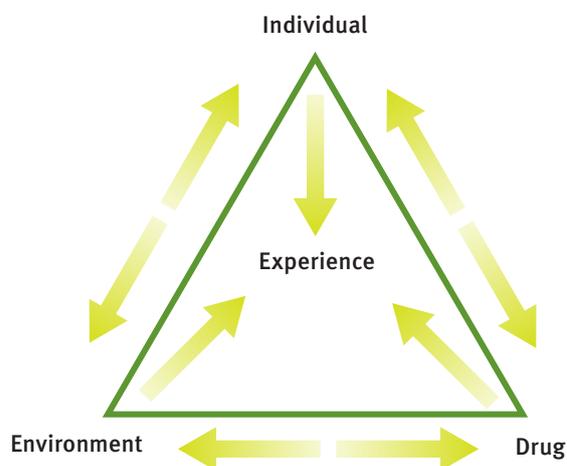
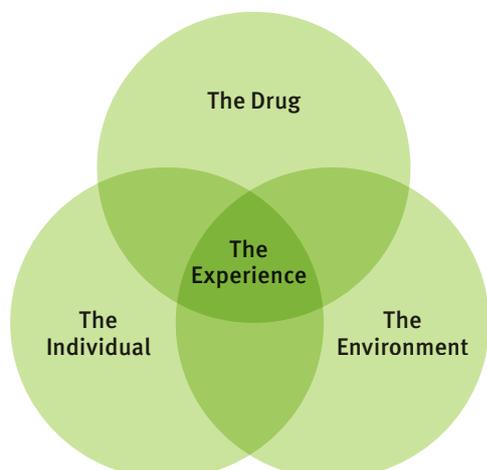


Educative outcome	At the completion of this activity, students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify environmental and individual factors that influence the decision to try or use cannabis • develop and rehearse some refusal strategies and statements
Task	Students are to identify the individual and environmental factors that may influence drug use in fictional case studies and develop refusal strategies for themselves and others
Duration	40 minutes
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worksheet 1: scenarios, cut up for students • Worksheet 2: additional information, cut up for students • Worksheet 3: student worksheet, one per pair of students

Introduction:

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



Activity:

TIP/COMMENT

The focus of this activity is on the decision the young person is about to make regarding whether to use or not use cannabis. What might influence the young person's decision to try cannabis? Most importantly, what might help them to decide not to use cannabis?

Individual	Environment	Cannabis
<i>physical and psychological, genetics, size, height, weight</i>	<i>when, where and who with</i>	<i>quantity, frequency, potency, and how it is consumed/route of administration</i>

- In pairs, provide students with a scenario from worksheet one and ask them to identify the influencing factors for the drug, the individual and the environment. All responses can be recorded on Worksheet 3
- Provide students with one more piece of information from Worksheet 2. Students need to determine whether the additional information is an individual or an environmental factor and decide how it might influence Jack/Jen's decision to try, or not try cannabis
- Based on the information in the scenario, and with the additional piece of information, ask the students to come up with a statement or something they could say to dissuade Jack/Jen from trying cannabis
- For example, "tonight isn't a good night to try cannabis for the first time because you have a soccer game tomorrow and you don't want to let your team down"
- Ask the students to come up with one or more statement(s) or strategies that Jack/Jen could use to refuse trying cannabis. Use the NCPIC resource [No, Nuh, Nope](#) to assist with refusal skills. Encourage students to think about what they would say if they were in that situation and rehearse their statements

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

- Whole of class brain storm: Students generate their own scenarios combining individual and environmental risks (the drug should stay the same but the route of administration, purity or amount could be changed)
 - Who is the person (age, gender, health)? Where are they and who are they with? What is being offered (joint/ bong)?
 - Discuss what environmental or individual factors would influence the person's decision to try or use cannabis on this occasion. For example, do they have enough information about cannabis? Is the environment safe? What mood are they in?

Extensions

- These scenarios can be used to provide skills training in refusal. For example, if Jack/Jen decides she doesn't want to try it, what could he/she say/do and still be part of the group? E.g. come back lines or pretend to try it or pretend she feels sick and needs to go home etc. Practice/role-play these refusal skills with a partner. E.g. "Not tonight, thanks" or "Cannabis doesn't agree with me", etc.
- Students can be encouraged to identify factors that can mitigate some risks, e.g. being in a safe environment, being with friends, etc.
- Brainstorm a range of refusal statements that can be used if a person is confronted with an opportunity

Key messages for communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. The activity explores how these can interact when it comes to making a decision about whether to try or use cannabis. Scenarios are used to consider how these elements 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

- [No, Nuh, Nope](#) to assist with refusal skills
- See also: *Information for Teachers* in this package (downloadable PDF on website)