



2017 ACTIVITY GUIDE

ACTIVITY FOR GROUPS AGE 13 TO 16

**2017 DRUG AWARENESS WEEK
ALCOHOL – DRUGS – GAMBLING**

THIS ACTIVITY GUIDE IS A SUPPORT TOOL FOR TEACHERS AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS WHO WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AGE 13 TO 16 AND WOULD LIKE TO RUN AN AWARENESS BUILDING ACTIVITY WITH THEIR GROUP.

Positive Adaptive Strategies

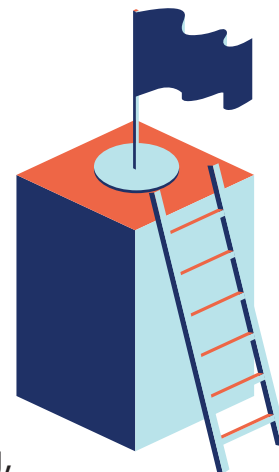
The goal of this Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) campaign is to build awareness among young people about the **risks and consequences associated with drinking, taking drugs, and gambling** and foster the adoption of protective factors that can help them make good decisions. This year, the campaign focuses on **positive adaptive strategies** as a protection factor.

The activity was designed for **2017 Drug Awareness Week** but can be used with young people in the target age group at any point during the year. The activity aims to promote a protective factor recognized as one of the most effective ways to counter the risks related to alcohol, drugs, and gambling: **using positive solutions to deal with stress and face problems instead of turning to alcohol, drugs, or gambling.**

Protective factors are elements that, when present in the life of a young person, help them develop their personal and social skills and foster self esteem. Young people who acquire these skills and have good self esteem are more likely to make smart decisions for themselves, both in situations involving drugs, alcohol, or gambling and in other spheres of their lives.

The more a person develops their skills and abilities, the more they have the wherewithal to avoid or put off drinking or taking drugs—especially when they're young or as a way of gaining acceptance with their peers or adapting to social situations. To keep psychotropic substances and gambling from becoming a way of dealing with difficult life situations, it's important—especially for young people—to develop positive strategies for dealing with life's challenges and stressors. Studies show that young people with a wider range of positive adaptive strategies have fewer negative experiences when facing difficult or stressful situations.

ACTIVITY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGE 13 TO 16



OBJECTIVES

- Make sure young people know that positive solutions (i.e., positive adaptive strategies) are highly protective factors that can help them in many different areas of their lives and protect them from the risks associated with drinking, taking drugs, and gambling.
- Make sure young people are aware of the risks and consequences associated with drinking, taking drugs, and gambling, and the strategies that can be used to avoid those risks.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- This guide to the activity for young people age 13 to 16
- Presentation entitled *Age 13–16 Activity* (can be downloaded as a PDF from www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/professionnels/dependances) (Web page in French only)
- Two short videos, about solutions for dealing with stress and the risks of drinking and taking drugs ("*Des solutions gagnantes pour gérer le stress et les risques de la consommation*") and about the importance of having a good support network and speaking up for yourself ("*Être bien entouré et s'affirmer, c'est important*") available in French with English subtitles at: www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/professionnels/dependances) (Web page in French only)
- Computer and multimedia projector
- A whiteboard or other writing surface

ACTIVITY LENGTH

- 1 hour

STEPS

PART 1

CHOOSE SMART SOLUTIONS

1. Using the projector, watch the two videos as a group. The first is for young people age 13 to 24 and is about positive strategies for dealing with stress and the risks of drinking or taking drugs. The second is for young people age 13 to 16 and is about the importance of having a good support network and speaking up for yourself.
2. Activate the *Age 13–16 Activity* PDF presentation to project the talking points on the screen.
3. In response to the videos, and to get the group processing the information, lead a group discussion by projecting and asking each of the following questions:
 - What do you think about the ways of dealing with stress presented in the first video?
Note for the person leading the activity: The strategies shown in the video include: making lists, writing down your feelings, being prepared, laughing or making others laugh, playing a game to take your mind off of things, turning a boring task into a pleasant activity, spending time with your dog.
 - Do you have examples of stressful situations in your life or in the lives of people your age in general?
 - What ways do you know of, or use, to deal with stress and solve problems?
Note for the person leading the activity: It can be a good idea to write down the answers on a whiteboard.
 - In your opinion, why might it be helpful to talk to someone you trust when you're going through a tough time?
Note for the person leading the activity: Mention that talking to someone you trust can help you get your feelings out in the open, get an outside opinion, brainstorm solutions, find out that there are other people with similar experiences, get help or support, etc.

- Do you always feel comfortable resisting peer pressure when someone offers you alcohol or drugs or suggests doing something that doesn't seem right to you?

Note for the person leading the activity: In response to the video for young people age 13 to 16 about the ways of saying no, remind your group that it can be hard to turn down an offer when you feel pressured, but that it's important to speak up for yourself if you want people to respect you and respect what you do. Remind them, too, that teaming up with a friend can make it easier to say no. There's power in numbers!

4. To wrap up the first part of the activity, complete your group's list of solutions for dealing with tough situations by projecting all the tips in the anti-stress toolbox included in the *Age 13–16 Activity* onto the screen.

PART 2

AVOIDING RISKS AND CONSEQUENCES

1. Use the following information to introduce the subject of youth alcohol and drug use.

As a teenager, you might be tempted to experiment with drinking, drugs, or gambling. The first thing to know is that, even though you might get the impression that more and more people your age are into it, it's not necessarily true. Drinking, drugs, and gambling have actually been on the decline among high school students since 2000.

You may want to drink or do drugs to have fun or relax with your friends, but you definitely shouldn't use them to ignore your problems or deal with unpleasant emotions. Drugs and alcohol shouldn't be...

- One of your only ways of having fun
- The only thing you do with your friends
- Something you do every time you go out
- Something you do to fill a void
- The thing you do to forget, to wind down, to de stress, to reward yourself, etc.

If you decide to take alcohol or drugs or gamble, you need to know about the potential risks and consequences and have strategies for minimizing them.

2. Continue presenting the *Age 13–16 Activity* PDF.

Work your way through the *True or False?* slides. Take the time to ask your group about each statement. For example, get a show of hands from the people who think a statement is true and those who think the same statement is false. Move to the slide with the answer and get your group to share their thoughts on the subject.

3. Lead a group discussion by projecting and asking the following question:

- What strategies can you use to avoid the risks and negative consequences of drinking, taking drugs, or gambling?

Note for the person leading the activity: It can be a good idea to write down the answers on a whiteboard.

4. To wrap up the second part of the activity, complete your group's list of strategies for avoiding the risks and consequences associated with drinking, drugs, and gambling by projecting all of the strategies from the last page of the *Age 13–16 Activity* onto the screen.