



2017 ACTIVITY GUIDE

ACTIVITY FOR GROUPS AGE 17 TO 24

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 17 TO 24 AND WOULD LIKE TO RUN AN AWARENESS-BUILDING ACTIVITY WITH THEIR GROUP.

Positive Adaptive Strategies

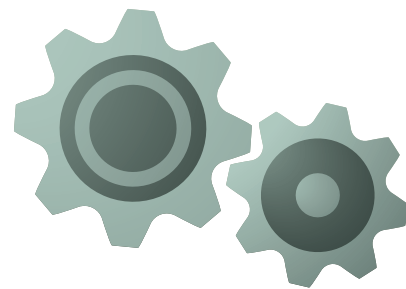
The goal of this Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) campaign is to build awareness among young people about the **risks and consequences associated with drinking, taking drugs, and gambling** and foster the adoption of protective factors that can help them make good decisions. This 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 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 17 TO 24



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 17 to 24
- Presentation entitled *Age 17–24 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 overcoming the challenges and risks involved when you drink or take drugs (“*Comment surmonter les défis et éviter les risques de la consommation*”), 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 17 to 24 and is about overcoming the challenges and risks involved with drinking and drug use.
2. Activate the presentation for the *Age 17–24 Activity* PDF 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.
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 17–24 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.

People sometimes feel tempted to drink, do drugs, or gamble. The first thing to know is that, even though you might get the impression that more and more people your age are into drinking, drugs, or gambling, it's not necessarily true.

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 17-24 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 17–24 Activity* onto the screen.
5. **Option for taking it further:** You could also break the group up into smaller groups to talk about the risks and consequences illustrated in the following scenarios. Then get everyone to come back together in a big group and talk about solutions for dealing with these types of situations to get everyone thinking about them and about ways of preventing the risks.

Scenarios:

- You're in a bar. You've been drinking. At the end of the night, a friend who's there with you offers to give you a ride home.
- You've been drinking (or doing drugs). You're about to send a really angry text that will have serious consequences.
- You've been drinking (or doing drugs). You're out of condoms and are considering having unprotected sex.
- You're at a party. A group of friends is trying to get another friend, who has also been drinking (or doing drugs), to do something dangerous or inappropriate.
- You've been drinking, but you feel like you're fine. You're not sure if you're over the legal limit for driving.