THEME:
impacts, consequences and variables

ACTIVITY NUMBER: **3D**

ACTIVITY NAME **what influences drug use?**

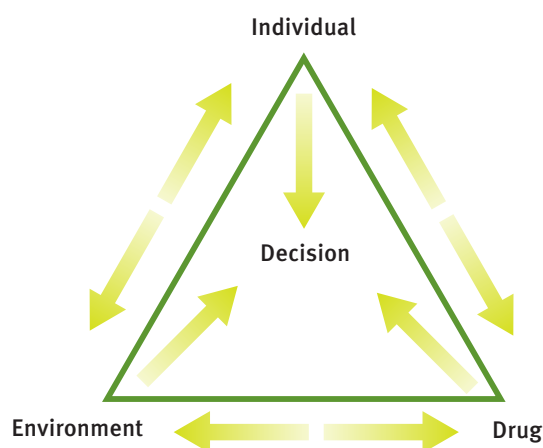WHAT: **instructions**

December 2013

Educative outcome	At the completion of this activity, students will be able to:
	• identify environmental and individual factors that influence the decision to try or use cannabis
Task	Students are to identify the individual and environmental factors that may influence drug use in fictional case studies
Duration	40 minutes
Materials	• Worksheet 1: individual factors, cut up and placed in a container • Worksheet 2: environmental factors, cut up and placed in a container • Worksheet 3: additional information, cut up and placed in a container • Worksheet 4: printed for pairs or groups

Introduction:

The decision of trying or using a drug and the outcome that results can be influenced by three factors. These are the individual, the environment and the substance.

Facilitate a class discussion for the students to define and understand the three domains. For example:

Individual	Environment	Cannabis
physical and psychological, genetics, size, height, weight *e.g. whether the person has had little sleep and is very tired.* *whether the person is feeling sad or angry about something* *whether the person has a relative that has developed problems related to substance use*	***when, where and who with*** *e.g. whether the person is in "safe" company (among friends etc.)* *whether the person is in a public place* *whether other people are under the influence of substances*	***quantity, frequency, potency, and how it is consumed/route of administration*** *what is in it?* *how strong is it?* *whether it has been used before*

Activity:

- Students are divided into pairs or small groups
- Students randomly select an 'individual' card and an 'environment' card (this can be done by pulling one of each out of a bucket)
- With the information they have, they need to identify what factors will influence the person's decision to use or not use cannabis. Questions to prompt students can include:
  - Why might that person decide to use?
  - Why might that person decide not to use?
  - What are the risks?
- Students record their answers on Worksheet 4
- Students pull out one more piece of additional information (Worksheet 3). Prompt students with questions such as:
  - Does the new piece of information change the decision?
  - Does the new piece of information mean there are more or less risks for the person?
- Students record their answers on Worksheet 4
- Ask students to develop a "refusal statement" that the person in their scenario could use to say no to cannabis and record this also
- Students present their results to the class

Summary and concluding remarks:

- Teacher facilitates discussion recapping the interactive effects of the individual, environment and substance and risks associated with cannabis use
- Teacher reiterates that there is no 'safe' level of cannabis use as dose and response may be unpredictable

Alternatives

- Ask pairs or small groups to swap one card (e.g. change the environment and see if that changes the risks regarding the decision)

Extensions

- Students create their own individual and environmental cards and share or swap these
- Students create two additional pieces of information for their scenario – one that increases the risk to the person and the other that might decrease the risk to that person

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WHAT:
background infomation

Key messages for	• Most young people do not try or use cannabis • Using cannabis can have unwanted physical, social and emotional consequences. These can be immediate, short- or long-term • Cannabis is illegal in Australia
Activity Overview	• This activity focuses on the variety of factors that can influence the decision about whether to try or use cannabis. It introduces a model that considers three factors; the drug, the individual and the environment, and explores how these can interact.

Individual:

Individual factors relate specifically to the person. It will also include the expectations, attitudes and values the person has. It includes such areas such as:

- Background: sex, age, biological and environmental family histories, cultural and economic factors, physical and psychological predisposition

- Health: physical, psychological, spiritual, emotional and social

- Self-concept: expectations, values, ethics and regard for others

- Interpersonal skills: communication, assertiveness, social competence

- Knowledge: ability to reason, make decisions and evaluate

Environment:

Environmental factors are those related to the place and setting where a substance might be obtained or used. This will include the social, physical, economic and cultural nature of the environment as well as time of day and the people present.

Drug:

This domain considers factors related to the type or class of drug, its potency and the way the substance is consumed. It will also include chemical properties and pharmacology of the substance, dose, frequency, route of administration and cost.

For more information please access these NCPIC fact sheets and other resources

- People at risk of developing problems with their cannabis use

- Cannabis and young people

- See also: *Information for Teachers* in this package (downloadable PDF on website)