

Elementary School **ACTIVITY GUIDE**

This year, to commemorate Drug Awareness Week, we are offering you the possibility of organizing original activities for students in grades 5 and 6. You can also find other activities on the www.dependances.gouv.qc.ca Web site.

Activity objectives:

To develop among young people the feeling that they are competent when it comes to making informed choices about drinking alcohol and taking other drugs.

To enable young people to exercise critical judgment when it comes to drinking alcohol and taking other drugs, and to the at-risk behaviours associated with their consumption.

SITUATION SCENARIOS

Activity description:

We suggest an interactive activity by means of which the students are invited to role play through situation scenarios (skits) lasting 3 to 4 minutes each.

The day before, give each student who will be playing a role a copy of the script so that they can prepare. As the teacher, you can play the role of a narrator and lead the group discussion according to the situation scenario.

These six situation scenarios address young people with regard to the risk factors that can result in substance abuse (low self esteem, isolation, peer pressure, etc.). They are designed to better prepare students to resolve problems that can arise in their lives. The situation scenarios reproduce events that occur in the "real lives" of young teens.

Length:

20 to 25 minutes, or 4 to 5 minutes per situation scenario (skit), and 15 to 20 minutes for the group discussion.

Materials required:

Each young actor must have on hand a copy of the script for the situation scenario (skit) in which he or she is participating.

A • FALSE FRIENDS

Teacher:

In this situation scenario, we meet Jonathan and Dave. This is an unusual encounter, because the boys don't have much in common, and Jonathan doesn't normally talk to Dave.

Jonathan: Hey! Dave!

Dave: Yeah? What?

Jonathan: Wait for me – I'll go out for recess with you!

Dave: You want to go with me? Gee! That's surprising!

Jonathan: Hmm – you don't seem too happy to see me. Is it because Luc and I ran after you yesterday? Come on. I'm sure Luc will give you back your hat. We only did it for a laugh. You know how it is!

Dave: (Hesitating) No – it's not that.

Jonathan: Well, what is it then? What's wrong with you?

Dave: Nothing. Everything's fine.

Jonathan: OK. It's better that way... Listen – can you lend me your magazine? I didn't get the November issue yet.

Dave: So that's it! I figured there was a reason why you wanted to come with me. You want something.

Jonathan: Oh come on! Knock it off and give it to me. I'll give it back to you tomorrow. Promise. It wouldn't kill you to be cool once in a while.

Dave: Fine! Here's the magazine. Are you happy now?

Jonathan: Yes, thanks. (Sounding like he's in a hurry) OK – See ya, numskull. I'm going to see my friends.

Dave: (To himself) Now that you've got my magazine, leave me alone.

Teacher:

Once again, Dave did not dare to tell Jonathan what he really thought. This isn't the first time that Jonathan has made fun of him and then acted as though nothing happened. Jonathan's behaviour hurts Dave's feelings, but he doesn't dare say anything because he's afraid of how Jonathan will react. He doesn't want to look like he's afraid. You know, this impression that we sometimes have, the feeling that it's easier to say yes to something we disagree with instead of explaining why we don't agree, is quite common. It could even happen to you when it comes to drinking alcohol and taking drugs.

What do you think? Should Dave continue to give in to Jonathan's bullying or should he tell Jonathan how he feels, meaning that his words and actions hurt his feelings? And more importantly, let's try to think of ways for Dave to be more assertive. In this situation, what could Dave do to assert himself to Jonathan?

B • HELP!

Teacher:

Now, let's meet Melissa and Valerie. These two good friends have not spoken for a few days. Let's hear their story.

Melissa: Hi, Valerie.

Valerie: Hi, Mel.

Melissa: It looks like things aren't going so well with you.

Valerie: Things are okay.

Melissa: What's the problem?

Valerie: Nothing – I told you!

Melissa: Oh come on, Valerie! It's obvious that something's wrong. What's up? Why won't you talk to me? You know, you can tell me if something's wrong.

Valerie: You'll think it's stupid.

Melissa: Of course not. I don't think things that hurt my friends are stupid. Come on, tell me! What is it?

Valerie: Well, it all started at the beginning of the year. You know Yannick, the big guy who's always hanging out with Tom and Patrick?

Melissa: Yes, yes. I know who you're talking about. He's the big-mouth who always thinks he's the boss of everyone.

Valerie: Yes – that's the one. At the beginning of the year, he came to see me. I was nervous and embarrassed, and I was worried about what he was going to say to me. It was as if he knew I was afraid of him and that I wouldn't be able to stand up for myself.

Melissa: Okay, so what did he say to you?

Valerie: Well, he said "Give me your snack, or I'll start rumours about you and everyone will laugh at you."

Melissa: Oh no! Poor you! That's not right! Did he leave you alone after that?

Valerie: Of course not. He kept on doing it, then last week, he made me give him my lunch. I don't know what to do. I don't know how to get out of it.

Melissa: He has to stop bullying you, the thug! It's not right. You must feel awful! You must be so scared!

Valerie: Yes – and I'm much smaller than him – I don't know what to do. Every day I worry that I'll run into him and I'm afraid that it'll get worse if I talk to someone or if I do something about it.

Melissa: If you don't do anything or say anything, it won't stop, you know. He knows he'll get what he wants whenever he scares you and threatens you. Who knows what he'll do next time! You need to talk to someone. You can't let him get away with it. After you, there will be someone else, and it will never stop. He's unbelievable.

Valerie: Maybe, but who do you want me to talk to? I don't know who could possibly stop him. I don't want people to think I'm a snitch and that I'm scared.

Teacher:

Valerie has a big problem on her hands. Ever since the beginning of the year, she has been trying to avoid Yannick so that he can't threaten her. Until today, Valerie has kept her secret to herself. Today, she finally had the courage to speak to her friend Melissa. In this situation scenario, we are dealing with something that's called "taxing", but young people can encounter all kinds of problems, including those relating to alcohol and drugs, and they need advice and help in order to know how to handle such situations.

Here, Melissa is encouraging her friend to seek help. But Valerie does not know where to turn, and she is afraid of reprisals and of what others might think of her.

If you were in the same situation as Valerie, what would you do? Where would you turn for help?

C. THOSE PESKY PARENTS!

Teacher:

Those pesky parents! They always want to know where their children are, what they're doing, and who they're playing with. They're just so nosy! Let's hear what Jerome's parents are like.

Mother: (sounding impatient) It's 9:15 and Jerome isn't home yet. What's he up to? What time did you tell him to be home?

Father: I told him to be home by 8:30 at the latest. But you know how quickly children forget. Especially when they're at the park, with the new skateboard ramps...

Mother: I really don't like him being at the park so late. Especially with everything we hear about gangs. The other night, I saw a bunch of teens hanging out at the park. I'm not completely sure, but it looked to me like they were drinking beer. I know that Jerome is responsible, but sometimes, when you're influenced by a group, it's easy to get carried away. And with everything we're hearing about taxing these days... I wouldn't want anything to happen to him.

Teacher:

Jerome arrives at home one hour late. At the park, he had met some friends, and together, they decided to have a skateboarding contest, which went overtime... How do you think Jerome's parents will react? If you were Jerome, what would you say to his parents? Has a situation like this ever happened to you?

Note to teacher:

After the discussion, return to the situation scenario for the end of the conversation between Jerome and his parents.

Mother: Jerome?

Jerome: Hi. (Silence)

Mother: Hi Jerome, how are you? You know, your father and I were starting to worry. It's almost 9:30.

Jerome: It's already 9:30? I had no idea it was so late. We were playing on the new ramps. It was so much fun. I was with Pete, Andrew, and Matthew. They showed me some new tricks. I can't wait to show them to you!

Father: I'm really happy for you. But you know, I was really worried that something had happened to you, that you might have run into problems with other teens, for instance.

Jerome: I think I know who you're talking about. But we don't hang out with them. We aren't interested in them at all. You know, if there ever was a problem, or if they ever bothered us, I'd tell you.

Father: We trust you and we love you. And I know how easy it is to forget the time – I'm a pro! But from now on, let's stick to the schedule, okay?

Jerome: Okay. I promise.

Mother: It's alright, Jerome. Now get to bed. You have school tomorrow.

D. WHY DO WE HAVE TO FOLLOW SO MANY RULES?

Vera: (sounding discouraged) Hi Lisa. I'm so fed up!

Lisa: Gee, Vera, what's wrong?

Vera: I just came from the principal's office. He told me I have to write a two-page essay. Unnhhh... Can you imagine? It's a little much!

Lisa: Why is he making you write an essay?

Vera: I don't get it – it has nothing to do with anything. Is it really so bad to have a picture of a marijuana leaf on my T-shirt? He said that it isn't in line with the school's educational mission. Please!

Lisa: Wow!

Vera: He said that it's one of the rules of the school, and that I have to follow it. I'm just so fed up with rules. When it isn't at school, it's at home: "Pick up your laundry, come in at such-and-such a time, get off the phone, beer at your age? Don't even think about it! Have you done your homework? Be polite!"

Lisa: I know, there sure are a lot of rules to follow.

Vera: At least sometimes I get to make the rules: "Stay out of my room!" I really don't want my brother to find my personal diary – and more especially to read it!

Lisa: I get it. Does your brother follow your rule?

Vera: Yes. Deep down, it's better anyway because he knows that if he doesn't, I won't follow his rule about not touching his electric guitar and his amp.

Lisa: I guess at times, some rules are easier to follow than others.

Teacher:

What do you think? Do you think it's true that some rules are easier to follow? Can you name any? After our discussion, we will return to the situation scenario for the continuation of the conversation between Lisa and Vera.

Vera: It's true that there are some rules that are easier to follow than others, but there are also some that I have a lot more trouble with than others. Sometimes it's because I don't understand them, and sometimes, it's because I don't see the point, which makes me not want to follow them.

Teacher:

Can you think of examples of rules that you don't understand or that you don't see the point in at school or at home?

Lisa: I understand, Vera. On the other hand, I wonder what would happen if there weren't any rules. How would we live together and get along at school and at home?

Teacher:

Finally, do you think that like Lisa said, some rules are useful and that they make it easier to live in harmony at school and at home? Can you think of any?

E. IF I HAVE A PROBLEM, WHO CAN I TALK TO?

Teacher:

In this situation scenario, Steve is a boy who is calm and reserved. He normally likes to play with his friends at recess, but not today. He is walking around the school yard alone, looking down.

Simon: Hey Steve, do you want to play hacky sack?

Steve: (Seeming depressed). No, I don't feel like it.

Simon: Come on Steve, play with us.

Steve: No. I told you I don't feel like it.

Simon: Come on, you always play. This isn't like you. What's going on?
Did you have a fight with your girlfriend?

Steve: Please! You know I don't have a girlfriend.

Simon: Yeah, I know. I was just trying to make you laugh.
I can see that it isn't working. What's wrong?

Steve: It's nothing.

Simon: If you don't want to tell me, that's fine, but don't tell me there's nothing wrong.
Look at you – of course there's something wrong.

Steve: That's true. There is something wrong, but it isn't that serious.

Simon: Come on! I have eyes! If it wasn't serious, you wouldn't look like that!

Steve: If I tell you, do you promise not to tell anyone?

Simon: Yes, I promise.

Steve: You know my father, well, he likes to drink beer.

Simon: Yeah, mine too.

Steve: Yes, well, my father drinks too much beer. You've seen him, Simon, whenever you come over, he's always drinking beer. Sometimes he says really mean things to people.

Simon: Yes, that's true. I noticed that.

Steve: Well, yesterday, he drank too much, as usual. And he started insulting my mother. They were yelling at each other, and while he was yelling I was afraid that he was going to hit her, so I screamed at him to stop and it worked. But I was really scared. If it happens again and they don't stop, then what? I don't know what to do. I feel so confused.

Teacher:

Things are not going very well for Steve. He is afraid, and he doesn't know what to do about his father's problem. Where can Steve turn for help?

Who could he talk to about the fact that things aren't right in his life?

F. WHAT DOES "REALLY COOL" REALLY MEAN?

Teacher:

In this next situation scenario, we are introduced to Olivier and Fred, who are getting ready for the weekend. They are planning to go skateboarding on Friday at the new municipal skate park. Sam, the more adventurous member of their group, suggests that they wrap up their evening of skateboarding at his place. While his parents are out, he plans to hold a "really cool" party, as he calls it.

Fred: Hi, Olivier.

Olivier: Hi, Fred.

Fred: Are you interested in going to the skate park tonight?

Olivier: Sure. That's a good idea. What time?

Fred: At about 6:30. Does that work for you?

Olivier: Sounds good!

Sam: Hey guys – wait up!

Fred: What? What do you want?

Sam: I have something to tell you.

Olivier: Go ahead – we're listening!

Sam: Not in front of everyone. Come over here.

Fred: Let's hear it. What kind of trouble are you trying to get us into?

Sam: Don't say that. It isn't trouble at all. It's fun that I'm talking about. My parents won't be home tonight, and I know where they hide their liquor. We could rent movies and have a little fun drinking beer. It'll be cool!

Olivier: I figured it would be something like that. Listen. Sam, if I accept, I don't know what could happen, but if I say no right away, I know I won't get into any trouble. Sam, are you really sure you want to get into something like that? What about you, Fred, are you going to join him?
I know I'm not. You know, Sam, I don't find drinking beer all that cool. There are a lot of things that I find really cool and that I have fun doing, and I'm proud of that. When I practice a new skateboarding trick, and I finally get it, well, I find that really cool.

Fred: Ya, well, on my soccer team, when I play well, I find that really cool!
(Addressing the students in the class)
And what do you do that you think is really cool?

Teacher:

Now why don't you each tell me something you think is really cool?

2 COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES TO THE SITUATION SCENARIOS

Activity description:

Organized into focus groups, work teams, or using another set-up (writing assignment, homework, etc.), ask the students to answer the following questions.

Length:

Variable, depending on the selected format (in group with verbal answers or in writing).

First question:

Can you name any personal problems that youths your age can experience?

Second question:

Why do you think that some young people with personal problems don't talk to other people about them?

Third question:

What do you think could happen to a young person who has personal problems and who continues to experience them without seeking to resolve them?

Fourth question:

Do you think that the solution lies in drinking alcohol or in taking drugs? How about in running away or resorting to violence?

Fifth question:

If a young person has a problem, to whom should he or she talk?

3 QUIZ

Activity description:

This quiz is a complementary activity to the situation scenarios. Read the questions to the students and ask them to identify the right answers.

Length: Approximately 15 minutes.

1 Parents give me advice because...

- A. they think they are right;
- B. they have too much time on their hands;
- C. they love me;
- D. they don't trust me;
- E. none of the above.

The answer is C: because they love me.

Parents give us advice because they love us. Deep down, if parents didn't care about what we did, they wouldn't go to the trouble of giving us advice.

2 A friend who tries to make me do something I don't want to do...

- A. knows better than I do what's good for me;
- B. is doing it out of respect for me;
- C. is nice to decide for me;
- D. does not respect me.

The answer is D: does not respect me.

A friend who tries to make you do something you don't want to do does not respect you. Only you can decide for yourself. Real friends will not push you to do things against your wishes. They will respect your decision.

3 Inside a group, true friendship means...

- A. following others even if the others are doing something that bothers me;
- B. explaining to others why I prefer not to tag along;
- C. putting my personal preferences aside to follow others;
- D. none of the above.

The answer is B: explaining to others why I prefer not to tag along.

When you're part of a group, true friendship means that you are comfortable explaining to others why you would prefer not to tag along. By doing this, you are demonstrating to your friends that you are honest and that you prefer to make your own choices instead of being a "follower".

4 When I have a decision to make about alcohol or other drugs, my main consideration is...

- A. my budget;
- B. what my friends will think;
- C. how to do it and not get caught;
- D. myself.

The answer is D: my main consideration is myself.

When you have a decision to make about alcohol or other drugs, your main consideration is yourself.

It's true! Only you can decide whether or not to drink alcohol or to take drugs. You are always responsible for your own decisions.

5 It is a good idea to learn about alcohol or other drugs...

- A. so that you can impress others;
- B. just in case you need to answer a telephone survey about it;
- C. so that you are able to make an informed decision;
- D. so that you don't look stupid.

The answer is C: so that you are able to make an informed decision.

You learn about it in order to be able to make an informed decision. Because when you know a lot about a topic, it is possible to formulate an opinion and make appropriate decisions.

6 By asserting my ideas to my friends, even if others do not share them, I show that I have...

- A. courage;
- B. self-confidence;
- C. honesty;
- D. self-respect and respect for others;
- E. all of the above.

The answer is E: all of the above.
*It is true that it is not always easy to express ideas to your friends.
If you can do it, you should be proud of your strength.*

7 My friends can influence me and force me to take drugs.

True or false?

The answer is true.
*However your decision should always be yours, and not your friends'.
The decision to not take drugs can sometimes lead you to look for new friends.*

8 Some young people drink alcohol and take drugs to copy their friends.

True or false?

The answer is true.
It's nice to feel accepted by a group. But how far are you prepared to go to fit in?

9 Parents who ask their children questions about their friends and their activities...

- A. are doing it to be nosy;
- B. love them and want to make sure they are okay;
- C. don't trust them;
- D. none of the above.

The answer is B: they do it because they love them and want to make sure they are okay.
By regularly talking to your parents about your activities and your friends, you are making them aware of your tastes, your interests, and of who your friends are. Furthermore, talking to your parents or to anyone else you trust can help you to prevent or resolve problems, to obtain other opinions about a topic, to share your happiness or your pain, etc.