

# Implementation Guide for Cannabis and Consequences II

## What is Cannabis and Consequences II?

- *Cannabis and Consequences II* is a package developed by Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre for the National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre (NCPIC) based on updating the *Cannabis and Consequences (2003)* package
- It contains up-to date scientific and evidence-based information about cannabis
- It includes background information for curriculum co-ordinators and for teachers, and a review of the cannabis literature, including key messages for young people
- It includes 12 classroom activities which can be used to deliver information to students in a single session or combined to deliver a comprehensive course that considers the prevalence, impacts and strategies for help seeking in relation to cannabis
- Although the Australian Curriculum is still in development, this package has incorporated elements of the guiding characteristics identified in *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (August 2012)*

## Who is this package for?

The classroom activities in this package were developed to be delivered to year eight and year nine students. Each activity also suggests alternatives and extensions so it can be adapted for students' abilities, time restrictions, teacher's needs and resources available.

## Who can deliver this package?

The activities in *Cannabis and Consequences II* can be facilitated by teachers, school support staff and by external providers or any combination of these.

## How do I deliver the package?

Each activity is presented in sections as separate PDF's:

- The instructions are for teachers to read over and determine if the activity is suited to their class and how they will best execute it. The instructions include the educative outcomes for students. Answers for teachers are included in the instructions where appropriate
- The worksheets are for students to complete and need to be printed beforehand
- The background information is for teachers to read beforehand if desired. It provided links to more information appropriate to the activity

There is some overlap in activities within each theme as some of the activities build on previous ones. Teachers should read through all the activities in each theme to determine which activity/combination of activities best suits their needs.

## What do I need to do before I start this program with students?

Creating a safe environment for students and teachers to talk about cannabis is important.

### Setting ground rules

Discussing ground rules can assist in creating a safe environment that invites students to ask questions and share knowledge. It can also clarify the teacher's role in these discussions.

## Common examples of ground rules

- **No put-downs** – everyone has a right to their beliefs, values and opinions and these need to be conveyed and received in a respectful manner
- **No identifying information** – Students are encouraged to speak in third person (“I know a person who...”). If a student is telling a story about a friend, family member or even themselves, they must not use names or any identifying information
- **No personal questions** – students are discouraged from asking any personal questions of other students or the teacher/facilitator
- **Student confidentiality** - What is said in the room remains in the room and is not to be discussed with others.
- **Teacher confidentiality** –Teachers need to explain “duty of care” regarding mandatory reporting and how confidentiality is managed in such cases. It is important that teachers demonstrate their own commitment to keeping class discussions confidential.
- **Everyone has the right to pass** (that is, not answer questions)
- **All questions are good questions**
- **Listen when other people are speaking**
- **Respect opinions of others**
- **Use correct terminology** – try to avoid nick-names or slang

## How do I manage confidentiality and disclosure?

Students need to be encouraged to talk in the third person when relaying stories. When talking about illegal drug use, there is a possibility that students may disclose personal issues and experiences. Teachers need to be familiar with school policies and legal procedures regarding such issues and make these known to students. Teachers also need to manage disclosure in class. Remind students of the ground rules and encourage them to speak in the third person. For example, if a student starts a sentence with “*My mum...*”, interrupt and remind the class to use statements like “*Someone I know...*” or “*I heard someone once say...*”. These phrases can be written on the board for students to remind them how to communicate questions and ideas.

Encouraging students to talk in third person and reframing information in fictional vignettes is useful. For example “*imagine this situation happened to Al...how do you think Al would feel? What advice would could Al’s friend give to Al?*”, “*What could Al’s friend do?*”.

Concurrently, it is never appropriate for teachers to make personal disclosures about alcohol or other drug use. Always use fictional vignettes to make a point. It is imperative that the teacher models appropriate language for students.

## What questions are students likely to ask?

Most questions from students about cannabis are information based questions. Students are seeking factual information about cannabis. If the teacher is unsure of the answer, it is worth disclosing that to the student/class. For example, “*I’m not sure I know the answer to that question but I would be happy go away and find out. Can I get back to with an answer next time we meet?*” or “*I’m not sure of the answer to that question, let’s have a look at this factsheet and see if we can find out?*”

Sometimes questions may be ‘permission seeking’. For example, “*if you’re at a friend’s house and their parents smoke and you only have a little bit, isn’t that ok?*” or “*if you don’t smoke it but just eat it, isn’t that better for your health?*”. When answering these questions, it is important to remain focussed on the relevant factual information and encourage students to explore their own values.

Questions may be ‘values based’. For example, “*Doesn’t smoking cannabis make you dumb?*”. Teachers need to provide an objective answer that is disconnected from the value base implied. Encourage students to explore their own values and beliefs. A teacher might say “*Different people smoke cannabis for a range of different reasons. Sometimes smoking cannabis can affect your memory and ability to learn things.*”.



Finally, students may try to shock the teacher or other students in the class. Students will also test the credibility of the teacher. Teachers may be asked directly *“have you smoked cannabis?”*. A useful response to this is to bring the discussion back to the ground rules set earlier. For instance, *“remember we agreed in our ground rules not to ask personal questions? That’s a personal question and I would prefer not to answer it”*. It could then be followed with an assertion that the teacher is well informed about cannabis, its use and consequences.

### **Commonly asked questions**

For a list of commonly asked questions and their answers go to: [click here](#)