

Educative outcome	At the completion of this activity, students will demonstrate increased knowledge of normative data relating to cannabis, alcohol and tobacco use in Australia
Task	Students estimate how many people in Australia use various substances by standing on a continuum from 1-10
Duration	15 minutes
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers from 0-10 on A4 paper (create your own) Teacher answer sheet 1: data set, printed for teachers Worksheet 1: colour in the figures, if desired for students (alternative activity) Worksheet 2: reflective worksheet, if desired for students

Introduction:

Introduce the topic with an interactive discussion asking students whether they know how many people in our society and in secondary schools use drugs. Discussion might include questions like: “How do we know how many people use tobacco? Alcohol? Cannabis? Other illicit substances? Where do we get this information from?”

Discuss credible sources of information (for example the NCPIC website, National Drug Strategy Household Survey, Australian Secondary School Survey, etc.)

Activity:

- Students are to form teams of 2-3 and nominate a captain for each team
- At the front of the room place large black cards with the numbers 0 – 10 in order, which represents the number of people using drugs in each question (where 0 = nobody and 10 = everybody)
- The teacher reads out one of the questions and asks the teams to quickly decide on an answer
- The team captain then comes and stands on the continuum to represent this answer. For example, the teacher asks ‘How many Australians over the age of 14, say they have **never** tried cannabis?’ Students guess it might be 5 out of 10 people over the age of 14 have never tried cannabis – the team captain goes and stands at number 5 on the continuum
- The question and answer is then discussed as a group. Questions may include:
 - How did you decide on that answer?
 - Where did you get your information from?
 - Are you surprised when I tell you that x is actually the correct answer?
- The reflective worksheet may be given to students if desired



Summary and concluding remarks:

- Ask students “Why do you think we did this activity today?” The key message is that most young people do not use cannabis
- Whole of class discussion may raise issues regarding perception verses fact. Students are asked:
 - “Were you surprised by any of the facts you discovered?”
 - “Why do you think most young people don’t use cannabis?”

For a more critical analysis, it could also be useful to point out that these figures were from two main sources (a national household survey and the Australian secondary schools survey) and to discuss some of the advantages and disadvantages of this type of data

Tips/Comments:

- Experience in this exercise suggests that most students think more people are using substances than the statistics suggest. Conversation around perceptions and facts can be useful. Students may feel that the data doesn’t represent their own knowledge and experience. Teachers are encouraged to remind students that the statistics used in this activity are from big population studies. Some statements/data refer to the general Australian population (over the age of 14) while other statements are specific to Australian secondary school students – both are very large studies
- Using teams and asking them to discuss the statement before they go and stand on the continuum can help with ensuring students are making thoughtful decisions rather than following where their peers go
- Teachers may wish to adapt the wording of the statements according to how their students will understand it best

Alternatives

This activity can be conducted:

- Individually. Students are given a copy of worksheet 1 and asked to colour in the number of figures they think is appropriate for each question
- Using an interactive white board whereby 10 faces are depicted and students colour in the number of faces they think represents the correct answer

Extensions

- Ask students to critique the sources of data by considering some of the implications around the NDSHS and the Australian Secondary School Survey. Methodological issues might include self-reporting, accuracy, honesty, access to young people in the NDSHS is limited to those living at home, and so on
- Students discuss the impact of new information and how this affects drug use in society. For instance, drug use trends might change according to discoveries regarding the harms a drug can cause (e.g. there has been a decrease in smoking cigarettes due to increased knowledge and public perception about the harms from tobacco)



Teacher Answer Sheet 1: Data Set

Teachers please note: In order to use this data set for Activity 1A, all percentages will need to be rounded to the nearest multiple of 10. You may choose to calculate this yourself or with the class. This will mean many questions then appear to have responses of 100% non-consumption of each drug. Explain to the class that this is not the case and is a result of rounding. A range of questions have been provided, it is suggested you use a sample of them to suit your needs and class.

Data Questions	Answers	Source
How many Australians over the age of 14 say they have never tried cannabis?	65%	NDSH Survey Report, 2011**
How many 12 year old secondary students say they have never tried cannabis?	97%	TAOI ASSS, 2011*
How many secondary school students say they have never tried cannabis?	85%	TAOI ASSS, 2011
How many Australians over the age of 14 have never used an illegal drug?	61%	NDSH Survey Report, 2011
How many 17 year olds have not smoked cigarettes in the last week?	86%	TAOI ASSS, 2011
How many Australians have never smoked cigarettes?	58%	NDSH Survey Report, 2011
How many secondary school students have never tried alcohol?	26%	TAOI ASSS, 2011
How many secondary school students have never tried tobacco?	77%	TAOI ASSS, 2011
How many Australians over the age of 14 do not smoke tobacco daily?	85%	NDSH Survey Report, 2011
How may 12-15 year olds say they have not drunk alcohol in the last 12 months?	77%	NDSH Survey Report, 2011
How many 13 year olds say they have not drunk alcohol in the last 7 days?	92%	TAOI ASSS, 2011
How many secondary school students have not used cannabis in the last week?	96%	TAOI ASSS, 2011
How many 13 year old secondary school students say they have never tried alcohol?	38%	TAOI ASSS, 2011
How many secondary school students say they have not drunk alcohol in the last week?	82%	TAOI ASSS, 2011
How many 14 year old secondary school students have never tried cannabis?	89%	TAOI ASSS, 2011
How many 14 year old secondary school students have not used cannabis in the last week?	97%	TAOI ASSS, 2011
How many secondary school students say they have not used cannabis in the last year?	87%	TAOI ASSS, 2011

Data Questions	Answers	Source
How many secondary school students say they have never used a hallucinogen? (hallucinogens are things like LSD, acid, trips, magic mushrooms, datura, Angel's Trumpet)	97%	TAOI ASSS, 2011
How many secondary school students say they have never used amphetamines? (amphetamines include things like speed, uppers, MDA, goey, dex, dexie's, dexamphetamine, ox blood, methamphetamine or ice)	97%	TAOI ASSS, 2011
How many secondary school students say they have not used amphetamines in the last month? (amphetamines include things like speed, uppers, MDA, goey, dex, dexie's, dexamphetamine, ox blood, methamphetamine or ice)	99%	TAOI ASSS, 2011
How many secondary school students say they have never used opiates? (opiates include things like Heroin, smack, horse, skag, hammer, H, or other opiates (narcotics) such as methadone, morphine or pethidine)	98%	TAOI ASSS, 2011
How many secondary school students say they have never used cocaine?	98%	TAOI ASSS, 2011
How many 14 year old secondary school students say they have never used ecstasy? (Ecstasy might be called things like ecstasy or XTC, E, MDMA, ecci, X, bickies)	98%	TAOI ASSS, 2011
How many secondary school students say they have not used ecstasy in the last month? (Ecstasy might be called things like ecstasy or XTC, E, MDMA, ecci, X, bickies)	More than 99%	TAOI ASSS, 2011

* TAOI ASSS 2011 – Australian secondary school students' use of tobacco, alcohol, and over-the-counter and illicit substances in 2011

** NDSH Survey report 2011 – National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2010



Key messages for communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most young people do not try or use cannabis
Activity Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This activity focuses on statistics about alcohol and other drug use in Australia, with a focus on cannabis use among young people. This activity normalises non-use and therefore focuses information on the larger majority of people who do not try or use cannabis. It uses data from the National Drug Strategy Household Survey Report 2010 and the Australian secondary school students' use of tobacco, alcohol, and over-the-counter and illicit substances in 2011.

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

- [‘What is cannabis?’ factsheet](#)
- [‘Cannabis and young people’ factsheet](#)
- [Australian secondary school students’ use of tobacco, alcohol, and over-the-counter and illicit substances in 2011](#)
- See also: *Information for Teachers* in this package (downloadable PDF on website)

