

Safer Choices: Week 2

Wednesday 29 April 2015 **WHY TAKE DRUGS?**

Your child will be doing the following:

- Learning some key terminology about drugs
- Thinking about the different reasons why people take drugs
- Finding out about the law in relation to drugs and considering different scenarios

First... they will hear **some key terminology about drugs**

Drug – any substance taken into the body altering thought processes and behaviour.

Tolerance – to require more of the substance to produce the same or original effect

Withdrawal – physical and psychological effects user experiences when they stop using for whatever reason

Addiction – a condition characterized by an overwhelming desire to continue taking a drug to which one has become habituated through repeated consumption because it produces a particular effect, usually an alteration of mental status

Dependency – **drug dependence**, a psychological craving for, habituation to, abuse of, or physiologic reliance on a chemical substance

Physical dependency – when a substance effects the body in such a way that when it is removed the body undergoes physical withdrawal symptoms (sweats, shakes etc)

Then... they will be asked in a pair or group to think about reasons why people might take drugs. The following reasons will be discussed in class in addition to these:

Enjoyment – it seems to be harmless, it's easy to ignore the risks...

Environment - drug dealing and abuse is extremely common in areas of social deprivation and high crime and can be extremely easy to access and prove a short term release from the challenges of poverty. Equally, wealthier environments can make access to drugs easy.

Curiosity – which can lead to use, but also to high risk and addiction.

Also - Rebellion...Peer Pressure...Cost...Copying media images...

Next... they will read about the law in relation to drugs:

The three Classes of illegal drugs

Illegal drugs are put into three categories: Class A, B and C. Class A are the most harmful and have the biggest penalties.

| Drug | Maximum penalties |
|---|---|
| Class A – cocaine and crack cocaine, crystal meth, ecstasy, heroin, LSD and magic mushrooms (raw or processed) | Possession – 7 years in prison and an unlimited fine Possession With Intent to Supply or Supply – Life in prison and an unlimited fine |
| Class B – cannabis, speed (speed is Class A if prepared for injection), mephedrone | Possession – 5 years in prison and an unlimited fine Possession With Intent to Supply or Supply – 14 years in prison and an unlimited fine |
| Class C – anabolic steroids, ketamine and tranquillisers | Possession – 2 years in prison and an unlimited fine Possession With Intent to Supply or Supply – 14 years in prison and an unlimited fine |

A criminal record could affect your chances of getting a job or going on holiday abroad. Remember – drug-driving is as illegal as drink-driving and carries the same penalties.

the law

There are two offences police can charge you with if you are caught with drugs:

Possession

If you are caught with drugs the police will always take action, even if it's only a small amount. What happens depends on the circumstances. You might get a warning and have the drug confiscated or, if it's more serious, you will be arrested. The police will think it's more serious if:

- you've been caught with class A drugs

- this isn't the first time you've been caught

Dealing

(which includes the offences Possession With Intent to Supply, Offer to Supply and Supply)

Dealing is much more serious and includes being caught with drugs that you were going to share with your mates.

A drug dealer could end up in jail for a long time

What about the Law? Scenarios to consider

Scenario 1

A student in your year (Yr 10) is buying marijuana for other students and bringing it into school.

- What should their punishment be and why?
- It is discovered that they are selling to new Year 7s. Should this change the punishment and why?

Scenario 2

- A caretaker discovers a bag full of marijuana and pills in a student's locker. What should be the punishment and why?
- The student states that they have been making a lot of money and donating it all to a charity. Should that change the punishment and why?

You could talk about these scenarios at home – what punishments do you think there should be? What did your child think? What did they think about what the other students said?