

Talking About...

RECREATIONAL CANNABIS



The Talking About Series is an educational resource addressing **cannabis, tobacco, vaping, and waterpipes**. The series includes a set of activity guides, one for each topic, to help facilitate critical discussion with young people in a fun and informative manner.

Each activity guide is divided into three levels:

- **Level 1** aims to establish foundational knowledge about a specific lung health issue using a fun and interactive true or false activity.
- **Level 2** explores different perspectives and/or opinions on a specific lung health issue using a small group activity to establish the arguments from each side of the issue.
- **Level 3** provides an opportunity for youth to demonstrate the ability to apply appropriate skills and strategies in making decisions about their health through role play/discussion of different scenarios.

All three levels are intended to engage young people, using interactive activities, while inspiring critical thinking and reflection.

Each level is approximately 40-45 minutes and consists of an introduction, core activity, and debrief. We have provided sample energizers and debriefing activities, however, we encourage you to mix and match and/or incorporate your own activities, if needed, to best meet the needs of your group.

LEVEL 1
“THE WHAT”

Level 1 is intended to provide context and a brief overview of the topic. Some questions that might arise include: What is it? What do we already know? What can I expect? What are the facts?

*Norms and Agreements Activity (Optional) – See Appendix A

1.1 INTRO ACTIVITY
POWER WORDS

Objective : To establish existing knowledge about recreational cannabis among youth.

TIME: 10 minutes

MATERIALS:

- Flip Chart Paper or White Board
- Markers
- Post-it Notes
- Pens

PREPARATION:

- Prepare a flipchart with the question “What Do We Know?”

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Hand out a post-it note to every participant and ask them to write down the first thing that comes to mind when they think about cannabis
- Have participants post their notes on the flipchart/white board
- After everyone has posted their post-it notes, have participants gather around the flipchart to look at all of the responses
- Have group reflect on the questions/responses

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- How hard/easy was it to answer the question?
- What patterns/trends do you see when you look at everyone’s responses?

1.2 CORE ACTIVITY
RECREATIONAL CANNABIS | TRUE OR FALSE

Objective: To gain foundational knowledge about cannabis use among youth.

TIME: 20 minutes

MATERIALS:

- Masking Tape
- Signs for “True” “False”
- True or False Questions

PREPARATION:

- Rearrange the room so there is enough space for participants to move back and forth between the different sides of the room.
- Hang “True” and “False” signs on wall.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Explain to participants that they are going to spend the next couple of minutes looking at some important facts about recreational cannabis use among youth.
2. Advise participants that this is not a group activity (They will be working in a big group but each person is encouraged to make an individual decision).
3. Say first statement on True or False script and invite participant’s to move under the ‘True’ sign if they believe the statement to be true or under the ‘False’ sign if they believe the statement to be false.
4. Ask the questions to the group as a whole and allow participants 5 seconds to choose a side of the room.
5. Repeat questions when necessary.
6. Advise participants of the correct answer and follow-up statements, and move on to the next question. (Recommended to ask 4 or 5 questions)
7. At the end, ask participants to come back into a larger group to debrief.

**Facilitator Note: Depending on the size of your group and how much time is needed to debrief each answer, you may have time for only one of the two questions.*

DEBRIEF:

- What surprised you?
- What facts do you think are most important/relevant?

RECREATIONAL CANNABIS - TRUE OR FALSE**1. SMOKING CANNABIS SHOULD BE TOTALLY AVOIDED**

- ✔ **TRUE** - Regardless of the source – burning wood, tobacco, or cannabis – smoke inhalation is harmful to lung health. While the chemical make-up of cannabis smoke differs from that of cigarettes, neither is healthy for the lungs. More research is needed to fully know and understand the long-term effects of cannabis on lung health.

2. YOU CAN LEGALLY CONSUME (RECREATIONAL) CANNABIS IN ONTARIO AT THE AGE OF 18?

- ✘ **FALSE** - While 18 is the Federal age, you must be 19 years of age or older to legally purchase/consume cannabis in Ontario. Each province may regulate differently.

3. YOU CAN ONLY USE CANNABIS IN THE SAME PLACES AS YOU SMOKE TOBACCO (SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO STRATEGY)

- ✔ **TRUE** - In Ontario cannabis is regulated under the Smoke Free Ontario Act (SFOA) and treated like tobacco. That means, individuals are allowed to use cannabis in the same places they are allowed to use tobacco. For a complete list of restrictions under SFOA visit <https://www.ontario.ca/page/smoke-free-ontario>

** Depending on where you live and/or work there may be other restrictions on smoking and vaping (bylaws, workplace policies, property owner policies).*

4. ALL TYPES OF CANNABIS HAVE THE SAME LEVELS OF THC AND CBD (TWO CHEMICALS FOUND IN CANNABIS)

- ✘ **FALSE** - The two main chemicals found in cannabis are Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and Cannabidiol (CBD). THC is primarily responsible for the psychoactive effects or ‘high’ associated with cannabis use. People should be cautious if there are high levels of THC found in cannabis as this may produce stronger effects than expected. CBD is the other major compound without the psychoactive effects. In total cannabis plants produce more than 61 chemicals also known as cannabinoids.

5. CANNABIS SMOKE DOES NOT TRIGGER SYMPTOMS FOR PEOPLE WITH ASTHMA

- ✘ **FALSE** - Cannabis smoke may also be an asthma trigger and lead to worsening symptoms, as well as for other lung diseases. Second-hand cannabis smoke also contains many of the same toxins and carcinogens found in directly inhaled cannabis smoke.

6. THESE FOUR RESPIRATORY SYMPTOMS CAN BE TRIGGERED FROM SMOKING CANNABIS (COUGHING, WHEEZING, SPUTUM, CHEST TIGHTNESS)

- ✔ **TRUE** - Studies suggest that frequent and heavy cannabis smoking is associated with cough, sputum production, wheezing and a decline in lung function.

7. IF YOU ARE UNDER THE AGE OF 18 YOU ARE MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE HARM FROM USING CANNABIS.

- ✘ **FALSE** - Canada's Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines provide the following recommendations: Avoid use entirely before age 16 and delay initiation until at least after adolescence (25). This is because the brain is still developing until adolescence.

8. MIXING CANNABIS WITH TOBACCO IS EVEN MORE HARMFUL

- ✔ **TRUE** - Cannabis and tobacco should not be mixed. When people mix tobacco to their cannabis it increases the risks of developing respiratory symptoms. This is associated with more negative health effects due to higher toxic exposure. It also exposes you to nicotine, making it more addictive.

9. CANNABIS SMOKE CONTAINS MORE THAN 100 CHEMICALS

- ✘ **FALSE** - Cannabis smoke contains more than 450 chemicals and cigarette smoke contains more than 4,000, many cancer-causing. When mixing cannabis with tobacco, you also increase the risks associated with second-hand smoke that contains many poisons including ammonia and cyanide. Third-hand smoke, the leftover residue left on clothes, furniture and carpets can also worsen respiratory symptoms.

10. CANNABIS IS NOT ADDICTIVE

- ✘ **FALSE** - While most individuals who occasionally use cannabis do not experience dependence, approximately 5-9% of people that use cannabis will develop dependence. This rate amongst youth it is much higher at 17%. Additionally, about 1 in 5 people who use cannabis seek substance use treatment for cannabis related problems.

1.3 DEBRIEF - HOW ARE YOU FEELING ABOUT THE ISSUE?

TIME: 10 minutes

MATERIALS:

- 4 or 5 emojis printed on 8.5 x 11 paper (copy and paste from the internet or you can draw by hand)
- Masking Tape

PREPARATION:

- Rearrange the room so there is enough space for participants to move back and forth between the different sides of the room.
- Hang emoji signs on the wall around the room

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Invite participants to move under the emoji sign that best represents how they are feeling about cannabis (after the main activity)
- Encourage each emoji group to share with each other why they feel that way
- Ask for one person from each group to share back with the whole group the general sentiments that were expressed

LEVEL 2
“THE SO WHAT”

Level 2 is intended to establish why we care about this topic and why it matters. As well as to explore different perspectives on the topic.

*Norms and Agreements Activity (Optional) – See Appendix A

2.1 INTRO ACTIVITY
NUMBER CLUSTER BRAINSTORM

Objective : A quick activity to re-cap and assess the learnings from **Level 1**.

TIME: 10 minutes

MATERIALS:

- List of Questions (provide)

PREPARATION:

- Rearrange the room so there is enough space for participants to move around the room.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Facilitator will call out a number between 2 and 5 while participants are moving around the room
- Participants will then have to quickly form groups based on the number that is called out (if there is an odd number, remaining participants can join the group closest to them)
- In their groups, participants must answer the question that the facilitator reads out (i.e. what concerns you most about the recreational cannabis? What are your biggest concerns about cannabis?)

2.2 CORE ACTIVITY
CANNABIS FROM 4 PERSPECTIVES | 4 SIDES OF CANNABIS

Objective : To explore the recreational cannabis issue from different perspectives

TIME: 20 minutes

MATERIALS:

- Flipchart Paper
- Markers
- Fact Sheets (1 per group) *See page 10

PREPARATION:

- 4 pieces of flipchart paper with one perspective written on each (i.e. Industry, Health, Youth Who Use Recreational Cannabis, Youth Who Don't Use Recreational Cannabis)
- Set-up room so there is the appropriate space for small group work

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Divide group into 4 smaller teams, 1 group per perspective
- Small groups will have 7-8 minutes to brainstorm their perspective on recreational cannabis based on their assigned role (i.e. Industry) and provide a convincing argument
- Groups must record their ideas on flipchart provided
- Facilitator will then hand out one fact sheet per group and groups will have a chance to fact check their arguments and add anything to their flipchart
- Groups then hang up their flipchart and participants can walk around the room to see other perspectives about cannabis
- Ask each group to find a creative way to present their argument to the whole team.

2.3 DEBRIEF - INSIDE/OUTSIDE

TIME: 10 minutes

MATERIALS:

- None

PREPARATION:

- Prepare the room so there is space for participants to move around the room.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Number participants "1" or "2"
- Ask number 1s to form a circle facing outward
- Ask number 2s to then form a second circle on the outside of the first circle (the inner and outer circles should be facing each other)
- Make sure participants are lined up facing someone from the opposite circle
- The facilitator will then say a random number between 1 and 6. If it's an even number the outside circle moves to the right. If it's an odd number, the inside circle moves to the right.
- The facilitator will then pose a question ("What was the biggest surprise or learning during the 4 perspectives activity? What was the most convincing argument? What was something new you learned, etc.?)

LEVEL 3
“THE NOW WHAT”

Level 3 is intended to ask the question “What do we do now?” and to provide an opportunity to think critically about how to apply what we have learned.

*Norms and Agreements Activity (Optional) – See Appendix A

3.1 INTRO ACTIVITY
PRESSURE’S ON!

Objective : A quick and fun activity to promote critical thinking and to test your ability to form a strong argument in a short period of time.

TIME: 10 minutes

MATERIALS:

- Post it notes
- Pens/pencils
- Timer

PREPARATION:

- None

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Divide the group into pairs (number participants “1” or “2”)
- You have 1 minute to take notes on a (random) topic that your partner/teacher gives you
- After 1 minute is up, you will then have to speak for 1 minute on that topic using your notes if need be.
- Switch partners after you have presented and repeat the process.

3.2 CORE ACTIVITY
ROLE PLAY SCENARIOS

Objective : Participants will demonstrate the ability to apply appropriate skills and strategies in making decisions about their health in relation to recreational cannabis through role play/discussion of hypothetical scenarios.

TIME: 20 minutes

MATERIALS:

- Role play scenarios (printed)
- Costumes/props

PREPARATION:

- Print out scenarios

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Divide group into 4-5 smaller teams
- Choose scenarios that you feel are best suited for your group
- Hand-out 1 scenario per team
- Give teams 10 minutes to read over their scenario and prepare a role play
- Each will have a chance to perform their role play

SCENARIOS

SCENARIO 1

Aimo spends a lot of time on social media following a lot of social influencers. One of the newest trends is smoking cannabis and it is being posted on all of his feeds. Aimo is aware of the negative health effects of smoking cannabis but wants to be cool and stay with the trend. What can Aimo do in this situation?

SCENARIO 2

Abel is in his last year of high school and has become extra stressed with his upcoming university applications. He is worried that his grades might not be good enough to get into the schools he has selected. A friend told him that weed can help with stress. Abel is feeling overwhelmed and is curious about how cannabis could help him relax. What could Abel do in this situation?

SCENARIO 3

Ichiro has never smoked tobacco before because he doesn't want to become addicted. However, his friend is telling him that by smoking tobacco and cannabis together it removes the addictive properties of tobacco. What could Ichiro do in this situation and how could he become better informed?

SCENARIO 4

Santiago's friends have all tried cannabis before and he's thinking about whether to try it as well. His friends have told him that it's impossible to get addicted and it's not as harmful as cigarettes. What could Santiago do in this situation?

SCENARIO 5

Akeem sits next to a classmate who smokes heavily. He believes that the recent asthma flare-ups that he has experienced at school are a result of his classmate smelling like smoke. Akeem is embarrassed to say anything because he doesn't want to offend his classmate. What can Akeem do in this situation?

3.3 DEBRIEF - SNOWBALL

TIME: 10 minutes

MATERIALS:

- Post-it notes
- Pens/Paper

PREPARATION:

- Prepare the room so there is space for participants to move around
- Hand out one post-it note and a writing utensil per participant

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Form a big circle
- Ask participants to write down their biggest take-away/learning from the activity
- Once they have finished writing down their response ask participants to scrunch their post-it note into a (snow) ball and at the count of 3, everyone will toss their paper ball across the circle
- Each person will then pick up one of the paper balls (closest to them) and share what was written

APPENDIX A: NORMS AND AGREEMENTS

TIME: 5 minutes

MATERIALS:

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Masking tape

PREPARATION:

- On flipchart write 'Norms and Agreements'

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Explain to the group that we are going to brainstorm a list of group norms or agreements that will help create the atmosphere for the day.
- Note that the research suggests that when people create their own sets of norms and regulations they are more likely to both follow and enforce those agreements.
- Record suggestions on flip chart.
- Ideas to suggest include:
 - o Agree to disagree
 - o Silence the technology
 - o Trust the process
 - o Take the concepts, leave the details
 - o Be present
 - o Have fun
- Post in a visual place in the room.
- Revisit as necessary.

2.2 CORE ACTIVITY

RECREATIONAL CANNABIS FROM 4 PERSPECTIVES



1

The term cannabis comes from the Cannabis Sativa plant and includes the dried or crushed leaves (marijuana), resin of flower buds (hashish), and oils or waxes (extracts).

2

THC is primarily responsible for the psychoactive effects or “high” associated with cannabis use. High THC levels can be potentially dangerous.

3

Anything that burns cannabis creates harmful smoke (bongs, pipes, joints, etc.).

5

The most harmful way to use cannabis is to smoke it.

4

The general population **does not** use recreational cannabis.

7

Second-hand cannabis smoke contains many of the same toxins and carcinogens found in directly inhaled cannabis smoke.

6

Smoke from recreational cannabis contains many of the same toxins, irritants and carcinogens as tobacco smoke.

8

Children are at a greater health risk for cannabis use and it may also be an asthma trigger and lead to worsening symptoms, as well as for other lung diseases.

9

Early and frequent cannabis use is associated with poorer health outcomes.

10

Heavy smoking of cannabis may lead to chronic bronchitis and a worsening of chronic lung disease symptoms

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