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What If?

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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1. Introduction

Background

The risk of giving in to substance abuse, through negative peer pressure, exists amongst youth of all backgrounds, and giving in to substance abuse, at any age, can lead to serious addiction problems. Such risk should be avoided at all cost because addiction often means job loss, relationship fractures, depression, and failure at school.

It is known that preventive work is essential. For example, the National Anti-Drug Strategy created a Prevention Action Plan which includes “the development of resources and tools for preventing drug use”¹. The performance of *What If*, using Forum Theatre, is a prime example of such tool.

Forum Theatre

What if is presented in a Forum Theatre format. It is issue-based and offers students the opportunity to participate in realistic situations. Forum Theatre purposely presents worst-case scenarios in order to stimulate audience members into action. Students reshape the production through interventions, thereby becoming actors themselves, or “spect-actors.” The show is performed once for the audience. The show is then presented again, but this second time students are asked to stop the action and suggest a more constructive solution to the problems presented. The students’ interventions are mediated by a trained Mixed Company facilitator (called *the Joker*) who ensures that the work remains productive and helpful. Consequently, students can rehearse for reality in a safe, theatrical environment, re-constructing the actions on stage to create positive alternatives to the anti-models presented in the play.

¹ <http://www.nationalantidrugstrategy.gc.ca/prevention.html>

The Goals of *What If*

The intent in performing the play *What If* is to, first, help students develop real-time strategies for dealing with peer pressure on using alcohol and/or drugs; and second, to engage those students in creating practical solutions they can apply to possible similar situations in their own lives. More generally, it is hoped that *What If* stimulates students' critical thinking and engages them in active problem solving.

Caveat: Disclosure

Mixed Company does not ask for or encourage personal disclosure from students during the course of the show. However, the production deals with volatile issues. Sometimes, during the interactive segment of the performance, a student may either disclose or otherwise be adversely affected by recalling incidents they have experienced. Mixed Company, therefore, STRONGLY recommends that a representative from your school's Guidance Department be present at the show and available as a referral option for students dealing with these issues. Please feel free to forward this guide to your school's guidance department for their information.

2. The Play

Synopsis

What If examines alcohol, drugs, peer pressure, and the consequences of abusing harmful substances:

Ryan is forced to choose between his best friend, Chris, and his girlfriend, Melissa. Ryan adores Melissa, but lately she's been getting on his nerves to achieve high grades. On the other hand, Chris, who embodies fun, has taken to smoking weed before class - a habit that makes Ryan uncomfortable.

When Ryan, Chris, and Melissa attend a party, they must choose how much to drink and whether or not to take drugs. At the end of the evening they debate who is sober enough to drive home. In an effort to please both of them, Ryan makes a decision that proves disastrous to all.

What if Ryan, Chris, and Melissa made different choices? What if their story didn't have to end in tragedy?

Scene-by-Scene Story Narrative

Scene 1

Chorus, or the voice of conscience, introduces the main characters, Melissa and Ryan, who appear from opposite sides of the stage while a video of the car accident, in which they were involved, is presented.

Scene 2

Ryan and Melissa tickle each other in a fun, loving way. It is game they often play as an expression of their desire to be together. However, Ryan lets Melissa know that he finds her too serious at times. Chris arrives and goes on to describe the Pre-Prom party and gets excited about the booze and the drugs. Then Ryan is forced to make a choice between studying for a history exam (as recommended by his girlfriend Melissa) OR smoking a joint with Chris. He chooses to satisfy Melissa's appeal. However, without Melissa knowing, Chris and Ryan still plan to meet at lunch time to smoke a joint.

Scene 3

Chris and Ryan smoke a joint in the school parking yard. They make plans for the party. Since his brother made him a fake ID, Chris will purchase the beers. Ryan wants to have one too. They discuss money and how more is needed so that Chris can buy enough drugs, in case he has the opportunity to make money by re-selling those drugs at the party. In the meantime, Ryan notices how much Chris has been smoking lately and encourages him to slow down. Chris counter-argues stating that weed is not a drug because it is organic. He continues by claiming that he could make a lot of money since, thanks to his brother, he can get the drugs at a low cost. Chris and Ryan get into an argument. Chris reminds Ryan that it is the ecstasy drug that finally gave him the courage to speak to Melissa. Chris tries to convince Ryan that drugs actually improve his quality of life. Chris accuses Melissa to have turned Ryan into a "wuss". Finally, much peer pressure is exerted by Chris on Ryan to smoke another joint.

Scene 4

The night of the party, Ryan picks up Chris and then Melissa (who expected to be picked up first). An argument ensues. Chris claims that Melissa should not be angry with Ryan but rather at him because he is the one who wanted to pick up some drugs and not Ryan. Nevertheless, she believes Ryan should be able to make his own decisions. They buckle up in the car EXCEPT Chris. On the way to the party, Melissa addresses the issue of drinking and driving and that the designated driver should not be drinking. She offers to be the designated driver because she knows Ryan will not be able to stop at a couple of beers once he starts partying and dancing. Then Chris assures Ryan and Melissa that he can drive under the influence of alcohol and drugs –and is proud of it – and offers to drive. Suddenly, the three

almost got into a car accident. Chris belittles the incident while Melissa is really upset. Then they go to the beer store. While Chris gets the beer, Ryan and Melissa have a conversation in the car about Ryan's recent behaviour and its impact on his future. Melissa expresses her concern that Ryan is becoming too much like Chris and that he is going to waste his life. Ryan accuses Melissa of being uptight. Ryan makes a "cross my heart an' hope to die" promise to Melissa that he will not drink or consume drugs excessively and that he will drive her home safely.

Scene 5

At the party, Melissa and Ryan get into another tickle game and then relax in each other's arms. Melissa and Ryan address the audience at each end of the stage. Ryan claims he had so much fun he did not need ecstasy (called "e") and then talks about the positive effects of the drug on Melissa. On the other hand, she claims the drug just made her thirstier. A little while later, Chris meets them. Ryan and Melissa notice the time and realize they will be in big trouble with their parents. An argument erupts between Ryan and Melissa about who will drive back home. Melissa considers calling a cab but Ryan has no money in addition to the fact that he must bring his mother's car back. At the end, Chris is able to convince Melissa to back down and let Ryan drive.

Character Breakdown

Ryan:	Grade 12 student - in a relationship with Melissa
Melissa:	Grade 12 student - in a relationship with Ryan. She is an ambitious student who wishes to attend the University of Western Ontario.
Chris:	Ryan's classmate and best friend who does not intend to go to University but rather wishes to work at his uncle's sheet metal shop.
Chorus:	The voice of conscience

3. Pre-Show Principles

3.1. Theatre Etiquette

Please review the following theatre guidelines with your students prior to the performance:

- Please be considerate: talking, whispering, snacking or shuffling about in seats disrupts the actors and distracts the audience.
- Please try not to leave and re-enter during the performance. Plan washroom visits for before or after the show.
- Taking photographs and recording sound or video during a performance is strictly prohibited by Canadian Actor's Equity regulations.

3.2. Sensitivity in the Classroom

Since *What If* tackles substance abuse through negative peer pressure, a topic that may give rise to strong reactions, Mixed Company Theatre would like to stress the importance of sensitivity and an atmosphere of trust in the classroom. Students may take emotional risks by opening up; therefore, teachers are urged to proceed with awareness and respect.

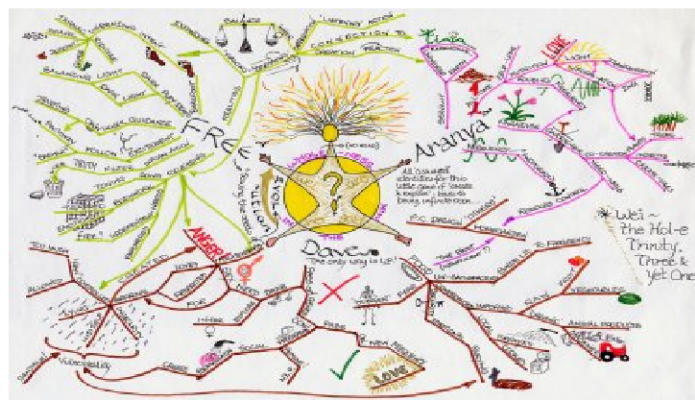
Before beginning any of these activities, please ask the students to agree to the following terms:

- Do not cause physical or emotional harm to others.
- Do not cause harm to yourself through the revealing or exploring of potentially painful emotions.
- Do not cause harm to the space.

4. Warm-up Exercise

Mind-mapping

Mind-mapping is a note-taking strategy, used in business and educational settings, to help generate, visualize, structure and classify ideas such as in decision-making situations. Below is an example of a mind-map:



In this first activity, students will first **write the words “substance abuse”** in the centre of a white 8½” x 11” sheet of paper and then add “negative peer pressure”

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Guru_Mindmap.jpg

Following are the steps required to complete the mind-map³:

- Start in the centre with an image of the topic, using at least 3 colours.
- Use images, symbols, codes and dimensions throughout your Mind Map®.
- Select key words and print using upper or lower case letters.
- Each word word/image must be alone and sitting on its own line.
- The lines must be connected, starting from the central image. The central lines are thicker, organic and flowing, becoming thinner as they radiate out from the centre.
- Make the lines the same length as the word/image.
- Use colours - your own code - throughout the Mind Map®.
- Develop your own personal style of Mind Mapping®.
- Use emphasis and show associations in your Mind Map®.
- Keep the Mind Map® clear by using Radiant hierarchy, numerical order or outlines to embrace your branches.

5. Post-Show Activities

The following activities have been developed to offer teachers and students the possibility of enhancing their classroom's experience of *What If*. These exercises will give students the opportunity to actively and reflectively explore further issues about negative peer pressure and substance abuse in relation to their own lives.

IMPORTANT NOTE: tolerance and generosity of the heart are essential qualities to the success of these activities. If needed, teachers can adapt the exercises to best suit the needs of their students.

The various types of activity listed in this guide include: small and large group discussions, reflection and journaling, as well as some improvisational acting work.

5.1. Group Definition: What is negative peer pressure?

Overall Objectives:

- To become aware of personal beliefs or attitudes around negative peer pressure and how influences such as family, friends, the media and one's personal experiences have affected these beliefs and attitudes.

³ <http://www.mapyourmind.com/howto.htm>

- To practice active listening through clarification, paraphrase and reflection exercises on “negative peer pressure”.
- To collate impressions around the concept of negative peer pressure to form a definition that sufficiently encompasses the range of experiences.

Material required: Chart paper and markers.

Activity:

- 1) As a class, students will brainstorm words or phrases which they associate with the concept of “peer pressure.” What is the difference between “negative” and “positive” peer pressure?
- 2) From the list created by the whole class (see above step), each student will choose four or five words that he/she feels are most meaningful to him/her and most critical in defining “peer pressure.” A straw vote⁴ is then conducted to narrow down the list to a total of less than ten words or phrases.
- 3) Finally, the teacher posts the narrowed and selected ten (or so) words or phrases around the classroom, and the class will “vote” on their feet, by moving to the phrase or word they prefer. This exercise will organize them into small task groups of approximately five or six students from the different definition groups around the room.

Group Discussion:

In a circle, the class holds a “talking stick” discussion (passing around a stick or rock to share talking time). Each student paraphrases the feelings of the person who spoke before him/her, and then contributes by offering his/her view on the following questions:

- Why did I choose the word I did?
- How do I feel when I experience peer pressure to do something I know is wrong (i.e. substance abuse)?
- Why do I think peer pressure is such an existing force amongst youth?
- Do you think negative peer pressure is more present in certain cultures than in others? Justify your answer.

⁴ A straw vote is defined as “an unofficial vote taken to obtain an indication of the general trend of opinion on a particular issue” (*Random House Unabridged Dictionary*, Copyright © 1997, by Random House)

5.2. Sculpting Images: How can negative peer pressure be depicted?

Overall Objectives:

- To look at various examples of negative peer pressure based on the students' personal experiences, therefore presenting different perspectives.
- To explore common processes of peer pressure (how it begins and how it ends).
- To explore different influences on individual responses peer pressure.

Material required: Chart paper and markers.

Activity:

- 1) The class is divided into small groups of approximately 3 students.
- 2) Within each group, each student in turn “sculpts” the others into a still image of peer pressure from their own experience. The creator of the sculpture should focus on the feelings during the negative peer pressure experience.
- 3) Each student has two turns to create a different sculpture each time. The group then chooses one of them to present to the class.

Group Discussion around the following points:

- Description of the process of putting and receiving negative peer pressure
- Feelings or perceptions (beliefs, attitudes) that lead to putting and/or receiving (negative) peer pressure onto someone
- Signs/Precursors that negative peer pressure experiences and substance abuse will occur
- Feelings and responses around negative peer pressure

Journal Activity:

Students can respond around the following questions:

- 1) What were the causes of the conflicts I sculpted?
- 2) Are these common causes for the conflicts that happen in my life?
- 3) How do I tend to respond to conflict?

5.3. Factors in Behaviour: How do I handle peer pressure?

This activity continues the process of examining experiences with negative peer pressure by focussing more on one's own personal responses to negative peer pressure.

Overall Objectives:

- To analyze personal past negative peer pressure experiences by including the perspectives of others;
- To explore personal responses to negative peer pressure and some of the factors which affect how we respond in different situations.

Note to educator:

This activity allows self-disclosure in front of other students. It is necessary to restate the rules of the class to ensure that each student is heard and respected.

Material required: Chart paper and markers.

Activity:

- 1) Students brainstorm situations where each of them was pressured into doing something that he/she knew was “wrong”. Each student should think about how differently each of us responds to negative peer pressure depending on the relationship between him/her and the other person, as well feelings or circumstances surrounding that negative peer pressure experience.
- 2) The students then reflect on recent negative peer pressure experiences they have had in the recent past and choose the one experience which was most memorable.
- 3) The class is divided into three groups. In each group, every student will sculpt the one memorable experience using the other student as bodies.
- 4) Each group will select two images to be presented to the rest of the class.

Journal Activity:

Students may reflect around the following questions:

- 1) Was the portrayal of my peer pressuring me different from how I remember

- or perceived the experience?
- 2) What could this be telling me about my perceptions or about the negative peer pressure experience?
 - 3) What were my responses to negative peer pressure experiences? Were these responses typical responses to negative peer pressure experiences? And were these responses typical of myself?
 - 4) What factors influenced my responses in these instances? What effect did my upbringing and my past experiences with friends have on my responses in these instances?
 - 5) How often do factors like these affect how I respond to negative peer pressure situations?

5.4. Unfinished Dialogues: Escalation vs. De-Escalation

Overall Objectives:

- To explore an unfinished dialogue through improvisation to negotiate a solution, if possible;
- To explore the ambiguous roles and contexts of the dialogues to unearth the power dynamics of conflict;
- To make students more aware of their own emotional “triggers” in a variety of situations, thereby increasing practice of their conflict resolution skills.

Material required: Unfinished dialogue slips (dialogues 1 and 2 provided below).

Activity:

- 1) Students follow these unfinished dialogues until they reach a conclusion, or until the dialogue heats up. The facilitator can also add characterization to the dialogues, providing variety and building role-playing skills.
- 2) Different members of the classroom, evoking different responses, can perform the same dialogue. The dialogue topics range in complexity as they progress.

Dialogue 1: The daring game

Student 1	Hi, I was looking for you everywhere
Student 2	Well... here I am!
Student 1	I wanted to ask you something
Student 2	Go ahead! Don't be shy!

Student 1 I was wondering how daring and risk-taking you are?
Student 2 What do you mean?

Student 1 Well, would you ever dare trying something you know you
 should not be trying?
Student 2 Like what? Any examples?

And so on...

Dialogue 2: Why not

Student 1 I feel sad.
Student 2 You always feel sad.

Student 1 I realize that but I do not know why.
Student 2 Maybe you should try something different to 'make you' happy.

Student 1 I am not sure...
Student 2 Why not?

Student 1 What if it doesn't work?
Student 2 It will. I guarantee you it.

And so on...

Group Discussion:

- Ask students what the scene was about. The students, surprisingly, will often have very different ideas of what they were creating. Reverse roles to create a new scene.
- Discuss variations, the ideas of escalation vs. de-escalation.
 - Ask the students: Where did the change begin (specifically, which line)? How important is it to be able to determine the moment when the resistance to the peer pressure of substance abuse broke down?
 - Students can then offer their own alternative lines as a solution to de-escalate the situation.

Suggested Topics for Dialogues:

Students can script these short, unfinished dialogues after practising dialogues 1 and 2:

- Dialogue 3: Rumours
- Dialogue 4: Strength of Character
- Dialogue 5: Individuality
- Dialogue 6: Help
- Dialogue 7: Learning
- Dialogue 8: Faith in Others
- Dialogue 9: Popularity Contest
- Dialogue 10: Love

5.4. Scenes from *What If*: Responses to negative peer pressure:

Overall Objectives:

- To extend the play forum process by allowing every student to choose a negative peer pressure experience from the play then inviting them to personally change it
- To explore the different responses to peer pressure in an oppressive relationship.

Activity:

- 1) In groups of three, students choose a scene that troubled them.
- 2) They role-play the scene twice, each taking a turn at playing a different character

Definition of terms:

Oppression: a situation in which one person(s) uses his/her power to improve his/her physical, social, economic, political or emotional state at the expense of another person(s)
Examples: someone is put down, disrespected or manipulated.

Some guidelines for students in role:

Oppressed Role: React naturally, but try to find a more effective resolution to the conflict so that the scene is changed and ends more fairly and peacefully.

Oppressor Role: React in character, trying to ensure that the conflict ends up being resolved (or not) in the same oppressive way. Please also consider what will realistically change the oppressor. An oppressor will not magically alter his or her ways. Remember: Someone who has power will do everything they have to retain it.

Bystander Role: An extremely important role: in most of the conflict we have contact or experience with, we are playing this role. This role is also a position of tremendous hope and power to potentially change a situation (or call in an authority that can). Take it seriously: think and try as hard as you can to mediate or change the conflict to a more positive resolution.

Group Discussion:

1. How did it feel to be the oppressed? As the oppressor?
2. What was the oppressor doing that made it difficult to resolve the conflict fairly and peacefully?
3. What were different tactics tried by the oppressed?
4. How did it feel to be the bystander?
5. How much was possible?
6. What were the restrictions to these possibilities?

Journal Activity:

Students can respond to the following questions:

1. What were my feelings as the oppressed?
2. How did I feel when playing the oppressor?
3. What were the motivations behind my actions in each role?
4. What seemed to be the approach to resolving the conflict that I identified with the most?
5. Which one did I find to be most effective?
6. How did it feel to be a bystander who stepped in?
7. Is there usually something that deters me from doing this?

5.6. Decision Style: The IDEAL decision-making model

Overall Objectives:

- To explore in greater detail the IDEAL decision-making model and understand how it can be applied in one's own life;

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- To re-think one's decision-making process in terms of the IDEAL model.

Material required: 5' x 3' space on a bulletin board or a wall which would be covered with white paper, divided into vertical columns with the headings: "I", "D", "E", "A", "L". Cue cards and markers.

Activity:

- 1) In pairs, students brainstorm different ways of responding to negative peer pressure situations from past experiences and from the play.
- 2) Each pair writes their answers on cue cards.
- 3) They post the cue cards on the papered area under each of the headings.
- 4) The whole class reads and discusses the categories and cue cards.

Homework:

Each student copies the I.D.E.A.L. Decision-Making Model (see *below*) in their notebook. During a pre-determined number of days following this event, each student will make notes about four negative peer pressure situations they will have observed or experienced themselves. Those notes can be handed in or taken up as a class.

The IDEAL decision-making model⁵:

- I** Identify the problem.
- D** Describe all the possible solutions to the problem.
- E** Evaluate each solution (pros and cons about each solution).
- A** Act on the best solution (choose the best solution and try it).
- L** Learn

5.7. Conflict Resolution in Life: 10 Commandments

Overall Objectives:

- Based on their knowledge, students will create a guide entitled "Ten Commandments of Negative Peer Pressure Resistance".

Material required: Chart paper and markers

⁵ <http://www.peelregion.ca/health/commhlth/injprev/pdfs/appendix3.pdf>

Activity:

- 1) Students work in small groups to create their “Ten Commandments.”
- 2) Class reconvenes to create a “master list” for the classroom, which will be on display in the classroom.
- 3) Alternatively, students can work as a class to create a “master list” for the classroom together.

Group Discussion:

Students can reflect upon this unit, and discuss what they feel they have learned about resistance to negative peer pressure. Alternately, students can complete a culminating journal activity discussing the following:

- What have I learned about resistance to negative peer pressure?
- Has my style of dealing with negative peer pressure changed since completing this unit?
- Who would benefit from this type of training/experience?
- Can you think of a past experience that you might have handled differently, knowing then what you know now?

Additional Exercises

http://www.camh.net/education/Resources_teachers_schools/Drug_Curriculum/Primary/curriculum_buildingconfidence.html

This website provides many in-depth exercises on substance use and abuse. These exercises are directly linked to the Ontario *Health and Physical Education* curriculum (all grades)

6. Online Resources

6.1. For Students

- **Canadian Content**
http://www.canadiancontent.net/en/jd/go?Url=http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/grow/drugs_alcohol/know_drugs.html
- **Centre for Addiction and Mental Health**
http://www.camh.net/About_Addiction_Mental_Health/Drug_and_Addiction_Information/about_alcohol.html.
- **Kids Help Phone**
http://kidshelp.sympatico.ca/en/informed/sub_drugs.asp?sec=3&sb=2

6.2. For Teachers and School Administrators

- **Centre for Addiction and Mental Health**
- http://www.camh.net/education/Resources_teachers_schools/index.html
- **Health Canada**
- http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/child-enfant/school-ecole/index_e.html
- **Substance Abuse Network of Ontario (SANO)**
- <http://sano.arf.org/curriculum.htm>. *Educating Students about Drug Use and Abuse.*
- **Public Health Agency of Canada**
- http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/7-18yrs-ans/comphealth_e.html*
*For additional information about the *Comprehensive School Health* program, readers can access its gateway, entitled “Communities and Schools promoting Health” at <http://www.safehealthyschools.org>.

6.3. General

6.3.1. FUNDING

- **Health Canada**
 - http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/drug-drogues/dscif-ficsa/index_e.html
(Funding, through Federal Government, for projects on substance abuse)

6.3.2. PREVENTION

- **Health Canada**
 - http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/pubs/adp-apd/prevent/index_e.html

6.3.3. FACTS, STATISTICS, AND OTHER DATA

- **Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA)**
 - <http://www.ccsa.ca/NR/rdonlyres/5D418288-5147-4CAC-A6E4-6D09EC6CBE13/0/ccsa0115212007e.pdf>
 - http://www.ccsa.ca/CCSA/EN/Statistics/Student_Statistics/
- **Health Canada**
 - http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/pubs/adp-apd/straight_facts-faits_mefaits/index_e.html
- **National Anti-Drug Strategy** (from Government of Canada)
 - <http://www.nationalantidrugstrategy.gc.ca/>
- **Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA)**
 - <http://www.ophea.net>

6.3.4. TREATMENT

- **Centre for Addiction and Mental Health**
 - http://www.camh.net/Care_Treatment/Resources_clients_families_friends/treat_young_people.html
 - Breslin, C.; Sdao-Jarvie, K.; Tupker, E.; & Pearlman, S. *First Contact: A Brief Treatment for Young Substance Users*. CAMH publication. 1999

Appendix 1

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Drugs are chemicals that change the way a person's body works.

According to the Centre for Addiction & Mental Health's (CAMH) student survey, Toronto students (Grades 7 to 12) reported the following rates of substance use during the past year:

- 51.3% drank alcohol
- 14.8% reported "binge drinking" (more than 5 drinks on one occasion)
- 20.1% smoked cannabis
- 8.3% reported use of illicit drugs other than cannabis.

What is the difference between medicine, legal drugs and illegal drugs?

Medicine

Medicine is a **type of legal drug** which doctors are allowed to prescribe them for patients, stores can sell them, and people are allowed to buy them. But it's not legal, or safe, for people to use these medicines any way they want or to buy them from people who are selling them illegally.

Legal Drugs

Cigarettes and **alcohol** are also considered legal drugs. However, in Ontario, it is illegal for anyone under the age of 19 years old to purchase or be served alcohol. It is also against the law to sell cigarettes to youth under the age of 19.

Illegal Drugs

Illegal drugs are identified as marijuana, ecstasy, cocaine, LSD, crystal meth, and heroin.

Important Questions

Why Are Illegal Drugs Dangerous?

Illegal drugs aren't good for anyone, but they are particularly bad for a kid or teen whose body is still growing. Illegal drugs can damage the brain, heart, and other important organs. Cocaine, for instance, can cause a heart attack - even in a kid or teen.

While using drugs, a person is also less able to do well in school, sports, and other activities. It's often harder to think clearly and make good decisions. People can do dumb or dangerous things that could hurt themselves - or other people - when they use drugs.

Why Do People Use Illegal Drugs?

Sometimes kids and teens try drugs to fit in with a group of friends. Or they might be curious or just bored. A person may use illegal drugs for many reasons, but often because they help the person escape from reality for a while. If a person is sad or upset, a drug can - temporarily - make the person feel better or forget about problems. But this escape lasts only until the drug wears off.

Drugs don't solve problems, of course. And using drugs often causes other problems on top of the problems the person had in the first place. A person who uses drugs can become dependent on them, or **addicted**. This means that the person's body becomes so accustomed to having this drug that he or she cannot function well without it.

Once a person is addicted, it's very hard to stop taking drugs. Stopping can cause withdrawal symptoms, such as vomiting (throwing up), sweating, and tremors (shaking). These sick feelings continue until the person's body gets adjusted to being drug free again.

Can I Tell If Someone Is Using Drugs?

If someone is using drugs, you might notice changes in how the person looks or acts. Here are some of those signs, but it's important to remember that depression or another problem could be causing these changes. A person using drugs may:

- lose interest in school
- change friends (to hang out with kids who use drugs)
- become moody, negative, cranky, or worried all the time
- ask to be left alone a lot
- have trouble concentrating
- sleep a lot (maybe even in class)
- get in fights
- have red or puffy eyes
- lose or gain weight
- cough a lot
- have a runny nose all of the time

What Can I Do to Help?

If you think someone is using drugs, the best thing to do is to tell an adult that you trust. This could be a parent, other relative, teacher, coach, or school counsellor. The person might need professional help to stop using drugs. A grown-up can help the person find the treatment he or she needs to stop using drugs. Another way kids can help kids is by choosing not to try or use drugs. It's a good way for friends to stick together.

Appendix 2

GLOSSARY OF TERMS⁶

Addiction

A person has an addiction when he or she becomes dependent on or craves a drug all of the time.

Depressant

A depressant is a drug that slows a person down. Doctors prescribe depressants to help people be less angry, anxious, or tense. Depressants relax muscles and make people feel sleepy, less stressed out, or like their head is stuffed. Some people may use these drugs illegally to slow themselves down and help bring on sleep - especially after using various kinds of stimulants. (See below.)

Hallucinogen

A hallucinogen is a drug, such as LSD, that changes a person's mood and makes him or her see, hear, or think things that aren't really there.

High

A high is the feeling that drug users want to get when they take drugs. There are many types of highs, including a very happy or spacey feeling or a feeling that a person has special powers, such as the ability to fly or to see into the future.

Inhalant

An inhalant, such as glue or gasoline, is sniffed or "huffed" to give the user an immediate rush. Inhalants produce a quick feeling of being drunk - followed by sleepiness, staggering, dizziness, and confusion.

Narcotic

A narcotic dulls the body's senses (leaving a person less aware and alert and feeling carefree) and relieves pain. Narcotics can cause a person to sleep, fall into a stupor, have convulsions, and even slip into a coma. Certain narcotics - such as codeine - are legal if given by doctors to treat pain. Heroin is an illegal narcotic because it is has dangerous side effects and is very addictive.

Stimulant

⁶ Excerpt from:

http://www.canadiancontent.net/en/jd/go?Url=http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/grow/drugs_alcohol/now_drugs.html. Updated and reviewed by: Ryan L. Redman, MD. August 2007. Originally reviewed by: Robert B. Lembersky, MD

A stimulant speeds up a person's body and brain. Stimulants, such as methamphetamines and cocaine, have the opposite effect of depressants. Usually, stimulants make a person feel high and energized. When the effects of a stimulant wear off, the person will feel tired or sick.