury that their arguments are better. The jury will decide the outcome of the debate. The judge will end each debate by providing the answer indicated after each statement in this guide.

Number of participants

- One facilitator, who will also act as judge.
- A jury composed of four to ten youths, one of whom is appointed to be the foreperson.
- The YES team (three to five people).
- The NO team (three to five people).
- The other people present, if any, serve as an audience.

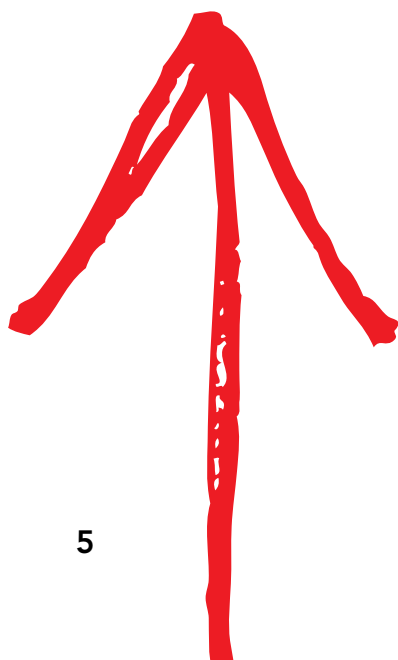
Length

Approximately fifteen minutes for each statement being debated.

Activity 2 (continued)

Description of the activity

- The facilitator (judge) selects three statements from those proposed in this guide, explains the rules of the activity, and ensures that the time allowed for each debate is respected.
- For each of the selected statements, the YES team and the NO team are given eight minutes to prepare their arguments. It is not necessary for all of the team members to agree with the position they have to take (YES or NO). Their goal is to find arguments that support the team's position. In order to strengthen the arguments, the facilitator may encourage the members of the team to use examples (real situations) in their argument.
 - Each team is given two minutes to present their arguments to the jury. Flip a coin to determine which team begins the debate.
 - The jury deliberates for up to five minutes, and then the foreperson announces the verdict.
 - The judge comments on the jury's verdict and initiates a discussion related to the subject with the participants, if necessary.
- If required, the teacher may refer to a variety of brochures produced by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) (e.g.: *Young people and alcohol*; *Teens and Cannabis*; *Young people and designer drugs*; *Drugs... Let's talk about it*; etc.). These brochures are available for download from the MSSS website, at msss.gouv.qc.ca.



Activity 3

Understand the issue!

Objectives

- To bring young people to examine their own habits related to alcohol or other drugs and gambling, in order to be able to assess their own level of risk.
- To encourage young people to discover an interest, a dream, or a life goal within themselves that can serve as a protective factor that will help them to avoid inappropriate behaviours involving drinking, using drugs or gambling.
- To provide an activity that contributes to structure a young person's identity, stimulates the creative thinking process and provokes meaningful communication.

Materials required

Questionnaire (Appendix 2).

Description of the activity

- Each student is invited to complete a questionnaire and to write a letter intended to be read five years in the future. Once the questionnaire has been completed and the letter written, the student seals the envelope and places it in a safe location. The letter should only be opened in five years.
- The facilitator can initiate a discussion with the students related to the importance of having things that they are passionate about and dreams that protect them against inappropriate behaviours involving alcohol, drugs or gambling (see the information concerning protective factors in Appendix 3).

Length of the activity

Approximately 30 minutes in class (plus time at home for those who have not finished their letter) and 15 to 20 minutes for group discussion.

Appendix 1

Subjects for debate – Activity 2

The debate!

Subject 1

Using drugs only to satisfy a physical or psychological need is a sign of dependency.

> YES

A dependency can exist on two levels: psychological and physical.

- Psychologically, dependency is the need to take a given substance more and more often in order to feel better about yourself, relax, calm down, become motivated, find the courage to overcome your problems, etc.
- Physically, dependency is a physiological need created by the body becoming habituated to the effect of the alcohol or another drug, causing difficulty in doing without it and relatively strong physical reactions during withdrawal.

Subject 2

Only people who have a serious dependency problem involving alcohol or other drugs experience negative consequences associated with their consumption

> NO

Young people experience negative consequences from using alcohol or other drugs without necessarily developing an abuse or dependency problem. Here are some examples:

- An unprotected sexual encounter that leads to a sexually transmitted or blood-borne disease or unwanted pregnancy
- Injuries as the result of a fight or an accident
- Physical problems (digestive problems, overdose, nasal irritation, etc.)
- Psychological problems (distress, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, etc.)
- Problems at school (absenteeism, lack of motivation, suspension, low grades, etc.)
- Relationship problems with friends and family

Subject 3

Someone you care about is drinking or using drugs to excess , and you are getting more and more worried. The best way to help is to confront him/her with the bad habits you have observed.

> NO

Confrontation is not the best way to help someone who is facing problems like these. Here are a few ideas about how to help:

- Wait until the person is completely sober before talking to him/her.
- Express your worries about their consumption.
- Tell the person about the changes you have noticed in him/her.
- Ask if he or she is ready to take steps to get help. If yes, encourage your friend to consult a professional counsellor. (Taken from the website: parlonsdrogue.com).

Subject 4

Smoking a joint or taking a drink of alcohol is an excellent way to overcome shyness when you want to tell someone that you like them.

> NO

Drinking alcohol or taking drugs is not a good way to control your emotions and overcome your fears, and using them for that purpose can quickly become a problem. In addition, it could send a false image of you or be unattractive to the person you want to like you. It's better to develop more self-confidence and do it with your own resources!

Subject 5

Switching from a group of friends who drink occasionally to a group that drinks regularly and in large quantities influences your consumption.

> YES

Your group of friends is an important component of your social environment that can have a great deal of influence on your behaviour. This also applies to drinking or using drugs. Many people drink more and more often if they hang out with other people who do. It is extremely important to choose your friends carefully.

Subject 6

During a party, chugging is a real challenge and shows who is a real party animal!

> NO

Chugging alcohol (drinking a large quantity of alcohol in a very short time) can cause acute alcohol poisoning, coma, and even death.

Here are the signs:

- Less and less responsive or no reaction
- Loss of consciousness or deep sleep
- Difficulty breathing
- Weak pulse
- Repeated vomiting
- Excessive sweating
- Skin damp or hypothermia (cold skin)

A person who exhibits these symptoms must never be left alone.



Appendix 2

Questionnaire

Letter to Myself

Right now, my main interest is:

I discovered it in:

What appeals to me about it is:

When I do something associated with this interest, I feel:

Today, I would describe myself as:

In five years, I imagine myself as:

Letter to myself!

Dear Me, I want you to remember that, five years ago ...

Appendix 3

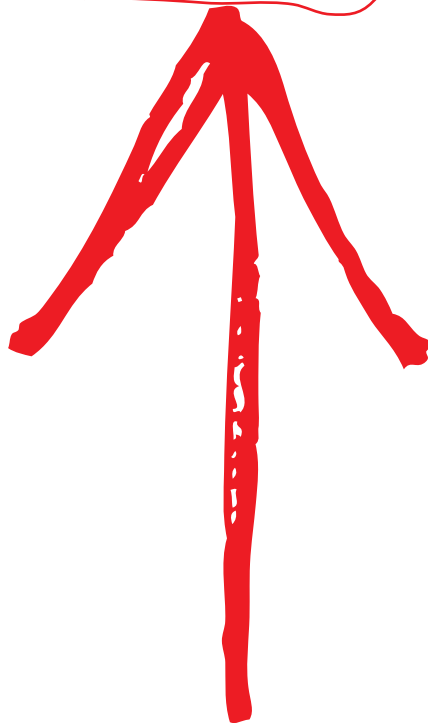
Supplementary information concerning protective factors

A protective factor is an element that helps to overcome certain difficulties, even when negative elements are present (such as being surrounded by people who drink a lot, have the impression of not receiving any support in difficult moments, etc.).

Protective factors can help you to avoid developing alcohol, drug or gambling dependency. **Here are some examples:**

- Having good self-esteem
- Knowing your strengths and weaknesses
- Believing in your future and setting goals for yourself
- Having friends who you can trust and be comfortable with
- Cultivating good relationships with your family
- Getting involved in projects, developing passions, and engaging in sports or leisure activities on a regular basis
- Having healthy living habits in terms of food, sleep, etc

Also visit the website: tasjuste1vie.com



Direction des communications, ministère
de la Santé et des Services sociaux

This document is available online at
dependances.gouv.qc.ca by clicking
Drugs and alcohol and then
Drug awareness week.

Masculine pronouns are used generically
in this document.

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