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# UNDERSTANDING SUBSTANCE ABUSE

## CHOICES, CONSEQUENCES, AND RECOVERY



By Jonah Sanders

# **Understanding Substance Abuse: Choices, Consequences, and Recovery**



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## Table of Contents

<b>Module 1: Types of Substances and Their Effects</b> .....	5
<b>Lesson 1: Substance Awareness &amp; Prevention</b> .....	5
<b>Lesson 2: Categories of Substances &amp; Their Effects</b> .....	8
<b>Lesson 3: Substance Awareness Activities</b> .....	12
<b>Lesson 4: Short-Term Effects of Substances</b> .....	15
<b>Lesson 5: In-the-Moment Decisions &amp; Long-Term Effects of Substances</b> .....	18
<b>Lesson 6: Jordan’s Story – Long-Term Effects &amp; Social/Legal Context</b> .....	21
<b>Lesson 7: Legal Status &amp; Social Perception of Substances</b> .....	25
<b>Lesson 8: Reflection, Personal Impact &amp; Informed Choices</b> .....	29
<b>Lesson 9: Visual Learning – Multimedia Exploration of Substance Use</b> .....	31
<b>Lesson 10: What’s Out There? – Substance Awareness Q&amp;A</b> .....	34
<b>Lesson 11: Myths &amp; Facts About Substance Use</b> .....	37
<b>Lesson 12: Myth vs. Fact – Clearing Up Substance Misconceptions</b> .....	40
<b>Module 2: Peer Pressure and Refusal Skills</b> .....	44
<b>Lesson 1: Understanding types of peer pressure (direct, indirect, internal)</b> .....	44
<b>Lesson 2: Common scenarios where youth face pressure</b> .....	47
<b>Lesson 3: Strategies to say “No” confidently and respectfully</b> .....	50
<b>Lesson 4: Importance of choosing friends who support healthy choices</b> .....	54
<b>Lesson 5: Role-play exercises simulating peer pressure situations</b> .....	58
<b>Lesson 6: Group brainstorm of refusal phrases</b> .....	60
<b>Lesson 7: Reflect on past situations and discuss better responses</b> .....	62
<b>Module 3: Short- and Long-Term Consequences</b> .....	65
<b>Lesson 1: Physical health risks (overdose, disease, brain damage)</b> .....	65
<b>Lesson 2: Mental health effects (depression, anxiety, psychosis)</b> .....	70
<b>Lesson 3: Social consequences (family, school, friendships)</b> .....	74
<b>Lesson 4: Legal issues: arrests, probation, incarceration</b> .....	76
<b>Lesson 5: Case studies of real-life consequences (fictionalized for sensitivity)</b> .....	80
<b>Lesson 6: Small group discussions on how consequences impact life goals</b> .....	82



<b>Module 4: The Science of Addiction</b> .....	86
<b>Lesson 1: Brain reward system and neurotransmitters</b> .....	86
<b>Lesson 2: How repeated use changes brain chemistry</b> .....	88
<b>Lesson 3: Loss of control and cravings</b> .....	90
<b>Lesson 4: Addiction is treatable—not a moral failing</b> .....	92
<b>Lesson 5: Visual diagrams of brain areas affected</b> .....	94
<b>Lesson 6 : “Myth vs. Fact” quiz on addiction</b> .....	97
<b>Lesson 7: Brief video animation explaining addiction neuroscience</b> .....	98
<b>Module 5: Pathways to Recovery and Treatment Resources</b> .....	100
<b>Lesson 1: Types of treatment: detox, therapy, support groups, medication-assisted</b> ....	100
<b>Lesson 2: Importance of early intervention</b> .....	103
<b>Lesson 3: to access help confidentially How</b> .....	106
<b>Lesson 4: Encouraging peer and family support</b> .....	108
<b>Lesson 5: Provide a printed/digital resource guide with contact info</b> .....	111
<b>Lesson 6: Q&amp;A about treatment and recovery myths</b> .....	113
<b>Lesson 7: Invite a local recovery counselor or peer mentor (optional)</b> .....	115
<b>Module 6: Review and Personal Reflection</b> .....	118
<b>Lesson 1: Summary of substance types, refusal skills, consequences, addiction, and</b> ...	118
<b>Lesson 2: Emphasize personal power to make informed decisions</b> .....	120
<b>Lesson 3: Encourage seeking help and supporting peers</b> .....	121
<b>Lesson 4: Reflection journaling: “One thing I learned and one action I will take”</b> .....	124
<b>Lesson 5: Optional sharing circle to voice commitments</b> .....	126



# Module 1: Types of Substances and Their Effects

## Lesson 1: Substance Awareness & Prevention

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

- Identify different categories of commonly misused substances.
- Describe the short-term and long-term effects of these substances on physical and mental health.
- Understand how legal status and social perception vary across substances.
- Recognize why awareness of these differences is important for decision-making.

### Welcome & Warm-Up

Icebreaker Activity

Prompt: What substances do you think are most commonly misused in your community?


 Student Response: \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 1: Introduction & Overview

Definition: Substances are chemicals that can change how the body and mind work.

Purpose: This lesson introduces the most common categories of substances, their effects, and how society views them.

Relevance: Understanding substances helps students make informed choices and recognize risks.

 Reflection: Why do you think some substances are legal while others are not?



## Section 2: Categories of Substances

2.1 Alcohol – A legal depressant for adults; slows brain function and impairs coordination.

2.2 Tobacco/Nicotine – A legal stimulant (age-restricted); increases alertness but is highly addictive.

2.3 Marijuana – A psychoactive drug with varying legal status; can cause relaxation, euphoria, or anxiety.

2.4 Prescription Drugs – Medications like Xanax or Adderall, safe when prescribed but often misused.

2.5 Opioids – Strong pain relievers (e.g., oxycodone) with high addiction risk.

2.6 Stimulants – Drugs like cocaine or meth that increase energy and alertness but can damage health.

2.7 Hallucinogens – Substances like LSD or mushrooms that distort perception and reality.

 Task: Match each substance category with one example and one short-term effect.

## Section 3: Effects of Substances

### 1 Short-Term Effects:

- Euphoria
- Impaired judgment
- Mood changes
- Loss of coordination

### .2 Long-Term Effects:

- Addiction
- Organ damage
- Cognitive decline
- Mental health issues



 Fill-in Exercise:


Alcohol long-term effects: \_\_\_\_\_

Nicotine long-term effects: \_\_\_\_\_

Marijuana long-term effects: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 4: Legal & Social Perception

- Alcohol & tobacco: Legal but age-restricted.
- Marijuana: Legal in some states/countries, illegal in others.
- Prescription drugs: Legal when prescribed, illegal when misused.
- Hard drugs (e.g., cocaine, heroin): Illegal, high social stigma.

 Task: List one substance that is legal but socially discouraged, and one that is illegal but sometimes socially accepted.

### Activity: Group Discussion

Scenario: A friend says marijuana is safer than alcohol.

Task: Discuss the short-term and long-term effects of both substances.

### Discussion Prompt

Question: How do social perceptions influence whether people choose to use substances?

 Student Response: \_\_\_\_\_

## Review & Reflection

### Quick Questions

- What is the difference between short-term and long-term effects?

 \_\_\_\_\_

- Why is prescription drug misuse dangerous?

 \_\_\_\_\_

- How does legal status affect substance use?

 \_\_\_\_\_



## Lesson Summary

- Substances affect the brain and body differently.
- Short-term effects include euphoria, mood shifts, and impaired judgment.
- Long-term effects can lead to addiction, organ damage, and mental health issues.
- Legal and social views vary, influencing how substances are used and perceived.

## Lesson 2: Categories of Substances & Their Effects

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

- Identify and describe the main categories of substances.
- Understand how each category affects the body and mind.
- Recognize real-world examples of commonly used substances.
- Challenge common myths and normalize informed conversations.

### Welcome & Warm-Up

#### Icebreaker Activity

Prompt: *“What substances do you think are most commonly misused in your community?”*

 **Student Response:**

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### Section 1: Introduction to Substances

Definition: A substance is \_\_\_\_\_.



Why this matters: Understanding substances helps us \_\_\_\_\_.

 **Reflection:**

Why do you think young people are more vulnerable to substance misuse?

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## Section 2: Substance Categories Overview

Each category includes:


- **Name**
- **Street/Common Names**
- **Examples**
- **How They Affect the Brain/Body**
- **Addiction Potential**

### .1 Alcohol

Examples: Beer, wine, liquor

Effects: Slurred speech, slowed reflexes, lowered inhibition

Risks: Liver damage, impaired judgment, addiction

 **Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

### 2 Tobacco/Nicotine

Examples: Cigarettes, vapes, chewing tobacco

Effects: Increased heart rate, short-term stimulation

Risks: Lung cancer, heart disease, strong addiction

 **Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_




### 3 Marijuana

Examples: Weed, edibles, hash

Effects: Relaxation, altered sense of time, memory issues

Risks: Cognitive impairment (especially in teens), dependency

 **Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

### 4 Opioids

Examples: Heroin, fentanyl, morphine, painkillers

Effects: Pain relief, euphoria, drowsiness

Risks: High overdose risk, respiratory failure, extreme addiction

 **Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

### 5 Stimulants

Examples: Cocaine, meth, some ADHD meds

Effects: Energy surge, alertness, increased heart rate

Risks: Heart problems, aggression, psychosis

 **Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

### .6 Hallucinogens

Examples: LSD, mushrooms, PCP, ketamine

Effects: Hallucinations, distorted reality, paranoia

Risks: Bad trips, flashbacks, risky behavior

 **Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_


### 7 Inhalants



Examples: Paint thinner, glue, aerosol sprays

Effects: Brief euphoria, dizziness

Risks: Brain damage, heart failure, sudden death

 **Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Activity: Match-the-Substance Game

Match each substance to its correct category and effect.

Substance	Category	Effect
LSD	_____	_____
Cigarettes	_____	_____
Beer	_____	_____
Cocaine	_____	_____
Heroin	_____	_____

 **Student Answers:**

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### Q&A Pause

- Which category have you heard the most about?

 \_\_\_\_\_

- Which surprised you the most?


 \_\_\_\_\_



## Review & Reflection

Quick Questions:


1. What is one short-term effect of alcohol?

 \_\_\_\_\_

2. Why are opioids considered especially dangerous?

 \_\_\_\_\_

3. Which substance category includes legal items like vapes and cigarettes?

 \_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson Summary

- Substances affect the brain and body differently.
- Categories include alcohol, nicotine, marijuana, opioids, stimulants, hallucinogens, and inhalants.
- Risks range from addiction to life-threatening health issues.
- Awareness helps prevent misuse and supports informed choices.

## Lesson 3: Substance Awareness Activities

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, learners will be able to:

- Sort and classify substances into the correct categories.
- Challenge myths and misinformation about drugs and alcohol.
- Reflect on how media, peers, and culture shape perceptions.
- Strengthen critical thinking for making informed choices.




### Section 1: Group Activity – Substance Sort

Setup:



- Provide students with printed cards (substance names, photos, or street names).
- Students work in groups to sort each card into the correct category on a large poster or table.




### Debrief Discussion:

- Were there substances that were hard to place?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Did any street names surprise you?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Why do you think people don't always recognize prescription misuse as dangerous?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2: Myths and Real Talk


### Game: "True or False?"

#### Sample Statements:



- "You can't get addicted to weed."  
 True / False → Why? \_\_\_\_\_
- "Prescription drugs are safe because doctors give them out."  
 True / False → Why? \_\_\_\_\_
- "Mixing alcohol and pills is no big deal."  
 True / False → Why? \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 3: Small Group Discussion

#### Prompts:

- What have you heard about different drugs from music or social media?  
 \_\_\_\_\_



- What’s the difference between what’s hyped and what’s true?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Who do you trust for real info—and who might not be reliable?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 4: Reflection & Wrap-Up

### Individual Journal Prompt:

“Which substance category do you feel you understand better now—and how might that affect your decisions?”

 Journal Notes:

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### Closing Circle (Optional):

- Share one fact or insight you didn’t know before today.
- Reminder: *This isn’t about judgment—it’s about information and choices.*

### Lesson Summary

- Sorting activities help students recognize substances and their categories.
- Myths about substances can be misleading and dangerous.
- Media and peers often shape perceptions—but trusted sources matter more.
- Reflection supports stronger, informed decision-making.



## Lesson 4: Short-Term Effects of Substances

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- Identify and explain key short-term effects of common substances.
- Recognize how these effects increase risk for harm.
- Explore how short-term pleasure can lead to long-term consequences.
- Reflect on personal or peer experiences with short-term impairment in a safe, nonjudgmental setting.

### Welcome & Warm-Up

**Prompt:** “What’s the first thing you think happens when someone drinks or uses drugs?”

 Student Response: \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 1: What Happens Right After Use?

#### Focus on 4 Main Effects

#### 1. Euphoria (“The High”)

- Short-term pleasure or intense happiness.
- Different depending on the substance (weed vs. opioids vs. stimulants).

 Why do you think people are drawn to this feeling?

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#### 2. Impaired Judgment



- Can't properly assess danger or consequences.
- Leads to risky decisions (unsafe sex, driving, fights).

✎ Example of a risky choice: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Coordination Loss

- Slurred speech, stumbling, slow reaction time.
- Dangerous for driving or even crossing the street.

✎ Have you ever seen someone who couldn't walk straight? How did it affect them?

### 4. Mood Changes

- From relaxed to paranoid or angry in a short time.
- Can hurt relationships or escalate conflicts.

✎ How could sudden mood swings affect friendships?

## Section 2: Real-Life Application

### Story Example (Fictionalized):

“Jay took pills at a party, felt amazing, then panicked when he couldn't drive home...”

✎ Reflection: What went wrong in Jay's situation?

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## Section 3: Multimedia + Group Processing


**Visual Aid:** Short video clips or dramatized scenarios showing:



- Slurred speech.
- Risky behavior from impaired judgment.
- Mood changes in social settings.

**Discussion Questions:**


1. What short-term effects did you recognize in the videos?

 \_\_\_\_\_

2. Have you ever seen these things happen in real life?


 \_\_\_\_\_

3. What might someone regret the next day after “feeling good”?

 \_\_\_\_\_

**Review & Reflection**

- Short-term effects can feel good, but they often come with immediate risks.
- Impaired judgment, poor coordination, and mood changes increase danger for self and others.
- What feels good in the moment can lead to regret—or even long-term consequences.

 Journal Prompt: “What’s one thing I learned today about the risks of short-term substance use?”

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**Lesson Summary**

- Substances can cause quick effects like euphoria, poor judgment, stumbling, or mood swings.
- These effects increase risk-taking and can damage safety, health, and relationships.



- Understanding short-term harm helps prevent long-term consequences.
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## Lesson 5: In-the-Moment Decisions & Long-Term Effects of Substances

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- Practice decision-making skills in scenarios involving substance use.
- Recognize how short-term “highs” impact judgment and choices.
- Identify long-term health, mental, and social consequences of substance misuse.
- Reflect on prevention strategies for self and peers.

### Welcome & Warm-Up

**Prompt:** “Think of a time when you saw someone make a bad choice in the moment. What do you think influenced them?”

 Student Response: \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 1: Role Play – “In the Moment” Decisions

#### Activity Instructions:


1. Break into groups of 3–4.
2. Each group receives a scenario card.

Example situations:

- “You’re at a party and someone offers you a pill.”
- “Your friend says mixing alcohol and energy drinks makes the night more fun.”



- “You see someone stumbling but they still want to drive home.”
3. One person plays the *user*, others play *friends reacting*.

 Group Notes:

What happened in your scene? \_\_\_\_\_

**Debrief Questions:**

- How did the “high” or mood change affect decision-making?

 \_\_\_\_\_

- How would the outcome change if someone was sober?

 \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 2: Reflection and Prevention Thinking**

 Journal Prompt:

“Have I ever seen someone make a decision they regretted because of short-term effects of a substance? What might they have done differently?”

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**Optional Share-Out:**


- Students may share insights (voluntary only).
- Emphasize: This is a *nonjudgmental space*.

**Section 3: Long-Term Effects of Substance Use**

**Key Impacts:**



- **Addiction & Dependency** – Brain craves the substance, making it hard to stop.
- **Organ Damage** – Liver (alcohol), lungs (tobacco), heart (stimulants).
- **Brain Development** – Especially harmful for teens; affects memory, decision-making.
- **Mental Health Issues** – Depression, anxiety, psychosis (certain substances).
- **Life Impact** – Reduced school/work performance, strained relationships, legal issues.

 Reflection Question: Which long-term effect do you think young people underestimate most? Why?

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### Section 4: Wrap-Up Activity

1. **List 2 facts you learned today:**


- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

2. **List 1 question you still have:**

- \_\_\_\_\_

### Quick Review Prompt:

“Euphoria isn’t free—what might it cost?”

 Student Response: \_\_\_\_\_

### Lesson Summary

- Role-play helps us see how short-term effects lead to risky decisions.
- Long-term effects can damage health, mental wellness, and life opportunities.
- Prevention means recognizing risks and making informed choices.



## Lesson 6: Jordan’s Story – Long-Term Effects & Social/Legal Context

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Describe how long-term substance use affects the body and brain.
- Explain the process and impact of addiction.
- Understand the connection between substances and mental health disorders.
- Reflect on how long-term risks influence short-term choices.
- Recognize how legal status and social perception influence substance use decisions.

### Intro Discussion – What Is “Long-Term”?

#### Warm-Up Questions:

- “What does long-term mean to you?”




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- “Can one decision today affect you years later?”




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#### Brief Talk:

- Long-term = cumulative harm over months or years.
- Substance use can cause “wear and tear” on both body and mind.

### Section 1: Case Study – Jordan’s Story




#### Narrative (Read Aloud / Handout):

“Jordan was 15 when he started smoking weed and drinking at parties. At first, it felt harmless—something fun to do with friends. Over time, Jordan needed more to feel the same ‘high.’ By age 18, he was using pills to escape stress and couldn’t go a day without



them. He felt anxious without substances, struggled in school, and pulled away from family. At 21, Jordan was diagnosed with depression and liver problems.”

### Reflection Questions:

- What were Jordan’s short-term choices?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- What were the long-term consequences?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- How did substance use affect both Jordan’s body and mind?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2: Physical Effects of Long-Term Use

### Breakdown by System

#### Organ Damage:

- Liver: Alcohol → cirrhosis, hepatitis
- Lungs: Tobacco → COPD, lung cancer
- Heart: Cocaine & stimulants → strain, risk of heart attack
- Kidneys/Pancreas: Alcohol & drugs → impaired function

#### Cognitive Decline:

- Memory loss, slower thinking, attention problems
- Brain development disrupted in youth
- Reward system rewired → harder to feel joy naturally

#### Matching Exercise:

- Alcohol → \_\_\_\_\_
- Tobacco → \_\_\_\_\_
- Cocaine/Stimulants → \_\_\_\_\_



- Marijuana (heavy, long-term) → \_\_\_\_\_

#### Activity:

- Show diagrams or videos of damaged organs (youth-appropriate)
- Invite students to match substances to the organs they harm

### Section 3: Addiction & Mental Health

#### Addiction as a Brain Disease:

- Not just “bad choices”—repeated use changes the brain
- Cravings, loss of control, relapse are part of the illness

#### Mental Health Impact:

- Depression and anxiety are common
- Hallucinogens and cannabis can trigger psychosis or paranoia
- Substance use may start as a coping mechanism and spiral

#### Case Story / Video Clip:

- Show youth describing long-term struggles with addiction or emotional trauma

#### Quick Activity – Myth vs. Fact Quiz:

- “Addiction only happens to weak people” → False

#### Reflection Question:

- Why do people keep using substances even when they know the risks?

 \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 4: Legal Status & Social Perception



**Discussion Points:**


- Laws vary by substance and location
- Marijuana perceptions have shifted with legalization
- Social stigma vs. medical use (prescription drugs)
- Media and peer pressure influence behavior

**Small Group Discussion:**

- Which substances have confusing legal or social rules?
- How do perceptions influence personal or peer choices?

 **Reflection Prompt:**

- How might legal status or social perception affect your decisions?

 \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 5: Review & Reflection**

**Journal Prompt:**

- “If I could send a message to my future self about the risks of long-term substance use, what would it be?”

 \_\_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_\_

**Wrap-Up Activity:**

- List 2 long-term effects you learned today:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

- One short-term decision that could prevent long-term harm:

 \_\_\_\_\_



## Lesson Summary

- Long-term substance use harms both body (organs, brain) and mind (mental health).
- Addiction develops through tolerance, dependence, and loss of control.
- Legal status and social perception shape how people approach substance use.
- Real stories like Jordan's show how short-term choices ripple into long-term consequences.

## Lesson 7: Legal Status & Social Perception of Substances

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, students will be able to:

- Identify how different substances are classified legally.
- Understand age restrictions, possession laws, and legal consequences.
- Compare how society views legal vs. illegal substances.
- Recognize how media, culture, and community influence perception.

### Mini Discussion Prompt

- “Why do you think alcohol is legal, but some other substances aren't?”



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## Section 1: Legal Classifications Overview

### Mini Lecture:

Explain the difference between:



**Legal Substances (regulated):**

- Alcohol (21+)
- Tobacco (21+)
- Prescription medications (legal with prescription)

**Illegal Substances (prohibited without exception):**

- Cocaine, heroin, LSD, MDMA

**Controlled Substances (legal or illegal depending on context):**


- Prescription opioids (legal if prescribed, illegal otherwise)
- Marijuana (varies by state/country)

**Important Concepts:**

- Schedule I–V classification in the U.S. (or local equivalents)
- Legal ≠ safe (e.g., alcohol and tobacco still cause harm)
- Consequences of misuse: fines, probation, jail, juvenile detention

**Activity:**

- Show a substance chart listing common drugs, legal status, and penalties

 Example:

Substance	Legal Status	Penalty if Misused
Alcohol	Legal 21+	Fine, suspension for minors
Cocaine	Illegal	Jail, fine
Marijuana	Varies by state	Varies

**Section 2: Social Perceptions and Media Messages**

**Group Brainstorm:**



- “What messages do we hear about alcohol?”

 \_\_\_\_\_

- “What do ads and movies show about weed or pills?”

 \_\_\_\_\_

- “Which drugs are considered ‘normal’ and which are ‘dangerous’?”

 \_\_\_\_\_

### Key Discussion Points:

- Normalization of alcohol and vaping in youth culture
- Stigma around illegal drug use, but glamorization of party culture
- Music, TV, and social media shape views (e.g., “everyone’s doing it” myth)
- Cultural and racial bias in enforcement (e.g., crack vs. prescription misuse)

### Optional Video Clip:

- Show 1–2 short clips from media portraying substances positively or negatively

## Section 3: Role-Play and Real-Life Scenarios

### Role Play Scenarios:

1. Student offered alcohol at a family party: “It’s just wine, you’re 16.”
2. Friend offers a prescription pill at school: “Everyone takes them for finals.”
3. Peer downplays vaping: “It’s not even real smoking—it’s just flavors.”

### Post-Role Play Discussion:

- Was this a legal violation, social pressure, or both?
- How does perception of “normal” affect decisions?
- What are the potential risks of each scenario?

 Notes:



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### Section 4: Reflection & Wrap-Up

#### Journal Prompt:

- “How do legal status and social perceptions influence my decisions or the decisions of my peers?”

 \_\_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_\_

#### Quick Review Activity:

- List 2 substances that are legal but still harmful:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

- One social perception that could lead to risky behavior:

 \_\_\_\_\_

#### Lesson Summary

- Legal status does not equal safety; alcohol and tobacco can still harm.
- Social perception, media, and peer pressure strongly influence substance use.
- Controlled substances may be legal in one context and illegal in another.
- Understanding the law and social influences can help make safer, informed choices.



## Lesson 8: Reflection, Personal Impact & Informed Choices

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, students will be able to:

- Reflect on personal perceptions of substances.
- Understand how legal consequences and social norms affect decisions.
- Recognize the importance of informed and safe choices.
- Identify resources for help and further information.

### Welcome & Icebreaker

- Quick question: “What’s one word that comes to mind when you hear the word ‘drugs’?”




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- Quick review of previous content:
  - Substance categories
  - Short-term effects
  - Long-term effects
  - Legal status and social perception

### Section 1: Reflection & Personal Impact

#### Journal Prompt:

- “What’s one substance that people in your world don’t take seriously—but should? Why?”




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- “How does knowing the legal consequences affect how you view certain substances?”



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### **Instructor Wrap-Up Points:**

- Legality does not equal safety.
- Critical thinking matters: don't just accept societal normalization.
- Knowing the law helps make safer choices—not just to avoid legal trouble, but to protect your future.

## **Section 2: Summary & Review**

### **Key Recap:**

- Substance categories and their effects (short-term and long-term).
- Legal and social perception differences.
- Addiction risks and mental/physical impacts.
- Importance of making informed choices.

### **Suggested Activities:**

- Show brief multimedia clips illustrating substance effects.
- Group discussion: What surprised you most from this module?
- Reflection sharing (voluntary) on personal insights.

## **Lesson Summary**

- Substances can have serious short- and long-term effects on body and mind.
- Legal status does not guarantee safety.
- Social messages influence choices—critical thinking is essential.



- Awareness, reflection, and knowledge of resources empower safer decisions.


## Lesson 9: Visual Learning – Multimedia Exploration of Substance Use

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Visually identify physical, emotional, and behavioral effects of substance use.
- Connect real stories with scientific facts about short- and long-term impacts.
- Reflect personally on how substance use can influence daily life and future goals.

### Introduction & Icebreaker

- Welcome students and briefly review previous content:
  - Substance types
  - Short- and long-term effects
  - Legal and social considerations
- Icebreaker Question:
  - “What’s one word that comes to mind when you hear the word ‘drugs?’”  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Warm-Up Discussion (pair-share or group):
  - “Have you ever seen a video or commercial about drugs or alcohol that really stuck with you? What made it powerful?”
- Instructor Note:
  - Clips shown are educational, not meant to scare, but to inform and empower.

### Section 1: Clip Session – Short-Term Effects



**Clip 1: Party Turns Dangerous**

- Scenario: Alcohol-induced poor decisions and risk-taking.

**Discussion Prompts:**

- What happened? What effect did the substance have?
- Could it have ended worse?
- How do short-term effects impact decision-making, school, and safety?

**Clip 2: Vaping and Breathing Trouble**

- Youth testimony or news report showing vaping health risks.

**Discussion Prompts:**

- What physical or emotional effects did you notice?
- How might this affect daily life?

**Clip 3: Prescription Pills Misuse**

- Scenario: Student takes ADHD medication without a prescription during exams.

**Discussion Prompts:**

- How does short-term gain lead to potential long-term harm?
- Could this have legal or academic consequences?

**Section 2: Clip Session – Long-Term Effects****Clip 4: Real Stories – Living with Addiction**

- Recovering young adults share experiences.

**Clip 5: Opioids and the Brain**

- Animation or PSA showing long-term brain and body damage.

**Clip 6: Family and Social Fallout**

- Fictionalized or documentary scene illustrating family and social consequences.



**Discussion Prompts:**

- What consequences built up over time?
- How did substance use affect relationships, education, or health?
- What would you have wished to know earlier?

**Section 3: Reflection + Group Activity****Activity: “If I Were in That Clip...”**

- Small groups pick one clip to reflect on.
- Questions for discussion:
  - What would I have done differently?
  - What does this clip teach others my age?
  - How does this change how I see this substance?
- **Group Share:**
  - Each group presents answers in 2–3 minutes.

**Section 4: Personal Takeaway****Journal or Silent Reflection Prompt:**

- “One effect I didn’t realize before today was...”

 \_\_\_\_\_

- “One way I plan to avoid this situation in my life is...”

 \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructor Wrap-Up:**

- Substance use isn’t about being a “bad person”—it’s about understanding real risks.
- Videos are powerful because we remember what we see—use that memory to make safer choices.



## Section 5: Q&A / Open Discussion

- Prompt: “What substances have you heard about, seen, or been curious about?”
- Encourage judgment-free sharing.
- Follow-up questions:
  - Where did you hear/see it? (media, school, family, etc.)
  - What do people your age believe about these substances?
- Optional: Use sticky notes or anonymous polls for students uncomfortable speaking aloud.

## Lesson Summary:

- Multimedia helps connect visual stories with real risks.
- Short-term effects influence decision-making, while long-term effects affect health, relationships, and life goals.
- Reflection and discussion promote safer, informed choices.

## Lesson 10: What’s Out There? – Substance Awareness Q&A

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, students will:

- Identify substances they’ve heard about or encountered in their environment.
- Clarify common misconceptions through structured Q&A.
- Feel empowered to ask questions and talk openly about substance use realities.

### Creating a Safe Space



**Facilitator Guidelines:**

- Set ground rules: “No judgment, no naming names, no sharing anything that puts anyone in trouble.”
- Establish confidentiality within legal boundaries.

**Activity: Anonymous Entry Cards**

- Give each student a notecard:
  - “What substances have you heard about, seen, or been offered?”
  - (No personal use required—just what they’ve heard or seen.)
- Collect the cards in a box or basket.
- Read responses aloud anonymously.

**Section 1: Group Q&A – What’s Out There?****Build a List:**

- Write substances on a board or flipchart under categories:
  - **Legal substances:** Alcohol, tobacco, over-the-counter meds
  - **Illegal or misused substances:** Marijuana, opioids, prescription pills, lean, ecstasy, vapes, etc.

**Discussion Prompts:**

- “Where do you usually hear about this?” (Social media, friends, music, movies?)
- “Which ones are people saying are harmless or ‘normal’?”
- “Are there substances people think are safe but actually aren’t?”

*Encourage honest responses without pressuring anyone to share personal use stories.*

**Section 2: Facts vs. Myths Live Q&A**

**Facilitator-Led Q&A:**

- Choose 8–10 substances from the student list. For each:
  - Explain what it is.
  - Short-term and long-term effects.
  - Legal status.
  - Common myths.

**Interactive Questions:**

- “What have you heard about this?”
- “True or false—vaping is safer than smoking?”
- “Why do you think this one is popular?”

*Allow students to ask questions after each explanation.*

**Section 3: Real Talk – What We Wish We Knew****Small Group Breakout Activity:**

- Groups of 3–5 students respond to:
  - “What do you think most people your age don’t know about these substances that they should?”

**Group Share:**

- Each group shares 2 key points.
- Facilitator adds missing facts or corrections.

**Section 4: Exit Ticket Reflection****Personal Journal Prompt:**

- “What’s one thing you heard today that surprised you?”

 \_\_\_\_\_

- “What’s one question you still have about substance use?”

 \_\_\_\_\_

*Collect exit slips or let students place them anonymously in a box.*

### **Lesson Summary:**

- Students explore substances they encounter in their world.
- Myths are clarified through discussion and facilitator guidance.
- Reflection encourages ongoing curiosity and safer decision-making.

## **Lesson 11: Myths & Facts About Substance Use**

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of this session, students will:


- Debunk common myths about substance use.
- Accurately describe short- and long-term effects of common substances.
- Understand how misinformation influences risk-taking.
- Learn how to fact-check and think critically before believing or repeating drug-related claims.

### **Introduction & Icebreaker**


### **Discussion Prompt:**



- “What’s one thing you’ve heard about weed, pills, or vaping?”

 \_\_\_\_\_

- “Where did that information come from—friends, music, TikTok, etc.?”

 \_\_\_\_\_

### Set-Up:

- Create a two-column chart on the board or flipchart:
  - **Heard it:** Rumors, slang, street talk.
  - **Know it:** Facts, health data, science.

### Section 1: Myth vs. Fact Activity

#### Activity Instructions:

1. Present a series of statements about substances (some true, some false).
2. Students vote “Myth” or “Fact” using:
  - Show of hands
  - Paper signs
  - Digital quiz tools

#### Examples of Statements:

Statement	Answer	Quick Explanation
“You can’t get addicted to marijuana.”	Myth	Regular use can lead to dependence, especially in youth.
“Prescription drugs are safe if they’re from a doctor.”	Myth	Misuse, overuse, or sharing can still be dangerous.
“Vaping is less harmful than smoking.”	Myth/Partially	Some risks are lower, but lung and heart effects still exist.



Statement	Answer	Quick Explanation
"Drinking too much alcohol can lead to memory loss."	Fact	Heavy drinking damages the brain and memory functions over time.

### Facilitator Tips:

- After each statement, provide a brief explanation and connect to previous clips, case studies, or Q&A insights.
- Encourage students to ask questions if something is unclear.

## Section 2: Critical Thinking – What Have You Heard?

### Activity Instructions:

1. Ask students to write down one substance-related statement they've heard from peers, social media, or music.
2. Place them on sticky notes or verbally share.
3. Discuss as a group and place each statement under:
  - **Heard it:** Rumor, slang, or social message.
  - **Know it:** Verified fact, health info, or science-based evidence.

### Discussion Prompts:

- "Why do you think some myths are so popular?"
- "How can false beliefs influence someone's choices?"
- "Where can you find reliable information?"

## Section 3: Reflection & Wrap-Up

### Journal Prompt:



- “Which myth surprised me the most today, and why?”

 \_\_\_\_\_

- “How can I use facts instead of rumors to make safer choices?”

 \_\_\_\_\_

### **Instructor Summary:**

- Misconceptions about substances are common but correctable.
- Fact-checking and critical thinking are essential for safety.
- Understanding myths vs. facts empowers students to make informed decisions and guide peers.

### **Lesson Summary:**

- Myths can be dangerous because they misrepresent risks.
- Facts clarify short- and long-term substance effects.
- Critical thinking, questioning sources, and connecting with reliable data helps reduce risk-taking.

## **Lesson 12: Myth vs. Fact – Clearing Up Substance Misconceptions**

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of this session, students will:

- Distinguish between myths and facts about substance use.
- Critically evaluate misinformation from peers, media, and social platforms.
- Understand how social myths and peer pressure affect choices.
- Share accurate information with peers to promote informed decisions.



## Introduction – Today, We’re Clearing Up the Difference

- Brief Talk: Explain that not everything students hear about substances is true.
- Goal: Learn how to separate myths from facts to make safer choices.
- Quick Icebreaker: “What’s one thing you’ve heard about drugs or alcohol that might not be true?”




---

## Section 1: Myth vs. Fact Game – Interactive Challenge

### Instructions:

1. Prepare 20 Myth/Fact cards (or use a slide deck).
2. Read each statement aloud. Students vote:
  - Thumbs up = Fact
  - Thumbs down = Myth

### Sample Statements:

Statement	Answer	Explanation
“You can’t get addicted to weed.”	Myth	Regular use can cause dependence, especially in teens.
“Prescription pills are safer than street drugs.”	Myth	Misuse can still cause overdose, addiction, or health problems.
“Vaping is harmless water vapor.”	Myth	Contains chemicals harmful to lungs and heart.
“Addiction can happen even if you try something once.”	Fact	Brain chemistry can change, risk increases with repeated use.
“Alcohol slows brain activity and	Fact	Even small amounts impair judgment and



Statement	Answer	Explanation
coordination.”		motor skills.
“Only bad kids do drugs.”	Myth	Substance use can affect anyone; addiction is not a moral failing.

**Bonus Round:**

- Students create their own Myth or Fact for the group to guess.

**Section 2: Real Talk – Social Myths and Peer Pressure****Small Group Discussion:**

1. Assign each group a theme (e.g., “Weed is natural,” “Everyone drinks,” “Addiction is a choice”).
2. Discuss:
  - What is the myth?
  - Why do people believe it?
  - What is the real truth?

**Group Share:**

- Each group presents their myth and fact correction.
- Instructor adds medical or legal clarification as needed.

**Section 3: Visual Fact Check Activity****Instructions:**

1. Show screenshots of social media posts, memes, or music lyrics that glamorize substance use (school-safe content).



## 2. Discussion Questions:

- “What message is being sent?”
- “What is the truth?”
- “How might someone younger interpret this?”

### Mini Talk:

- Explain how misinformation spreads online.
- Highlight reliable sources: CDC, SAMHSA, NIDA, youth health organizations.

## Section 4: Reflection + Takeaways

### Reflection Journal Prompt:

- “Which myth have you heard the most—and how has that shaped what you believe?”

 \_\_\_\_\_

- “What’s one fact you’ll share with someone else?”

 \_\_\_\_\_

### Instructor Wrap-Up:

- Remind students: You can’t make healthy choices with false information.
- Challenge: “Be the one who knows better and does better.”

## Lesson Summary & Wrap-Up

- Myths can mislead peers and create unsafe behaviors.
- Facts help students make informed decisions and resist peer pressure.
- Critical thinking, fact-checking, and sharing accurate info protects your health and future.

### Exit Reflection Prompt:



- “What is one thing you learned today that surprised you?”
- Encourage talking to a trusted adult if questions or concerns arise.
- Distribute or display support resources: counselors, hotlines, community centers.

## Module 2: Peer Pressure and Refusal Skills

### Key Points:


### Lesson 1: Understanding types of peer pressure (direct, indirect, internal)

#### Lesson Objectives

By the end of this session, learners will be able to:

- Identify different types of peer pressure.
- Recognize common situations where pressure occurs.
- Practice refusal skills to say “No” confidently.
- Understand the value of surrounding themselves with supportive peers.

#### Introduction: What Is Peer Pressure?

- **Warm-Up Question:** “Have you ever felt pushed to do something by friends?”  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Brief discussion: Define peer pressure and explore its emotional impact.

### Section 1: Types of Peer Pressure

#### Instructor Presentation / Guided Discussion:

1. **Direct Peer Pressure**
  - **Definition:** When someone explicitly tells, urges, or dares you to do something.
  - **Example:** “Come on, just take one hit—it’s no big deal.”
2. **Indirect Peer Pressure**



- **Definition:** Feeling the need to fit in based on what others around you are doing.
  - **Example:** Everyone at a party is drinking, so you feel like you should too.
3. **Internal (Self-imposed) Pressure**
- **Definition:** Pressure you put on yourself to meet social expectations or avoid judgment.
  - **Example:** "If I don't vape, they'll think I'm boring."

**Class Brainstorm:**

- Ask: "Have you ever seen or experienced any of these types?"




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**Section 2: Real-Life Scenarios – Label the Pressure**

**Activity: "Which Type Is It?"**

- Read 5–6 short roleplay cards aloud or hand out to small groups.
- Students discuss in pairs/groups:
  - What kind of pressure is this? (Direct / Indirect / Internal)
  - How does it feel?
  - What would be a strong response?

**Example Scenarios:**

- Scenario 1: "Your friend keeps texting you to skip school to go smoke with them." → **Direct**
- Scenario 2: "Everyone on your team brags about getting drunk over the weekend." → **Indirect**
- Scenario 3: "You tell yourself you have to drink or no one will invite you again." → **Internal**

**Section 3: Group Discussion – Pressure in My World**

**Small Group Reflection Prompts:**

- When have you felt peer pressure to do something risky?
- Which type shows up the most at school, home, or online?
- Do you think social media increases indirect or internal pressure?

**Group Share:**



- Each group shares 1 takeaway or insight.




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## Section 4: The Psychology of Pressure

### Mini Talk by Instructor:

- Our brains are wired for belonging and approval, especially in youth.
- Pressure isn't always loud or obvious—some of the strongest influence is silent.
- Internal pressure often goes unnoticed but can lead to harmful choices if unchecked.

### Key Quote to Discuss:

“Not all peer pressure comes from others—some of it comes from inside you.”

## Section 5: Self-Check Quiz / Reflection

### Short Quiz or Handout (for journaling or take-home):

- Which type of peer pressure do you struggle with most?




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- Who in your life supports your healthy choices?




---

- What situation are you most likely to face in the next month?




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## Section 6: Wrap-Up & Takeaways

### Key Takeaways:

- Direct pressure is clear and verbal.
- Indirect pressure is about wanting to fit in.
- Internal pressure is often hidden but very powerful.

### Discussion Question:

- “Why is it important to know the type of pressure you’re facing?”




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### Closing Activity:



- Students write one strategy they can use next time they feel pressure.
- Option to post anonymously on a “Power Wall” or board.

## Section 7: Optional Real-Life Scenarios / Role-Play

### Situations for Reflection or Role-Play:

1. Being offered a vape at a party.
2. Seeing friends skip class or drink alcohol.
3. Feeling the need to act “cool” on social media.

### Discussion Questions:

- What kind of pressure is this?
- How would you feel in that moment?
- What’s a safe and confident way to respond?

### Lesson Summary:

- Peer pressure comes in **direct, indirect, and internal** forms.
- Recognizing the type helps you respond safely.
- Practicing refusal skills and surrounding yourself with supportive peers reduces risky choices.

## Lesson 2: Common scenarios where youth face pressure

### Lesson Objectives

By the end of this session, students will be able to:

- Identify real-life settings where peer pressure is common.
- Reflect on how pressure shows up at school, home, online, and in relationships.
- Analyze how peer pressure affects decision-making.
- Develop awareness and early warning signs of pressure situations.

### Introduction to Peer Pressure Scenarios



**Discussion Prompt:**

Ask the group:

- “Where do you think teens feel the most pressure from friends or peers?”

**Facilitator Explanation:**

- Peer pressure often happens in everyday environments.
- It can be **direct** (someone says something) or **subtle** (you notice what others are doing).

**Common Pressure Zones:**

- School or college
- Parties / social events
- Social media
- Dating relationships
- Neighborhood or community
- At home (siblings, cousins)

**Section 1: Scenario-Based Small Groups****Instructions:**

1. Divide students into small groups (3–5).
2. Assign each group one common peer pressure scenario.
3. Each group will:
  - Read their assigned scenario.
  - Identify what kind of pressure it is (**direct / indirect / internal**).
  - Discuss the feelings involved.
  - Suggest a healthy response.

**Sample Scenarios:**

- **Scenario 1 – At School:**  
You’re in the restroom, and friends start vaping. They say, “Just try it once. No one will know.”
- **Scenario 2 – At a Party:**  
Everyone’s drinking. You feel out of place holding a soda.
- **Scenario 3 – On Social Media:**  
You see someone your age showing off drugs and getting tons of likes.
- **Scenario 4 – In a Relationship:**  
Your boyfriend/girlfriend says, “If you really cared, you'd get high with me.”



- **Scenario 5 – Family Pressure:**

An older cousin offers you pills and says, “It’ll help you relax before your exams.”

**Group Presentations:**

- Each group shares:
  - What happened in their scenario.
  - What type of pressure was involved.
  - What would be a safe and respectful way to respond.

**Facilitator Feedback:**

- Reinforce helpful ideas.
- Validate strong refusal skills.
- Reframe unhealthy reactions.

## Section 2: Pressure Mapping Activity

**Individual or Partner Work:**

- Students draw a “pressure map” of their life.
- On it, they label:
  - Places or people where they feel the most peer pressure.
  - One example of a time they felt uncomfortable but stayed silent.
  - What they wish they could have said or done.

**Optional Share-Out:**

- Invite volunteers to share a piece of their map.

## Section 3: Deep Dive – Why These Moments Matter

**Facilitator-Led Talk:**

- These scenarios may seem small—but they’re turning points.
- One choice can lead to bigger habits or risks.
- Not all pressure is negative—good friends can pressure you toward healthy choices too.

**Personal Journaling / Reflection Prompt:**

- “What’s one situation where I felt pressure and wish I’d responded differently?”
- “What will I do differently next time?”
- Reflection can be silent, private, or accompanied by calming music.



**Closing Circle / Q&A:**

- Recap key pressure settings: school, social media, relationships.
- Re-emphasize that everyone feels pressure—it's normal.
- Invite youth to name one supportive friend or adult they can turn to.

**Quote to End Session:**

“The real test of character is what you do when no one is watching—and when everyone is watching too.”

**Section 4: Refusal Strategies****Teach the 4 Key Refusal Techniques:**

1. **Say “No” Clearly** – Firm voice, eye contact.
2. **Give a Reason or Excuse** – Example: “I have a game tomorrow.”
3. **Suggest an Alternative** – Example: “Let’s go play basketball instead.”
4. **Walk Away** – Know when to remove yourself.

**Practice Activity:**

- Role-play with partners or volunteers.
- Sample prompts:
  - “Try this.”
  - “Don’t be boring.”
  - “Everyone’s doing it.”

**Lesson Summary:**

- Peer pressure appears in **school, parties, social media, relationships, and home**.
- Recognizing the type and source of pressure allows for stronger, safer responses.
- Practicing refusal skills and identifying supportive peers strengthens decision-making.

**Lesson 3: Strategies to say “No” confidently and respectfully****Lesson Objectives**

By the end of this lesson, you will:

- Learn practical verbal and non-verbal strategies to refuse peer pressure



- Practice confident tone, body language, and assertive communication
- Reflect on how to balance assertiveness with respect
- Build a personal “toolkit” of responses you can use in real life

## Section 1: Why Saying “No” Is Hard

### Think & Write:

Why is it sometimes hard to say “No”—even when you really want to?

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### Facilitator Points to Keep in Mind:

- Fear of judgment or exclusion
- Wanting to fit in
- Not wanting to offend
- Uncertainty about how to respond

**Remember:** Feeling nervous is normal. Saying “No” calmly, clearly, and respectfully builds courage and earns respect.

## Section 2: Core Refusal Skills

### Techniques & Practice

#### 1. Direct Refusal

- Example: “No, I don’t want to do that.”
- Practice: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. Give a Reason or Excuse

- Example: “I have practice tomorrow.” / “I’m not into that stuff.”
- Practice: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 3. Change the Subject

- Example: “Let’s go grab something to eat instead.”
- Practice: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. Use Humor or Distraction



- Example: “Yeah, I’m already weird enough—don’t need anything extra!”
- Practice: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 5. Walk Away

- Example: Silence is a response; you don’t owe an explanation.
- Practice: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 6. Delay or Avoid

- Example: “I’ll catch up with you later.”
- Practice: \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 3: Watch & Break Down Refusal Scenes

#### Instructions:

Watch the clip(s) or read the scenario below. Answer the questions:

#### Scenario Example:

Your friend says: “Just try it once—it won’t hurt.”

#### Questions:

1. What strategy did they use to say “No”?

---

2. What could they have done better?

---

3. How did the others react?

---

### Section 4: Role-Play Practice

#### Instructions:

- Pair up or work in small groups.
- Practice refusing in the following situations. Switch roles: one pressuring, one refusing, one observing.

#### Scenarios:



1. Offered a vape at a bus stop
2. Friends pressure you to drink at a sleepover
3. Your crush says, “Just try this once—it’s fun”
4. At a party, someone hands you a pill
5. Group chat dares you to do something risky

**Observer Feedback:**

- Was the tone assertive?  Yes  No
- Did the body language match?  Yes  No
- Was it respectful?  Yes  No

**Section 5: Build a Refusal Phrase Bank**

**Brainstorm & Write Your Own Phrases:**

- “Nah, I’m good—thanks though.”
- “I’ve got something better to do.”
- “Not my thing.”
- “I’d rather be safe than sorry.”
- “I don’t mess with that.”

**Add Your Own:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 6: Reflection & Journaling**

**Prompt:**

Think of a time when you didn’t say “No” and wish you had.

1. What stopped you?

---

2. What would you say or do differently next time?

---

3. Which refusal skill do you want to try first?

---



## Section 7: Choosing Supportive Friends

### Questions to Reflect:

1. Who in your life encourages you to be your best self?

---

2. What traits make a friendship healthy? (Trust, respect, shared values...)

---

3. How can you surround yourself with supportive people?

---

## Section 8: Closing Takeaway

Write a personal “No” phrase you feel confident using:

---

Name one person you can practice this with:

---

### Remember:

“Saying ‘No’ isn’t weakness—it’s strength. It’s choosing your future, not someone else’s.”

## Lesson 4: Importance of choosing friends who support healthy choices

### Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will:

- Understand how peers influence decision-making, both positively and negatively
- Recognize traits of supportive vs. risky friendships
- Practice strategies to build or maintain healthy social circles
- Commit to surrounding yourself with peers who uplift and respect your boundaries



## Section 1: Friends Shape Our Choices

### Think & Write:

How have your friends influenced your decisions—both positively and negatively?

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### Facilitator Points:

- Friends can encourage good choices (studying, sports, avoiding drugs)
- Friends can pressure risky behaviors (skipping class, substance use)
- Social belonging is powerful—but your future is more important than just fitting in

### Key Message:

“You become like the people you spend time with—choose wisely.”

## Section 2: What Makes a Healthy Friend?

### Small Group Brainstorm (write or draw your answers):

1. What does a healthy friendship look like?

---

2. What are red flags in a friendship?

---

3. How do friends influence your habits or lifestyle?

---

### Signs of a Supportive Friend:

- Respects your “No”
- Doesn’t pressure you to use substances
- Encourages your goals and health



- Listens and communicates
- Sets boundaries too

### Signs of a Risky Friend:

- Makes fun of your choices
- Pushes you into bad situations
- Guilt-trips or manipulates
- Disrespects your boundaries
- Gets angry when you don't follow

## Section 3: Social Circle Mapping Activity

### Instructions:

- Use the three circles below:

**Inner Circle** – Closest, most trusted friends

**Middle Circle** – Casual friends (school, sports)

**Outer Circle** – Acquaintances or online friends

**Step 1:** Write initials or symbols for people you know.

**Step 2:** Label each person:

- Who uplifts me?
- Who pressures me?
- Who I may need distance from?

### Your Social Circle Map:

**Inner Circle:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Middle Circle:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Outer Circle:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Reflection Questions:

- Were you surprised by your map?



- Did you notice any risky patterns?
- 

“You don’t need to cut people off harshly—but you do need to protect your peace.”

## Section 4: Practicing Friend Filters

### Instructions:

For each scenario, mark Green Flag (healthy), Red Flag (risky), or Yellow Flag (caution) and explain why:

1. “Your friend always skips health class and jokes about getting high.”  
Flag: \_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_
2. “They check in when you’re upset and don’t judge you.”  
Flag: \_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_
3. “They tell you, ‘You’re no fun unless you’re drunk.’”  
Flag: \_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_
4. “They never pressure you, even if they’re into different stuff.”  
Flag: \_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 5: Commitments & Role Play

### Practice Conversations:

- “Hey, I don’t want to do that anymore.”
- “I still care about you, but I need to take a break from our friendship.”
- “I’m looking for people who respect my goals.”

### Reflection Prompt:

What will you do if someone close to you pressures you into something you’re not okay with?

---

### Commitment Statement:

“One thing I will do this week to protect my peace is...”



## Section 6: Closing Circle Reflection

Share with the group (or write down for yourself):

- One trait you value in a true friend: \_\_\_\_\_
- One boundary you will protect: \_\_\_\_\_
- One phrase you'll remember when feeling pressured: \_\_\_\_\_

Ending Quote:

“You don’t need a thousand friends. You need the ones who want the best for you.”

Suggested Activities:

## Lesson 5: Role-play exercises simulating peer pressure situations

Learning Objectives:

- By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:
- Recognize real-life peer pressure situations
- Practice assertive communication and refusal skills
- Create a bank of strong, respectful responses
- Reflect on past decisions and identify better strategies for the future

Introduction

- Quick recap of peer pressure types (direct, indirect, internal)
- Icebreaker question: “What’s one situation where people your age might feel pressured?”

Role-Play Exercises

Purpose: Help students practice real-life refusal in a safe environment

Instructions:

- Divide students into small groups or pairs



- Provide them with 4–6 peer pressure scenarios (examples below)
- One student plays the “persuader,” the other practices refusal using learned techniques
- Rotate roles and debrief after each

#### Example Scenarios:

- A friend asks you to vape behind the school
- You're offered alcohol at a sleepover
- Friends want to ditch class
- Someone pressures you to post something mean online

#### Debrief Questions:

- How did it feel to say “No”?
- What worked well in your response?

#### Group Brainstorm: “Refusal Phrase Bank”

#### Activity:

- In groups, students generate a list of 10+ phrases to say “No” respectfully and clearly
- Encourage variety: humorous, firm, excuse-based, assertive, etc.

#### Examples:

- “Nah, not my thing.”
- “I’ve got practice early tomorrow.”
- “I’m good, thanks.”
- “I don’t want to mess up my goals.”

#### Guided Reflection & Discussion

Purpose: Deepen learning by connecting it to real experiences

Prompts for Reflection (verbal or written):



- Have you ever been in a situation where you felt pressure to do something unsafe or uncomfortable?
- How did you handle it?
- What could you have done differently now that you've learned refusal strategies?
- What kind of friends help you stick to your values?

Optional: Anonymous journal entry or group circle share

## Lesson 6: Group brainstorm of refusal phrases

### Lesson Objective

By the end of this lesson, you will:

- Generate a variety of respectful and confident ways to say “No”
- Practice using refusal phrases in different situations
- Reflect on personal experiences and identify supportive friends

### Section 1: Brainstorm Refusal Phrases

**Activity:** In your group, generate **10+ phrases** you can use to say “No” respectfully and clearly. Try to include different styles:

- Humorous
- Firm
- Excuse-based
- Assertive

**Examples to inspire you:**

- “Nah, not my thing.”
- “I’ve got practice early tomorrow.”
- “I’m good, thanks.”
- “I don’t want to mess up my goals.”

**Your Group’s List:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2: Guided Reflection & Discussion

### Think & Write:

Answer these prompts in your journal or discuss in your group:

1. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt pressure to do something unsafe or uncomfortable?

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2. How did you handle it?

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3. Now that you've learned refusal strategies, what could you have done differently?

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4. What kind of friends help you stick to your values?

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(Optional: write anonymously or share in a group circle)

## Section 3: Skill Review & Practice

### Option 1: Refusal Skills Bingo

- Each square has a strategy or phrase from your brainstorm
- Find classmates who have used or practiced it
- Mark your card as you go

### Option 2: Scenario Hot Seat



- Call out a quick peer pressure scenario
- Jump in with a refusal phrase on the spot
- Practice using different tones and body language

### **Option 3: Quick Quiz / Exit Ticket**

Answer these before leaving:

1. Which refusal strategy do you feel most confident using?

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2. Name one phrase you want to practice this week:

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**Tip:** Keep your list of refusal phrases handy—it’s your personal “toolkit” for staying safe and confident in real-life situations.

## **Lesson 7: Reflect on past situations and discuss better responses**

### **Lesson Objectives**

By the end of this lesson, you will:

- Understand why reflecting on past peer pressure experiences is important
- Recognize common triggers of peer pressure
- Analyze past responses and their outcomes
- Identify emotions connected to peer pressure and learn how to manage them
- Explore better ways to respond in future situations

### **Section 1: Introduction to Peer Pressure Reflection**

**Think & Write:**

- What is peer pressure? (Include positive and negative examples)

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**Reflection Prompt:**

Write down **one situation where you felt pressured**. Include:

- Who was involved?
- What were you being pressured to do?
- How did you respond?
- What was the outcome?

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**Why Reflection Matters:**

- Helps you understand your past choices
- Guides you to make better decisions in the future
- Builds self-awareness and confidence

**Section 2: Identifying Peer Pressure Triggers**

**Common Triggers:**

- Friends or peers
- Social media
- Parties or social events
- Academic competition
- Group activities

**Activity – Group Discussion:**

- Share examples of triggers you’ve noticed in your life.
- How did these triggers make you feel?
- How did they influence your choices?

**Think & Write:**

List **3 triggers** that affect you most and how they make you feel:

1. Trigger: \_\_\_\_\_ Feeling: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Trigger: \_\_\_\_\_ Feeling: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Trigger: \_\_\_\_\_ Feeling: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 3: Analyzing Past Situations**



**Step-by-Step Reflection:**

Think about past experiences. Answer the questions below:

Situation	My Action	Outcome	Positive/Negative Result
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

**Guiding Questions:**

- Did I feel pressure from others or myself?
- What worked well in my response?
- What could I have done differently?

**Section 4: Emotional Impact of Peer Pressure****Common Emotions:**

- Fear
- Anxiety
- Excitement
- Regret
- Pride

**Activity – Emotion Mapping:**

For each past peer pressure situation, mark the emotion(s) you felt.

Situation	Emotion(s) Felt	How It Affected Me
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Reflection Prompt:**

- How did these emotions influence your decisions?
- Did regret or guilt play a role in your learning?



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## Section 5: Recognizing Unhelpful Responses

### Examples of Unhelpful Responses:

- Giving in too easily
- Staying silent when you wanted to speak up
- Avoiding responsibility or ignoring consequences

### Activity – Role Play & Discussion:

- Act out a past scenario where your response wasn't helpful.
- Discuss:
  - What went wrong?
  - How could you respond better next time?

### Think & Write:

- One unhelpful response I've used: \_\_\_\_\_
- How I could handle it differently in the future:  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Key Takeaway:

Reflecting on past peer pressure experiences helps you recognize triggers, understand emotions, and plan better responses—so next time, you can make choices that protect your values and well-being.

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## Module 3: Short- and Long-Term Consequences

### Key Points:

### Lesson 1: Physical health risks (overdose, disease, brain damage)

### Lesson Objectives



By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Identify the physical, mental, social, and legal consequences of substance use
- Differentiate between short-term effects and long-term outcomes
- Reflect on how these consequences affect daily life and future goals

## Section 1: Introduction

### Think & Write:

- Question: “What do you think happens when substance use becomes a habit?”
- Write your ideas below and categorize them:

Category	Examples from Your Brainstorm
Physical	_____
Mental	_____
Social	_____
Legal	_____

## Section 2: Physical Health Risks

### Short-term vs. Long-term Effects

#### Short-Term Effects:

- Overdose
- Slowed reaction time
- Coordination loss

#### Long-Term Effects:

- Liver or kidney damage
- Brain development issues
- Higher risk of chronic illnesses

#### Reflection Question:

- “Why do you think teens are more vulnerable to these risks?”



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## Activity: True or False – Physical Health Edition

Circle **True** or **False** for each statement:

1. Only illegal drugs can cause long-term damage to your body.  
**True / False**
2. You can overdose on prescription medication.  
**True / False**
3. Substance use has no effect on the brain if you only use it once.  
**True / False**

**Discuss:** What did you learn from your answers?

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## Section 3: Understanding Key Risks

### A. Overdose

**What it is:** Taking too much of a substance, overwhelming your body.

**What happens:**

- Slowed or stopped breathing (opioids, alcohol)
- Irregular heartbeat or heart attack (stimulants)
- Seizures or unconsciousness

**Think & Write:**

- Why might overdoses happen even with one-time use?

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### B. Disease Transmission

- Sharing needles → HIV, Hepatitis B & C
- Poor judgment under influence → risky behaviors, STDs
- Drugs weaken immune system → more sickness

**Reflection Question:**



- What steps can you take to avoid these risks?

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### C. Brain Damage

- Adolescents' brains are still developing → higher risk  
**Effects:**
- Impaired memory and learning
- Loss of impulse control
- Higher risk of depression and anxiety
- Permanent damage with long-term use or early exposure

#### Think & Write:

- How would brain damage affect your future goals?

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## Section 4: Organ Health Stations Activity

**Instructions:** Rotate through stations in small groups. At each station: read the info, then answer the reflection question.

Organ	Substance Effects	Reflection Question
Brain	Marijuana, alcohol, stimulants	What surprised you most about this organ's reaction to drugs?
Heart	Stimulants, tobacco	How might these effects change daily life?
Liver	Alcohol	How can long-term damage be prevented?
Lungs	Tobacco, vaping	What is the most important thing to remember about protecting your lungs?

## Section 5: Real-Life Case Reflection



**Case Study:**

A teen overdoses at a party after mixing prescription pills and alcohol.

**Think & Write (Answer in Pairs or Groups):**

- What physical signs showed danger?
- 

- Could this have been prevented? How?
- 

- What choices made it worse or better?
- 

**Reflection Prompt:**

- “What do I want my body and mind to be able to do in 5 years?”
- “What choices help me protect that future?”

**Optional Creative Activity:**

- Write a **short letter to your future self**
- Create a **poster titled “My Body, My Responsibility”**

**Section 6: Wrap-Up & Takeaways****Key Points to Remember:**

- Physical health risks are real and serious
- Overdose can happen from one-time use
- The body is strong—but also fragile
- Every choice shapes your future health

**Take-Home Resources:**

- Top 5 risks
- Emergency signs of overdose
- Where to get help or more info

**Reflection Question:**

- What is one action you will take this week to protect your health?

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## **Lesson 2: Mental health effects (depression, anxiety, psychosis)**

### **Lesson Objectives**

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Define key mental health conditions: depression, anxiety, and psychosis
- Explain how different substances can worsen or trigger mental health disorders
- Recognize the signs of substance-related mental health struggles
- Identify positive coping strategies and know where to seek help

### **Section 1: Opening & Icebreaker – Mental Health Word Cloud**

#### **Activity:**

1. Write words or phrases that come to mind when you think of “mental health.”
2. Create a group word cloud on a board or poster.

#### **Think & Write:**

- How do you feel when you see some of these words?

---

#### **Transition:**

“Today, we’ll explore how substance use affects these very parts of ourselves—our feelings, thoughts, and minds.”

### **Section 2: Guided Teaching – Key Mental Health Effects**

#### **A. Depression**

- Substances like alcohol, opioids, and marijuana can:
  - Slow brain function



- Increase sadness or numbness over time
- Make it harder to enjoy things or get motivated
- Using substances can mask depression—but also deepen it

**Reflection Question:**

- Have you ever noticed someone using substances to “feel better”? How did it affect them?

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**B. Anxiety**

- Stimulants (nicotine, energy pills, cocaine) can:
  - Increase heart rate, cause panic attacks
  - Lead to restlessness, paranoia
- Some use substances to calm nerves—but it can make anxiety worse

**Think & Write:**

- How could using a substance make anxiety harder to manage in the long run?

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**C. Psychosis**

- Certain drugs (marijuana, hallucinogens, synthetic drugs) can:
  - Cause hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that aren’t there)
  - Lead to confused thinking, paranoia, delusions
- People with family history of mental illness are at higher risk

**Reflection Question:**

- Why is it important to know your family mental health history before using substances?

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**Section 3: Activity – Substance + Mental Health Match Game**



**Instructions:**

- Match the **substance** with its most likely **mental health effects**.
- Substances: Alcohol, Cannabis, Prescription pills
- Symptoms: Panic attacks, mood swings, hallucinations

Substance	Mental Health Effect	Your Reasoning
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Why might someone think a drug helps with mental health at first?
- 

2. What are the risks of using substances as a coping method?
- 

**Section 4: Real-Life Scenarios & Discussion**

**Scenario 1:** A teen smokes weed regularly to handle stress—starts feeling paranoid and withdrawn.

**Scenario 2:** Another uses Adderall to stay awake for tests—develops anxiety and insomnia.

**Think & Write (Small Group Discussion):**

- What mental health warning signs are present?
- 

- What could they have done differently?
- 

- Who could they talk to for help?
- 



Share one insight from your group:

---

## Section 5: Creative Reflection – “My Mind Matters”

Choose an activity:

1. **Write:** “One thing I will do to protect my mental health is...”
- 

2. **Draw:** Sketch a brain and fill it with words or pictures showing positive thoughts.
3. **Share:** One way you cope with stress without using substances.

*Optional:* Share anonymously if you feel shy.

## Section 6: Closing Recap & Support Resources

**Key Points to Remember:**

- Substance use can trigger or worsen mental health issues
- Depression, anxiety, and psychosis are treatable—but substances make recovery harder
- Protecting your mind is just as important as protecting your body

**Take-Home Resources:**

- Youth-friendly support hotlines
- School counselor information
- Optional “Mental Health Coping Toolbox” card:
  - Deep breathing
  - Talking to a friend
  - Journaling
  - Moving your body

**Reflection Question:**

- What is one action you will take this week to support your mental health?
- 
- 



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## Lesson 3: Social consequences (family, school, friendships)

### Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand how substance use can affect family, school, and friendships
- Recognize legal consequences of underage or illegal substance use
- Reflect on which consequences would impact your life the most
- Identify resources and support systems to help if needed

### Section 1: Social Consequences

#### Discussion Prompt:

- How does substance use change your relationships?

#### Think & Write:

- Brainstorm in your group or individually and write your ideas below:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Key Points:

- Family conflict, broken trust, arguments, or disappointment
- Dropping grades, suspension, or risk of dropping out of school
- Strained friendships, isolation, or peer rejection

#### Reflection Question:

- Have you seen or experienced someone whose relationships were affected by substance use? How?

### Section 2: Legal Consequences



**Discussion Prompt:**

- What could happen if a teen is caught with drugs at school?

**Key Points:**

- Juvenile arrests, probation, court appearances
- Long-term record issues affecting college admission, jobs, or travel
- Local laws (minimum age for drinking, possession charges)

**Think & Write:**

- How could a legal consequence affect your future plans?
- 

**Section 3: Scenario Discussion**

**Scenario:** A student is caught with drugs at school.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What social consequences might they face?
- 

2. What legal consequences might they face?
- 

3. How could this situation have been prevented?
- 

**Section 4: Reflection – Which Consequences Matter Most?**

**Activity:** Write or share your thoughts:

- “Which consequence—physical, mental, social, or legal—would most affect my life and why?”
- 
- 



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**Key Reminder:**

- Recovery and positive change are possible
- Seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness

**Section 5: Support Resources****Think & Write:**

- Who could you turn to for help if you or someone you know is struggling with substance use?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Helpful Resources:**

- School counselors or social workers
- Local support programs or youth groups
- Hotlines or online help services

**Lesson 4: Legal issues: arrests, probation, incarceration****Lesson Objectives**

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand how the legal system handles unlawful behavior
- Recognize short-term and long-term consequences of arrests, probation, and incarceration
- Reflect on how legal issues could affect your life and choices
- Explore strategies to stay out of legal trouble

**Section 1: Introduction to Legal Consequences****Discussion Prompt:**

- What comes to mind when you hear: **arrest, probation, incarceration?**



**Think & Write:**

- List your ideas and feelings below:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Key Points:**

- Legal consequences are outcomes from breaking the law
- Short-term vs. long-term consequences: some effects are immediate, others last years
- Knowing the system helps prevent mistakes

**Section 2: Understanding Arrests**

**Definition:** Arrest is when law enforcement detains someone suspected of breaking the law.

**Key Points:**

- Rights of the accused: Miranda rights, access to a lawyer
- Short-term effects: stigma, detention, impact on family and school

**Activity – Case Scenario:**

- Imagine a fictional arrest for underage possession of substances.
- Answer these questions:

1. What rights should the person have been reminded of?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What mistakes were made during the arrest?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. How could the situation have been prevented?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Section 3: Short-Term Consequences of Arrest**

**Think & Write:**



- If you were arrested tomorrow, what short-term effects would disrupt your life the most?
- 

**Key Points:**

- Bail, court hearings, temporary detention
  - Emotional stress, family involvement
  - Possible loss of school or work opportunities
- 

**Section 4: Understanding Probation**

**Definition:** Probation is a legal period where a person avoids jail but must follow strict rules.

**Key Points:**

- Typical conditions: reporting to an officer, drug tests, restrictions on activities
- Probation can be an opportunity for reform but also comes with burdens

**Activity – Group Discussion:**

- Would you find probation easier or harder than jail? Why?
- 
- 
- 

**Section 5: Short-Term Effects of Probation**

**Think & Write:**

- What freedoms might you lose while on probation?
- 

- How would constant monitoring and risk of violation affect your daily life?
- 

**Activity – Role-Play:**



- Practice a conversation where a probation officer checks in:

1. How would you explain that you're following the rules?

---

2. What questions might the officer ask?

---

## Section 6: Understanding Incarceration

### Key Points:

- Jail = short-term confinement; prison = long-term
- Daily life includes strict routines, limited freedoms, and safety risks
- Can impact mental health and physical well-being

### Activity – Reflection:

- Read a short testimony from someone who experienced incarceration.
- Answer these questions:

1. What challenges did the person face?

---

2. How could these challenges affect their future?

---

3. What could someone do to avoid ending up in this situation?

---

## Section 7: Reflection & Takeaway

### Think & Write:

- “What is one choice I can make today to avoid legal trouble and protect my future?”
- 
- 



**Key Reminder:**

- Understanding legal consequences helps you make better decisions
- Staying informed and making safe choices protects your opportunities and freedoms

**Suggested Activities:**

**Lesson 5: Case studies of real-life consequences (fictionalized for sensitivity)**

**Lesson Objectives**

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand how different choices can lead to physical, mental, social, or legal consequences
- Analyze how decisions affect health, relationships, goals, and legal status
- Reflect on strategies to avoid risky situations and protect your future

**Section 1: Review of Consequences**

**Discussion Prompt:**

- Which type of consequence do you think is most common—and why?

**Think & Write:**

- Physical Health: \_\_\_\_\_
- Mental Health: \_\_\_\_\_
- Social Impact: \_\_\_\_\_
- Legal Issues: \_\_\_\_\_

**Key Reminder:**

- Choices have ripple effects across many areas of life.

**Section 2: Case Study Activity**

**Instructions:**



1. Work in small groups (3–5 students).
2. Read the assigned case study.
3. Discuss the following questions:
  - What choices were made?
  - What consequences followed?
  - How did these choices affect health, relationships, goals, or legal status?
  - What could the person have done differently?

### Example Case Studies

#### Case Study 1 – Jamal and the Party

- Jamal, a promising student-athlete, attends a party where alcohol and weed are offered. He gives in to peer pressure, gets caught, and is suspended from school.

#### Case Study 2 – Layla’s Escape

- Layla uses prescription pills to manage stress. Over time, she becomes dependent, distances herself from friends and family, and fails several classes.

#### Case Study 3 – Tyrese’s Trouble

- Tyrese is caught with vaping products on school grounds and faces juvenile court. The incident affects his college scholarship opportunities.

## Section 3: Group Presentations & Class Debrief

### Activity:

- Each group shares key takeaways from one case study.

### Discussion Prompts:

1. What stood out to you?
- 

2. How might this story happen in real life?
- 

3. What advice would you give this person?
- 



## Section 4: Life Goals Discussion

### Activity – Future You: Protecting Your Path

- Reflect on your own life goals (college, job, family, travel, etc.).
- Think about how substance-related consequences could disrupt them.
- Identify actions and mindsets that help you avoid risk.

### Think & Write:

- One goal I have: \_\_\_\_\_
  - One thing I would say “**No**” to in order to protect this goal:
- 
- 

## Section 5: Wrap-Up & Reflection

### Reflection Prompt:

- What lesson from today will stay with you—and why?
- 
- 
- 

### Support & Resources:

- School counselor
- Local youth programs
- Helplines or community services

### Closing Encouragement:

“It’s never too early to make good choices—or to ask for help.”

## Lesson 6: Small group discussions on how consequences impact life goals

### Lesson Objectives



By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand how choices and consequences can affect your personal goals
- Differentiate between short-term and long-term consequences
- Reflect on the impact of consequences on academics, career, relationships, emotions, and finances
- Develop strategies to protect and pursue your goals

## Section 1: Icebreaker – My Life Goals

### Activity:

- In small groups, share **one personal life goal** (e.g., finishing school, career aspiration, health goal, family plans).

### Think & Write:

- My life goal: \_\_\_\_\_
- Why this goal is important to me: \_\_\_\_\_

### Key Reminder:

- Every choice you make can either support or hinder your life goals.

## Section 2: Short-Term vs. Long-Term Consequences

### Definitions:

- **Short-Term Consequences:** Immediate results of a decision (e.g., suspension, fines, arguments, loss of trust)
- **Long-Term Consequences:** Lasting effects that can delay or block goals (e.g., criminal records, broken relationships, career setbacks)

### Activity – Group Exercise:

- Choose **one risky behavior** (e.g., skipping school, breaking the law, substance use)
- Make two lists:

Short-Term Consequences	Long-Term Consequences



Short-Term Consequences	Long-Term Consequences

**Reflection Question:**

- How might these consequences affect my personal life goals?
- 

### Section 3: Academic and Career Goals

**Discussion Points:**

- Poor choices can lead to dropping out, disciplinary records, or missed opportunities
- Legal or school records can affect college admissions and future jobs
- Keeping a clean record is important for career growth

**Activity – Small Group Discussion:**

- Discuss: “What career could be blocked if you had a criminal or disciplinary record?”
- 
- 
- 

### Section 4: Relationships and Social Life

**Discussion Points:**

- Consequences can lead to loss of trust from family
- Peer reputation can suffer, resulting in rejection or isolation
- Harder to form supportive networks when trust is broken

**Activity – Role-Play:**

- One person plays a parent or friend disappointed by a consequence
- Others discuss or act out **how they would rebuild trust**
- Reflection Question: How can I repair relationships after a mistake?



## Section 5: Emotional and Mental Health Consequences

### Discussion Points:

- Bad choices can trigger stress, anxiety, regret, and shame
- Long-term impact can lower self-esteem and motivation
- Emotions affect focus and drive toward goals

### Activity – Sharing Circle:

- Share: “How do emotions after a mistake affect your drive to succeed?”

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## Section 6: Financial Consequences and Life Planning

### Discussion Points:

- Poor choices can result in fines, legal fees, missed scholarships, or job loss
- Financial strain delays dreams like college, business, or travel
- Budgeting and planning help protect your goals

### Activity – Group Problem-Solving:

- Imagine someone is fined **\$2,000** for a poor choice
- Discuss:
  1. How would this affect their savings or budget?
  2. What goals might be delayed or lost?
  3. How could they prevent this in the future?

### Think & Write:

- One financial goal I want to protect: \_\_\_\_\_
- One action I will take to avoid financial consequences: \_\_\_\_\_

## Reflection Prompt

- How do I plan to protect my **life goals** from negative consequences?

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**Closing Thought:**

“Your choices today shape your future tomorrow—think ahead, act wisely, protect your goals.”

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## Module 4: The Science of Addiction

**Key Points:**

### Lesson 1: Brain reward system and neurotransmitters

**Lesson Objectives**

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Understand how the brain’s reward system and neurotransmitters work
- Explain how repeated substance use changes brain chemistry
- Describe how addiction leads to cravings and loss of control
- Recognize that addiction is a medical condition, not a personal weakness

### Section 1: Introduction

**Discussion Prompt:**

- Think about this question:

“Why do you think people keep using substances even when they know they’re harmful?”

**Think & Write:**

- My answer: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other ideas I heard from peers: \_\_\_\_\_

**Key Reminder:**

- Addiction is not just about choice—it involves physical and mental changes in the brain.

## Section 2: The Brain’s Reward System

### Content Overview:

- Neurotransmitters (like **dopamine**) send signals that tell your brain “this feels good”
- The **reward system** motivates you to repeat activities that give pleasure, such as:
  - Eating
  - Playing games
  - Social interactions
- Substances **hijack the reward system**, causing extra dopamine to be released unnaturally, which tricks your brain into wanting more

### Visual Aid:

- Look at the diagram of the brain highlighting the **reward system**
- Watch a short animated video showing how dopamine works (if available)

### Think & Write:

1. One natural activity that makes me feel good: \_\_\_\_\_
2. How might using substances change this natural feeling? \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 3: How Addiction Develops

### Content Overview:

- Repeated substance use alters brain chemistry
- Cravings occur because the brain now expects the substance to feel pleasure
- Loss of control happens as the brain prioritizes substance use over other activities

### Think & Write:

- How do you think cravings might affect a person’s daily life? \_\_\_\_\_
- 

- Why is it important to know that addiction is a medical condition, not weakness?
- 



## Section 4: Reflection Activity

### Prompt:

- “Imagine a friend is struggling with substance use. How would you explain to them why it’s not just about willpower?”

### Write Your Response:

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### Key Takeaway:

“Understanding the brain helps us see that addiction is a medical issue—and support, not judgment, is what helps recovery.”

## Lesson 2: How repeated use changes brain chemistry

### Lesson Objectives

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Explain how repeated substance use changes brain chemistry
- Understand the concept of tolerance, cravings, and addiction
- Recognize why normal activities may feel less enjoyable after repeated use

## Section 1: How the Brain Adapts

### Content Overview:

- Repeated substance use floods the brain with **dopamine**
- Over time, the brain produces **less natural dopamine**, so normal activities feel less rewarding
- This leads to:
  - **Loss of interest** in hobbies, food, or social activities
  - **Need for higher doses** to get the same pleasurable effect (**tolerance**)



**Think & Write:**

1. Name one activity that normally makes you happy: \_\_\_\_\_
2. How might this activity feel if your brain is used to artificial dopamine from substances?

**Section 2: Tolerance & Cravings**

**Content Overview:**

- **Tolerance:** Needing more of a substance to feel the same effect
- **Cravings:** Strong desire to use the substance because the brain wants that high dopamine
- **Addiction:** When the brain prioritizes substance use over other activities, even if harmful

**Think & Write:**

- What might happen if someone keeps increasing their use to chase the same high?

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**Section 3: The Addiction Cycle**

**Visual Aid / Optional Activity:**

- Use this simple cycle to understand addiction:

Use → Reward → Reuse → Tolerance → Craving → Addiction

**Reflection Questions:**

1. Which part of the cycle do you think is hardest to break? Why?

---

2. How could understanding this cycle help someone make healthier choices?

---

**Section 4: Reflection Activity**



**Prompt:**

- “Think about a habit or activity you do often. How does repetition change the way you enjoy it?”

**Write Your Response:**


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**Key Takeaway:**

“The brain adapts to repeated highs, which is why addiction is powerful—but understanding it gives you the knowledge to prevent or manage it.”

**Lesson 3: Loss of control and cravings****Lesson Objectives**

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Understand why cravings feel so strong
- Explain how addiction affects decision-making and impulse control
- Recognize that feeling unable to stop is part of the brain’s adaptation, not a personal failure

**Section 1: Why Cravings Happen****Content Overview:**

- Addiction makes the brain **prioritize the substance** like it would food, water, or survival
- Cravings are the brain’s signal: “I need this to feel good or normal”
- Even when someone wants to stop, **the brain still pushes for use**

**Think & Write:**

1. Have you ever craved something intensely (food, game, phone)? How did it feel?



- 
2. How do you think this feeling is similar to substance cravings?
- 

## Section 2: Impact on Decision-Making

### Content Overview:

- Addiction **rewires the brain**:
  - Reduces impulse control
  - Increases focus on substance over other priorities
  - Makes it harder to make long-term decisions
- Real feeling: wanting to stop but feeling “out of control”

### Think & Write:

- Why do you think someone might keep using a substance even if it’s harmful?
- 
- How could this affect school, friendships, or family relationships?
- 

## Section 3: Recognizing the Signs

### Activity – Self-Reflection:

- List 3 behaviors or feelings that could indicate someone is losing control due to substance use:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_

### Prompt:

- How could recognizing these signs early help someone get support before addiction worsens?
- 



## Section 4: Reflection

### Prompt:

- “Think of a habit or craving you have. What strategies help you resist when the urge is strong?”

### Write Your Response:

---



---



---

### Key Takeaway:

“Addiction changes the brain, making cravings powerful. Feeling out of control is not weakness—it’s a signal that support and strategies are needed to regain balance.”

## Lesson 4: Addiction is treatable—not a moral failing

### Lesson Objectives

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Understand that addiction is a medical condition, not a weakness
- Identify ways people recover from addiction
- Reflect on how reducing shame encourages asking for help

## Section 1: Addiction is Not a Moral Failing

### Content Overview:

- Addiction changes the brain, affecting cravings and decision-making
- Feeling “out of control” does **not mean someone is lazy or bad**
- Compassion and understanding are key for supporting people with addiction

### Think & Write:



- Why might someone wrongly assume addiction is a moral failing?
- 

- How does knowing addiction is a medical condition change the way you think about it?
- 

## Section 2: Support Systems for Recovery

### Content Overview:

Recovery is possible with the right support:

- **Professional Help:** counseling, therapy, treatment centers
- **Peer Support:** recovery groups, mentors
- **Family & Friends:** encouragement, guidance, accountability

### Activity – Identify Support in Your Life:

- List 3 people or resources you could turn to if you or someone you know needed help:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 3: Reducing Shame

### Content Overview:

- Shame and guilt can stop people from seeking help
- Being supportive and kind encourages asking for help
- Recovery is a journey, not a one-time event

### Think & Write:

- How can you show understanding to someone struggling with addiction?
- 

- Why is reducing shame important for recovery?
- 



## Section 4: Reflection & Recap

### Discussion Prompts:

- “What surprised you most about how addiction works?”
- “Why is it important to treat people with addiction with kindness?”

### Optional Journal / Exit Ticket:

- Write **one myth you now know isn't true about addiction:**
- 
- 

### Key Takeaway:

“Addiction is a treatable condition, not a personal failure. With support, understanding, and care, recovery is possible.”

### Suggested Activities:

## Lesson 5: Visual diagrams of brain areas affected

### Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Identify the brain regions affected by substance use and addiction
- Understand how neurotransmitters like dopamine contribute to addiction
- Separate common myths from scientific facts
- View addiction as a treatable brain condition—not a moral failing

## Section 1: Introduction

### Think & Write:

- What do you think happens in the brain when someone becomes addicted?
- 



**Preview:**

- Today you'll learn about the brain, addiction myths, and recovery.

**Section 2: Key Brain Areas and Their Roles****Visual Diagram Activity:**

- Look at the provided brain diagram or display on screen
- Key areas to focus on:

<b>Brain Area</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>How Substance Use Affects It</b>
<b>Prefrontal Cortex</b>	Decision-making, self-control	Impaired judgment and impulse control
<b>Nucleus Accumbens</b>	Reward and motivation	Flooded with dopamine; cravings increase
<b>Amygdala</b>	Emotions and stress responses	Heightened emotional reactions and craving triggers
<b>Ventral Tegmental Area (VTA)</b>	Dopamine production	Overstimulated by substances, reinforcing addiction

**Activity – Label & Color-Code:**

- On your handout, label each brain region
- Color-code areas affected most by addiction
- Optional: Draw arrows showing dopamine pathways

**Section 3: How Addiction Changes the Brain****Think & Write:**

- How does flooding the brain with dopamine affect natural rewards?
- 

- Why does repeated use reduce self-control and make quitting hard?
- 



**Discussion Prompt:**

- “Which brain area do you think is most affected when someone struggles with cravings?”
- Discuss in small groups and share your thoughts

**Section 4: Separating Myths from Facts**

**Common Myths:**

- Addiction is just a matter of willpower
- People choose to become addicted

**Facts:**

- Addiction rewires the brain, altering decision-making and reward systems
- Recovery is possible with support, therapy, and healthy habits

**Activity – Myth Buster:**

- Write down 2 myths you’ve heard about addiction
- Next to each, write the scientific fact you’ve learned today

Myth	Fact

**Section 5: Reflection & Recap**

**Journal Prompt:**

- “After learning about the brain, how has your view of addiction changed?”
- 

**Key Takeaway:**

“Addiction is a brain condition, not a moral failing. Understanding how it affects brain areas helps us see why support and treatment are so important.”



## Lesson 6 : “Myth vs. Fact” quiz on addiction

### Objective

By the end of this activity, you will be able to:

- Identify common myths about addiction
- Understand the scientific facts about how addiction affects the brain
- Separate misinformation from reality

### Section 1: Instructions

#### How to Play:

1. Your teacher will read a statement aloud or display it on a slide.
2. Decide whether you think it is a **Myth** or a **Fact**.
3. Vote individually, raise your hand, or use a quiz app if available.
4. After each answer, discuss why it is a Myth or a Fact.

### Section 2: Quiz Statements

**Think & Decide:** Circle **Myth** or **Fact** for each statement.

1. Addiction only happens to people with no willpower.
  - Myth / Fact
2. Addiction can change how your brain functions.
  - Myth / Fact
3. People can stop using substances anytime if they really want to.
  - Myth / Fact
4. Addiction is a chronic brain disease, but it is treatable.
  - Myth / Fact
5. Using substances occasionally is always safe and harmless.
  - Myth / Fact
6. Withdrawal and cravings happen because the brain has been rewired.
  - Myth / Fact
7. Addiction affects decision-making, motivation, and emotional control.
  - Myth / Fact
8. Support, therapy, and healthy habits can help people recover from addiction.
  - Myth / Fact

### Section 3: Reflection Questions



After the quiz, answer the following:

1. Which myth surprised you the most, and why?

---

2. How does understanding addiction as a brain disease change the way you think about people struggling with it?

---

3. Write one fact you will remember and share with a friend or family member:

---

### Key Takeaway

“Addiction is not a weakness—it is a chronic brain disease. Understanding the science helps us reduce stigma and support recovery.”

## Lesson 7: Brief video animation explaining addiction neuroscience

### Objective

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand how dopamine and the brain’s reward system contribute to addiction
- Reflect on how addiction changes brain function and behavior
- Challenge common myths about addiction
- Recognize the importance of empathy and support for recovery

### Section 1: Watch & Reflect

#### Instructions:

1. Watch the short video provided (3–6 minutes).
  - Recommended sources: NIDA, BrainFacts.org, or age-appropriate YouTube animations.
  - Focus: How dopamine works, how the brain becomes dependent on substances.



2. Take notes on anything that surprises you or helps you understand addiction better.

**Reflection Prompt:**

- What part of the video helped you understand addiction better?
- 

- What surprised you about how addiction works?
- 

**Section 2: Group Discussion – “What I Learned About Addiction”****Instructions:**

- Form small discussion circles with classmates.
  - Discuss the following prompts:
1. How does understanding the brain change the way you view addiction?
- 

2. Why do you think empathy and support are important for recovery?
- 

3. What’s one myth you used to believe about addiction that you no longer do?
- 

**Section 3: Optional Personal Reflection****Activity:**

- Write a short journal entry, record a response on an index card, or use a digital notebook.
- Focus on your personal takeaways and how you might use this knowledge in real life.

**Prompt Ideas:**

- “One thing I learned about addiction that I didn’t know before is...”
- 



- “One way I can support someone struggling with addiction is...”
- 

### **Key Takeaway**

“Addiction is a brain disease, not a weakness. Understanding the science helps us respond with knowledge, empathy, and support.”

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## **Module 5: Pathways to Recovery and Treatment**

### **Resources**

#### **Key Points:**

**Lesson 1: Types of treatment: detox, therapy, support groups, medication-assisted treatment**

#### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Identify the different types of addiction treatment and recovery options
- Understand why early intervention is important
- Know how to seek help confidentially
- Recognize the role of family and peers in the recovery journey

### **Section 1: Introduction & Icebreaker**

#### **Activity:**

1. Reflect: “What does ‘recovery’ mean to you?”
2. Write your response below:



3. Note: Recovery is a personal, ongoing process—there is no one-size-fits-all approach.

## Section 2: Types of Treatment Options

### Four Common Treatment Approaches:

Treatment Type	Description	Notes / Personal Thoughts
Detox	Medical support to safely remove substances from the body	_____
Therapy / Counseling	Individual or group sessions to address behavior and emotions	_____
Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)	Medicines like Suboxone or methadone to reduce cravings	_____
Support Groups	Peer-based groups (NA, AA, teen-focused)	_____

### Activity:

- Discuss: Which of these might be easy or hard for someone to try? Why?

**Optional Visual:** Draw or label a flowchart showing the different recovery paths.

## Section 3: Why Early Intervention Matters

### Discussion:

- Early action leads to better recovery outcomes
- Signs someone may need help: changes in mood, behavior, school/work performance

### Reflection Prompt:

- “What are some kind, non-judgmental ways you could check in on a friend?”



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## Section 4: Accessing Help Confidentially

### Information:

- Resources are private and safe:
  - School counselors
  - Local clinics and hotlines
  - National helplines (SAMHSA, Lifeline)

### Activity:

- Create a “Resource Card” with contact info for local or national services.
- Example:

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reminder:** Seeking help does not mean getting in trouble—it’s a safe and brave step.

## Section 5: Role of Peer and Family Support

### Discussion:

- Recovery is stronger with encouragement from friends and family
  - Share ideas: “What can you say or do if someone you care about is struggling?”
- 

**Optional:** Write a short note or encouragement you could give a friend:

---

## Section 6: Reflection & Empowerment Message

### Key Points to Remember:



- Recovery is possible
- Help is confidential and available
- Support from peers and family is powerful

**Reflection Prompt:**

- “If you or someone you know needed help, what’s one step you could take now?”
- 

**Optional:** Attach or refer to a local support flyer or digital resource list for future reference.

## **Lesson 2: Importance of early intervention**

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand what early intervention means in the context of recovery
- Learn why early action improves outcomes for mental health, substance use, and risky behaviors
- Identify risk factors and warning signs indicating early help is needed
- Reflect on short-term and long-term benefits of seeking help early

### **Section 1: Introduction & Icebreaker**

**Activity – Quick Brainstorm:**

- Question: “What problems in life are easier to solve if handled early?”
  - Write your ideas below:
- 
- 
- 

- Note: Early intervention is a “window of opportunity” to prevent bigger problems later.



## Section 2: The Science Behind Early Intervention

### Key Points:

- The brain forms habits and patterns early; addressing problems quickly helps rewire them
- Shorter treatment duration when issues are caught early
- Prevents escalation into crisis situations

### Activity – Case Discussion:

- Compare two fictional people:
  1. Alex seeks help after noticing stress early
  2. Taylor waits until stress becomes overwhelming
- Questions to discuss:
  - What differences in outcomes do you notice?
  - How did early help affect Alex’s recovery and choices?
  - What could have been worse for Taylor?

### Write your notes below:

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## Section 3: Risk Factors and Warning Signs

### Risk Factors:

- Family history of substance use or mental health issues
- Peer influence and pressure
- High stress or trauma

### Warning Signs:

- Sudden behavioral changes
- Withdrawal from friends or activities
- Decline in school or work performance

### Activity – Small Group Task:

- List your “Top 5 Warning Signs” that someone may need early support:

1. \_\_\_\_\_



- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 4: Short-Term Benefits of Early Intervention

**Key Points:**

- Reduced damage to health, relationships, and academics
- Early counseling or support = faster recovery
- Builds resilience, confidence, and hope

**Reflection Activity:**

- Write your response:
  - “What immediate benefit would I gain if I asked for help earlier in tough situations?”

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### Section 5: Long-Term Benefits of Early Intervention

**Key Points:**

- Prevents chronic illness, relapse, or incarceration
- Protects long-term mental health and relationships
- Increases chances of success in education and career

**Activity – Group Discussion:**

- Question: “If a student gets help for stress or substance use early, how could it change their 10-year future?”
- Write your thoughts:

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## Section 6: Reflection Prompt

- “One thing I will do differently in the future if I notice warning signs in myself or a friend is...”

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## Lesson 3: to access help confidentially How

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand what “confidential help” means and why it matters
- Learn the legal and ethical protections around confidentiality
- Identify trusted and safe resources for support
- Practice overcoming fear and stigma when seeking help

### Section 1: Introduction & Icebreaker

#### Activity – Group Brainstorm:

- Question: “What fears might stop someone from asking for help?”
- Write your ideas below:

---

---

**Key Note:** Confidential help means you can get support without worrying about judgment or unwanted exposure.

### Section 2: Legal and Ethical Aspects of Confidentiality

#### Key Points:



- Privacy rights protect your personal information (HIPAA or local laws)
- Counselors, doctors, and support staff have an ethical duty to keep information private
- Exceptions: If someone is at risk of harming themselves or others

**Activity – Case Scenario:**

- Read this scenario:
    - Jamie tells a school counselor about using substances. When is this information confidential? When might it be shared?
  - Write your answer:
- 
- 

**Section 3: Identifying Safe and Confidential Resources**

**Key Points:**

- Hospitals, clinics, and licensed counselors
- Helplines and online support platforms
- Anonymous peer support groups

**Activity – Small Group Task:**

- Make a list of local or online confidential resources you could use:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 4: Overcoming Fear and Stigma**

**Key Points:**

- Common fears: “People will think I’m weak” or “It will affect my reputation”
- Stigma delays recovery and prevents getting help
- Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness

**Activity – Reflection Journal:**

- Write your response:
  - “What fear would stop me from seeking help, and how can I overcome it?”



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## Section 5: Confidential Conversations and Trusted Adults

### Key Points:

- Identify trusted adults: teachers, mentors, family, religious leaders
- Ask for confidentiality upfront: “Can we keep this conversation private?”
- Use “safe phrases” to start tough conversations

### Activity – Role-Play:

- Practice asking a mentor or counselor for confidential support.
- Notes on how it felt:

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## Section 6: Reflection Prompt

- “One step I can take this week to access confidential help if needed is...”

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## Lesson 4: Encouraging peer and family support

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:



- Understand why peer and family support is important in recovery
- Identify different types of peer support
- Explore how family involvement helps treatment outcomes
- Learn communication skills to give and receive support
- Recognize and overcome stigma in support networks

**Section 1: Introduction & Icebreaker**

**Activity – Group Discussion:**

- Question: “When was a time peer or family support helped you through a challenge?”
  - Write your thoughts below:
- 
- 

**Key Note:** Support from loved ones and peers is a protective factor against relapse and helps build resilience.

**Section 2: The Science of Support in Recovery**

**Key Points:**

- Emotional encouragement reduces stress
- Accountability improves treatment outcomes
- Support increases self-esteem and resilience

**Activity – Case Example:**

- Compare two individuals: one with strong peer/family support, one without.
  - Write the differences in outcomes:
- 
- 

**Section 3: Types of Peer Support**

**Key Points:**

- **Formal:** Mentoring, support groups, sponsors



- **Informal:** Friends, classmates, colleagues
- **Online:** Peer communities, discussion boards

**Activity – Role-Play:**

- Practice responding as a supportive peer to someone struggling with temptation.
  - Notes on your response:
- 
- 

**Section 4: Role of Family in Recovery**

**Key Points:**

- Families can provide emotional, financial, and spiritual support
- Family therapy can strengthen treatment plans
- Challenges: overprotection, enabling, or criticism

**Activity – Group Discussion:**

- Question: “What healthy role can families play during recovery?”
  - Your ideas:
- 
- 

**Section 5: Building Communication Skills for Support**

**Key Points:**

- Active listening and empathy are essential
- Use non-judgmental language
- Set healthy boundaries
- Encouragement is more effective than criticism

**Activity – Pair Practice:**

- Practice saying supportive statements vs. judgmental ones
  - Reflection: Which felt more encouraging?
- 



### Section 6: Overcoming Stigma in Peer and Family Circles

#### Key Points:

- Stigma and shame stop people from seeking support
- Educating peers and families helps normalize recovery conversations
- Correct myths and misconceptions about addiction

#### Activity – Group Brainstorm:

- Question: “What myths about recovery need to be corrected in families or peer groups?”
  - Write your ideas:
- 
- 

### Section 7: Reflection Prompt

- “One way I can support a friend or family member in recovery is...”
- 
- 

### Suggested Activities:

## Lesson 5: Provide a printed/digital resource guide with contact info

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Identify accurate and trusted sources of recovery support and treatment
- Challenge myths and misconceptions about addiction recovery
- Understand how and where to seek confidential help
- Recognize the value of community, peer, and family support in recovery



## Section 1: Introduction & Icebreaker

### Activity – Word Association:

- Question: “What does recovery mean to you?”
  - Write the first word or phrase that comes to mind:
- 

**Quick Prompt:** “Say the first word that comes to mind when you hear ‘treatment’ or ‘support’.”

- Responses:
- 

**Key Note:** Today we will learn real, accessible resources, bust myths, and identify places to seek help.

## Section 2: “Find Help Fast” Resource Guide

### Instructions:

- Review the printed or digital guide provided.
- It includes:
  1. **Local Clinics / Treatment Centers** – Professional medical and counseling services
  2. **School Counselors / Trusted Adults** – Confidential support within your school or community
  3. **National Helplines** – For immediate guidance:
    - **SAMHSA: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)**
    - **Lifeline (Suicide Prevention / Crisis Support): 988**
  4. **Youth-Focused Apps / Websites** – Anonymous support platforms and recovery tools

### Activity – Highlight & Reflect:

- Highlight 2–3 resources you could realistically use or share with a friend:

1. \_\_\_\_\_



2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 3: Discussion & Reflection

**Prompt:**

- “Why might someone hesitate to reach out—even if they want help?”
  - Your thoughts:
- 

**Key Takeaways:**

- Accessing help is confidential and safe
- Early support improves recovery outcomes
- Community, peer, and family networks make recovery stronger

### Section 4: Reflection Prompt

- “One resource I feel I could use if I or someone I know needed help is...”
- 

## Lesson 6: Q&A about treatment and recovery myths

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Identify common myths and misconceptions about addiction and recovery
- Understand that recovery paths are individualized
- Recognize stigma as a barrier to seeking help
- Reflect on resources you can access for yourself or to support others



## Section 1: Myth vs. Fact Q&A Discussion

### Instructions:

- Read each statement below and mark whether you think it is a **Myth** or a **Fact**.
- Discuss your answers with the group.

Statement	Myth / Fact	Notes / Thoughts
“You have to hit rock bottom to get help.”	_____	_____
“Only adults go to rehab.”	_____	_____
“Asking for help is a sign of weakness.”	_____	_____
“There are different recovery paths, and not everyone needs the same kind of treatment.”	_____	_____

### Discussion Prompts:

- How does stigma keep people from getting help?
- What would make it easier for someone to ask for help?
- How can we challenge myths in our community or peer groups?

## Section 2: Guest Speaker / Real Voices in Recovery

### Activity – Learning From Experience:

- Listen to a peer mentor, recovery counselor, or someone in recovery (live or video).
- Topics to focus on:
  - Their journey and challenges in recovery
  - Strategies that worked for them
  - Advice for young people facing peer pressure or substance use

### Q&A:

- Take notes on 2–3 tips or insights you find most helpful:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



## Section 3: Reflection & Empowerment

### Journal Activity – “If I Needed Help...”

Answer the following prompts:

1. “If I needed help, I could talk to...”

---

2. “One myth I believed about treatment was...”

---

3. “One thing I can do to support someone else is...”

---

### Closing Empowerment Message:

“Recovery is possible. Help is available. You are never alone.”

## Lesson 7: Invite a local recovery counselor or peer mentor (optional)

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand the role of recovery counselors and peer mentors in the healing process
- Identify qualities of a supportive peer mentor
- Learn how personal storytelling supports recovery
- Recognize the stages of recovery and how mentorship fits into each stage
- Understand confidentiality, trust, and ethical boundaries in counseling and peer support

## Section 1: Qualities of a Supportive Peer Mentor

### Activity – Small Group Discussion:

- Discuss the following prompt with your group:



“What qualities make a supportive peer mentor?”

**Reflection Notes:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples to consider:** empathy, active listening, reliability, shared experience, non-judgmental attitude

**Section 2: Storytelling in Recovery Support**

**Activity – Role-Play “Story of Change”**

- In pairs, practice telling a short story about overcoming a challenge (fictional or real).
- Focus on: hope, learning from mistakes, and inspiring positive change.

**Reflection Questions:**

- How can sharing personal stories help someone feel understood?
- What boundaries are important when sharing your own or listening to someone else’s story?

**Section 3: Understanding the Recovery Journey**

**Activity – Recovery Timeline Exercise**

- Draw a timeline of a “recovery journey” with stages:
  1. Precontemplation (not ready to change)
  2. Contemplation (thinking about change)
  3. Preparation (planning change)
  4. Action (actively making changes)
  5. Maintenance (sustaining progress)
- Highlight where peer mentors or counselors could provide support.

**Reflection Prompt:**

- At which stage do you think a mentor is most critical? Why?
- How might short-term support differ from long-term mentorship?



## Section 4: The Role of a Recovery Counselor

### Topics to Explore:

- Credentials and training of counselors
- How counselors work alongside peer mentors
- Confidentiality and trust in counseling

### Activity – Mock Counseling Demonstration:

- Trainer or peer acts as counselor, while a student acts as a client seeking support.
- Practice opening questions, active listening, and providing empathetic guidance.

### Reflection Questions:

- What makes a counseling session feel safe?
- How does trust impact someone’s willingness to share?

## Section 5: The Power of Peer-Led Groups

### Activity – Simulated Support Group Circle:

- Practice peer-to-peer encouragement in a small circle.
- Take turns sharing a challenge (fictional or personal) and offering support.

### Reflection Prompt:

- How does a group setting encourage accountability and hope?
- What role does peer support play in sustaining recovery?

## Section 6: Preparing for a Guest Recovery Counselor or Peer Mentor

### Activity – Create 5 Respectful Questions:

- If a counselor or mentor visits, write 5 insightful questions you would like to ask.

### Example Questions:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_



3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Discussion Prompt:**

- How can you make the most of a guest speaker session?
  - What etiquette is important when interacting with someone in recovery?
- 

**Optional Reflection:**

“What is one thing I learned today about how mentors or counselors help someone recover?”

---

## **Module 6: Review and Personal Reflection**

**Key Points:**

**Lesson 1: Summary of substance types, refusal skills, consequences, addiction, and recovery**

**Learning Objectives**

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Summarize key lessons on substances, peer pressure, consequences, addiction, and recovery
- Recognize your personal power to make safe and informed choices
- Identify ways to seek help and support others

**Section 1: Quick Knowledge Review – “What Did We Learn?”**

**Activity: Quiz/Game**



- Use Kahoot, Quizizz, flashcards, or printed quiz to answer the following:

1. **Name 2 types of substances and one short-term effect of each:**

- Substance 1: \_\_\_\_\_ → Effect: \_\_\_\_\_
- Substance 2: \_\_\_\_\_ → Effect: \_\_\_\_\_

2. **List 2 refusal strategies you can use to say “No”:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Give one physical and one mental health consequence of substance use:**

- Physical: \_\_\_\_\_
- Mental: \_\_\_\_\_

4. **True or False:** Addiction is a personal failure → \_\_\_\_\_

5. **Name one way someone can get help confidentially:**

- \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2: Personal Reflection

### Prompt 1 – Power to Make Choices:

- Reflect and write:

“One way I can make safe and informed decisions in my life is...”

### Prompt 2 – Seeking Help & Supporting Others:

- Reflect and write:

“If a friend needed help with substance use, one thing I could do to support them is...”

### Prompt 3 – Impactful Lesson:

- Bonus Reflection:

“Which module from this course impacted me the most, and why?”

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### Section 3: Group Discussion (Optional)

- Share your reflections with a small group or class circle.
- Discuss:
  - What strategies or lessons will you remember the most?
  - How can we support each other in making safe choices?

## Lesson 2: Emphasize personal power to make informed decisions

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

- Understand what it means to make an informed choice
- Apply the “Power of Pause” strategy in decision-making
- Reflect on personal values and goals when faced with peer pressure or risky situations

### Section 1: Discussion – What Is an Informed Choice?

#### Prompt Questions:

- “What does it mean to make an informed choice?”
- “Can you think of a real-life situation where you or someone else needed to decide about substances or peer pressure?”

#### Facilitator Notes:

- Encourage students to share experiences (voluntarily).
- Emphasize thinking about consequences for health, goals, and relationships.

### Section 2: Strategy – Power of Pause

#### Steps:

1. **Pause** – Take a moment before deciding
2. **Think** – Ask: “Is this helpful to my health, goals, and values?”
3. **Decide** – Make a choice that protects your well-being

#### Optional Activity:



- Hand out or post a **“Decision-Making Checklist”** with the above steps for students to reference.

### Section 3: Reflection Activity – “My Voice, My Path”

#### Instructions:

- Choose 2–3 prompts to write about individually or share in a small group.

#### Prompts:

1. One thing I learned about myself from this course is...
2. If I saw a friend struggling, I would...
3. My biggest takeaway from the substance education lessons is...
4. A healthy goal I want to protect is...

#### Options:

- Individual journaling
- Small circle sharing (optional and voluntary)
- Anonymous notes collected and displayed (if time permits)

### Section 4: Wrap-Up and Encouragement

#### Key Messages:

- You are **not alone**
- You have the **right to say no**
- **Support is available and confidential**

#### Final Takeaway:

“Knowledge gives you power. Choices shape your future. And support makes anything possible.”

#### Optional:

- Distribute or display local and national help resources for easy access.

### Lesson 3: Encourage seeking help and supporting peers



## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

- Understand why seeking help is important for personal growth and recovery
- Recognize common barriers to asking for help
- Learn strategies to offer meaningful peer support
- Identify when professional help is necessary

### Section 1: Icebreaker Discussion – The Power of Support

**Prompt:**

- “Share a time when someone’s support made a difference for you.”

**Facilitator Notes:**

- Emphasize that support can come in many forms: listening, encouragement, advice, or simply being present.
- Highlight the mutual nature of support—helping others also strengthens your own resilience.

### Section 2: Breaking Down Barriers to Asking for Help

**Objective:** Identify what prevents people from reaching out.

**Content:**

- Common fears: stigma, rejection, shame, pride
- Cultural and social obstacles
- Reframing help-seeking as a sign of strength and empowerment

**Activity:**

- Brainstorm in small groups:  
 “What holds people back from reaching out for help?”
- Create a shared list and discuss ways to overcome each barrier

### Section 3: The Power of Peer Support



**Objective:** Explore how peers can promote resilience.

**Content:**

- Peer support is different from professional help: it relies on trust, empathy, and shared experience
- Peer mentors can serve as role models
- Support builds resilience and encourages healthy decision-making

**Activity:** Role-Play Exercise

- Practice being a supportive peer in a short scenario
- Focus on listening, encouraging, and offering guidance without judgment

## Section 4: Healthy Ways to Offer Support

**Objective:** Learn practical skills for safe and meaningful peer support.

**Content:**

- Active listening techniques (eye contact, nodding, summarizing)
- Encouraging without enabling harmful behaviors
- Respecting boundaries and knowing your limits

**Activity:** Listening Circle

- Take turns sharing a small concern
- Others practice listening without interrupting or giving advice
- Reflect on how it feels to be truly heard

## Section 5: Recognizing When Professional Help Is Needed

**Objective:** Understand when peer support isn't enough and professional intervention is required.

**Content:**

- Warning signs of crisis or severe mental health concerns
- Types of professional resources: counselors, doctors, crisis hotlines
- How to encourage a friend to take the next step safely

**Activity:** Case Study Discussion



- Scenario: “Your friend is showing signs of severe depression after substance use. What would you do?”
- Discuss in groups: when to encourage professional help, how to approach the conversation, and what resources to suggest

### **Closing Reflection & Empowerment Prompt**

- Journaling Option:

“One way I can seek help for myself or support a friend this week is...”

“What did I learn today about the strength in asking for help?”

- Reminder:

“Seeking help is a sign of courage. Supporting others strengthens both them and you. You are never alone.”

### **Suggested Activities:**

## **Lesson 4: Reflection journaling: “One thing I learned and one action I will take”**

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

- Reflect on what they’ve learned about substances, peer pressure, and personal choices
- Identify one specific action they want to take moving forward
- Build confidence in using their voice and supporting others
- Foster a safe, supportive environment through voluntary sharing

### **Section 1: Reflection Journaling – “One Thing I Learned, One Action I Will Take”**

#### **Instructions:**



1. Hand out a reflection worksheet or blank journal page.
2. Prompts to include:
  - “One important thing I learned is...”
  - “One action I will take to protect myself or help others is...”

**Optional Additional Prompts:**

- “I feel proud of myself because...”
- “If someone I know is struggling, I will...”

**Facilitator Notes:**

- Encourage honesty and clarity; this is for the student’s own growth.
- Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers.

## **Section 2: Sharing Circle – “Voicing My Commitment”**

**Instructions:**

- Create a safe, voluntary circle for students to share their reflections or commitments.
- Each student may say:
  - “One thing I learned is...”
  - “My commitment moving forward is...”

**Guidelines:**

- Respectful listening, no interrupting
- Affirmation gestures encouraged: applause, snaps, or nods
- Sharing is optional; students can simply listen if they prefer

**Facilitator Notes:**

- Reinforce that listening is a form of support
- Celebrate each voice and commitment shared

## **Section 3: Positive Closure & Resource Recap**

**Empowerment Message:**

- “You have power over your choices.”
- “It’s okay to ask for help.”
- “You can be a source of support to others.”



**Takeaway Materials:**

- Distribute small cards, stickers, or handouts:
  - Messages like “I Have the Power to Choose” or “My Voice Matters”
  - Include local/national help numbers (hotlines, school counselor info)

**Key Outcomes of Module 6**

Students should leave with:

- A realistic understanding of different substances and their impacts
- Practical strategies to resist peer pressure
- Awareness of physical, mental, social, and legal consequences of substance use
- Knowledge that addiction is a disease with biological and psychological factors
- Familiarity with recovery options and how to access support

**Lesson 5: Optional sharing circle to voice commitments****Learning Objectives**

By the end of this session, students will be able to:

- Understand how different substances affect the body and mind
- Learn practical ways to resist peer pressure
- Recognize the physical, mental, social, and legal consequences of substance use
- Understand addiction as a disease, not a moral failure
- Know about recovery resources and how to support others or seek help

**Section 1: Substance Use Refresher & Impact Review****A. Interactive Quiz Game**

- Format: Kahoot, Jeopardy-style, or flashcards
- Sample questions:
  - Which drugs are stimulants?
  - Name 2 long-term effects of marijuana
  - What is one sign of addiction?

**B. Mini Lecture Recap**

- Use slides or visuals to highlight:
  - Substance types, short- and long-term effects
  - Peer pressure and refusal strategies
  - Mental health risks
  - Legal consequences (e.g., probation, arrest)
  - Addiction and brain science
  - Treatment and recovery options

## **Section 2: Resistance and Real-Life Decisions**

### **A. Scenario Role-Plays**

- Students act out peer pressure situations:
  - Being offered a vape at a party
  - A friend pressuring them to skip school and drink
- Observers provide feedback on refusal strategies

### **B. Discussion: What Would You Do?**

- Prompts:
  - “What makes it hard to say no?”
  - “How can you stay true to your values?”

## **Section 3: Understanding Addiction and Recovery**

### **A. Myth vs. Fact Game**

- Sample statements:
  - “Addiction is a choice” → Myth
  - “You can get addicted after one use” → Sometimes True
  - “Recovery never works” → Myth

### **B. Video Animation / Infographic**

- Show a short, age-appropriate video on addiction neuroscience and recovery potential

### **C. Support & Help-Seeking Discussion**

- Review confidential help options (school, local clinics, hotlines)
- Discuss how to support a friend without judgment
- Distribute local/school-based resource cards



## Section 4: Personal Reflection & Commitment

### A. Reflection Journal Prompt

- Write:
  - “One thing I’ve learned about substance use, and one choice I will make to protect my health.”
- Optional guiding questions:
  - “What surprised you the most?”
  - “What will you do differently going forward?”

### B. Sharing Circle (Optional)

- Invite volunteers to share one insight or commitment
- Promote a supportive, non-judgmental environment

## Section 5: Target Audience & Context

- **Who:** At-risk youth ages 14–24 in schools, diversion programs, or community outreach
- **Icebreaker:** Introduce themselves + answer: “What does the word ‘risk’ mean to you?”
- **Mini Talk:** Define “at-risk youth” in a strengths-based way:
  - “This is about growth, not punishment.”
- **Why This Program Matters:**
  - Present stats, real-life stories, and prevention impact
- **Group Discussion:** “Have you seen choices that changed someone’s path—for better or worse?”

## Section 6: Where You Fit & Identity Mapping

### Activity: Identity Map

- Create a personal map with circles for:
  - School
  - Friends
  - Family
  - Choices
  - Dreams
- Reflect on how risky behavior can impact these areas or how healthy choices support them

### Optional Small Group Share:



- Volunteers share one part of their map
- Prompt reflection: “Why would it matter to me if I made a big change?”

## **Section 7: Goals, Support & Next Steps**

### **Presentation: Program Goals**

- Build knowledge
- Strengthen decision-making
- Learn how to get help without shame

### **Clarify Support System:**

- Teachers, mentors, counselors, community organizations

### **Activity: Goal Card**

- Write one personal goal:
  - “One thing I want to learn or change by the end of this program...”

### **Closing Round:**

- Optional: Each participant reads their goal aloud
- Reinforce: “You belong here. This is for you.”

