

Explorers All

A Drug Liferacy Module For Grade 4



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The material is designed to support curricular competencies defined by the BC Ministry of Education but can be used to develop drug literacy competencies in a variety of curricular settings and jurisdictions.

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iMinds is a health education resource that seeks to maximize young people's drug literacy—the knowledge and skills they need to survive and thrive in a world where caffeine, tobacco, alcohol and other drug use is common. Building health literacy (including drug literacy) is one part of a comprehensive school health approach to addressing substance use (along with other behavioural health matters relevant to youth).

"Really enjoyed the philosophy of iMinds and having students discuss "their" opinions" ~grade 6 teacher

"I've changed the way I teach and am using a more critical thinking approach"

~grade 7 teacher

Developing drug liferacy

Drug literacy is built by engaging students in honest, thoughtful discussions and projects that involve issues relevant to their daily lives. The goal is to encourage students to both express and think critically about drug-related beliefs, attitudes and behaviours.

Awareness, actions, decisions and behaviours are influenced by multiple factors including personal factors requiring self-awareness and self-management skills, relationships requiring social awareness and skills, and the physical and cultural environments requiring life knowledge and navigational skills. Therefore, students need to learn to ...

- assess the complex ways in which drugs impact the health and wellbeing of individuals, communities and societies
- explore and appreciate diversity related to the reasons people use drugs, the impact of drug use and the social attitudes toward various drugs
- recognize binary constructs (e.g., good vs bad) and assess their limitation in addressing complex social issues like drug use
- recognize how official responses to drugs may have less to do with the drug than with other factors
- develop social and communication skills in addressing discourse and behaviour related to drugs
- develop personal and social strategies to manage the risks and harms related to drugs

What's in it for students?

Students examine the factors that influence the way they think, feel and behave. They learn about and discuss ways to address issues related to health and drug use that may arise for them, their families or their communities.

Drawing on social ecological theory, *iMinds* helps students develop awareness of themselves, their relationships and their environments and helps them build skills in all these dimensions. By addressing all three areas, students develop healthy connectedness—a sense of both autonomy and social belonging.





iMinds aims to give young people an opportunity to

- understand the long relationship humans have had with tobacco, alcohol, cannabis and other substances
- analyze personal, social and environmental influences related to drug use and other lifestyle choices
- develop strategies for attaining and maintaining physical, emotional and social health during childhood, adolescence and young adulthood

What teachers like about iMinds

iMinds does NOT require teachers to be "experts" on drugs or mental health. Instead, teachers serve as facilitators who explore ideas and issues along with their students. iMinds is based on a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. This involves the belief that learning occurs when students are actively involved in the process of carving out their own meaning of things they both experience and come to "know" from various sources.

iMinds is consistent with the new BC curriculum. Rather than passively receiving information, learners are motivated to think

critically and become actively involved in the pursuit of knowledge. Together, the class identifies their current knowledge, explores other ideas and opinions, and acquires and demonstrates new knowledge related to drugs and health.

iMinds is not a program that teachers are expected to implement in a rigid fashion. Rather, it is a "way of thinking" about drug education and a collection of materials and ideas that teachers are encouraged to adopt and adapt as needed in their classroom and community contexts.

iMinds is relatively easy to implement in that it does not require a lot of preparation or any special equipment or materials.

What is available?

Initially, *iMinds* consisted of a set of multilesson modules for Grades 4-10. These are currently being supplemented by a wide range of learning ideas that can be easily incorporated into various curricular areas such as Social Studies, English Language Arts, Science and other subjects and settings. Resources are available in both English and French.





A constructivist approach

to drug literacy

iMinds is based on constructivist educational theory. A constructivist approach is ideal for teaching drug literacy because it avoids setting the teacher up as the "drug expert." Teachers need not worry about being asked questions for which they do not have answers. The role of the teacher is not to provide answers—it is to create a context of inquiry.

"I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only make them think."

~Socrates

"It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it." ~Aristotle

The value of a constructivist approach

In constructivist learning all questions and comments can be heard, discussed, explored and weighed against evidence. Even students who go for shock value will soon learn that their ideas are simply that—ideas. By validating all students' inquiries and providing them with sources of information, facilitators encourage young people to become active thinking beings.



Tips for constructivist teaching

- Stay neutral and acknowledge all contributions in an unbiased but questioning manner. By showing respect to all students regardless of their opinions, you encourage them to do the same.
- Insist on a non-hostile environment
 where students respond to ideas and not the
 individuals presenting those ideas. Make it
 clear from the start that everyone must be
 open to listening to, and considering, views
 that may be different from their own.
- Encourage all students to take part
 in discussions, but avoid forcing anyone
 to contribute if clearly reluctant. Ensure
 students know their feelings and opinions
 are important and will be respected.
- Keep discussions moving in a positive direction by questioning or posing hypothetical situations that encourage deeper thinking about the topic.
- Understand that consensus is not necessary on issues, and that a lack of consensus is in fact a better reflection of "real life."
- Get comfortable with silence as sometimes discussions require reflection.



The s-i model

iMinds materials are developed using a 5-i model that reflects the various phases of constructivist learning. Each module and lesson idea has been developed with these different aspects of learning in mind. Teachers are encouraged to pay particular attention to these as they adapt and construct lessons based on *iMinds* materials.

denfify

Students come to a learning situation with prior knowledge. The "identify" activities provide students and teachers with a means of assessing what they already know. The activities serve to engage students and encourage them to share their current ideas.

investigate

Learning requires students to observe, analyze and evaluate as they interact with materials and ideas introduced through the "investigate" activities. The new evidence may be provided through the ideas of their peers as well as by other sources.

nferpre

Students are encouraged not only to reach conclusions but also to assess the strength of evidence for those conclusions within a range of possible interpretations. The "interpret" activities encourage students to weigh evidence and assign meaning.

magin

Students who know how to understand evidence and manage a range of possible interpretations are in a better position to use knowledge creatively. The "imagine" activities encourage students to consider how knowledge might apply to new possibilities.

ntegrate

Knowledge involves the ability to incorporate new ideas into what is already known, and to use this new knowledge in further explorations. The "integrate" activities allow both students and teachers to make a summary assessment of what students know and can do.



Quick Guide to Drug Use

What are drugs?

Drugs are chemicals that change the way our bodies function. Psychoactive substances are drugs that affect our central nervous system (especially the brain) and make us see, think, feel and behave differently than we usually do. Some of the most commonly used drugs are caffeine (in cola, coffee, tea and chocolate), ethanol (in alcohol), nicotine (in cigarettes, cigars and chewing tobacco), and THC (in marijuana and other cannabis products).

Why do people use drugs?

People use drugs to get some benefit. For example, many people drink coffee to wake up and feel alert. And many people use alcohol to relax and unwind. Other drugs are used to take away pain or to address other problems. Some drugs are used to have a good time or to induce a spiritual experience.

How can using a drug be good and bad?

Many drugs, like certain medications, have greatly benefited human beings. In fact, most drugs are useful in some way. But *all drug use* also carries some risk. Even prescription medication from a doctor can cause harm, especially if not taken properly. It helps to think of drug use on a spectrum:



How much risk is involved in using a drug—and how much harm it may cause—depends on many factors.

- More drug equals more risk. Increased risk is associated with a greater amount and increased frequency of drug use, and with a higher concentration of the drug.
- 2. Younger age equals more risk. The human brain begins to develop in the womb but is not fully formed until well into adulthood. Drugs influence not only our immediate experience but also the way our brains develop. Drugs have a greater impact on young brains than they do on older brains.
- 3. Places, times and activities influence risk. Drinking a glass of wine at a family celebration and then playing chess with grandpa is less likely to result in harm than sneaking alcohol with a group of classmates and then riding bikes or skateboarding.
- 4. The reasons are important. When a person uses a drug because they are curious, they are likely to use it only occasionally or for a short time. But when a person uses a drug to deal with long-term problems, they may use the drug too much or too often. When a person uses a drug in order to fit in with a particular group, they may not listen to their inner self and therefore may make poor choices.

Making good decisions about substance use involves always looking at both the benefits and the risks, thinking about the reasons the drug is being used, and ensuring the context is safe for use. Generally, it is safest not to use any drug unless one can be sure the benefits clearly outweigh the risks, and that the context and reasons for use do not increase the potential for harm.

About the Grade 4 Module

Grade 4 students become "explorers" who seek out and examine the benefits, risks and harms of using medications, caffeine and other drugs. Students also explore a range of options for managing everyday problems and reflect on who they can look to if they ever need help.

Grade 4 is an ideal time for young people to start talking about medications, caffeine and other drugs, and why people use them. It is a time of curiosity and choices, a time when students may benefit from having a broader picture of the common substances being used around them. Young people may make better decisions about drugs later on in life if they understand how and why drugs are used, and know they have options for minimizing harm, including the option of not using any drug at all to address some common problems.



Curricular competencies (Physical and Health)

- Identify and describe factors that influence healthy choices
- Identify and apply strategies for pursuing personal healthy-living goals
- Describe and apply strategies for developing and maintaining positive relationships
- Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being
- Describe and assess strategies for managing problems related to mental wellbeing and substance use
- Describe factors that positively influence mental well-being and self-identity

Drug literacy objectives

- Assess the complex ways in which drugs impact the health and well-being of individuals, communities and societies
- · Explore and appreciate diversity related to the reasons people use drugs, the impact of drug use and the social attitudes toward various drugs
- · Recognize binary constructs (e.g., good vs bad) and assess their limitation in addressing complex social issues like drug use
- · Develop social and communication skills in addressing discourse and behaviour related to drugs
- Develop personal and social strategies to manage the risks and harms related to drugs



Lesson 1: Exploring Why People Use Drugs

In preparation ...

- Familiarize yourself with each of the learning activities in this lesson.
- Review Quick Guide to Drug Use (page 5).
 (The information provided is not intended to form the basis of a lecture to students.
 It is meant to enhance your background understanding in order to help you facilitate classroom discussion.)
- 3. Make copies of masters:
 - Drugs in Our World 1 per pair or small group
 - Exploring Reasons for Drug Use 1 per pair or small group
 - Explorer Log 1 per student
- 4. You will need:
 - Explorers master to display using overhead or LCD projector
 - · Wipeboard and markers
 - Scissors and glue or tape 1 set for each pair or small group



Notes & Tips

This exercise encourages students to see that drug use is part of our culture, and that different drugs are used for different reasons. It also reminds them of the wide range of substances that are included in the term "drugs."

The Explorer Log helps students integrate new or enhanced knowledge throughout the unit.

Lesson Plan

Brainstorm: Introduce "explorer" theme (5 min)

- Display or hold up the Explorers master (or other pictures representing explorers or exploring) and briefly introduce explorer theme.
- Pose the question, "What are some of the qualities of a good 'explorer'?" Accept a few answers and jot them on the board.
- Explain to the class that over the next several lessons they will become explorers on a mission to seek out, collect and examine knowledge about caffeine, medications and other common drugs in our world.

Pair-Share Activity: Discovering why people use drugs (35 min)

- Pose the questions, "What is a drug?" and/or "What are some examples of drugs?" Accept a few possible answers and write them on the board.
- Arrange students into pairs (or small groups). Give each pair a Drugs in Our World sheet, an Exploring Reasons for Drug Use sheet, scissors and glue. Explain that their task is to cut out the drug items in the "world" and decide where they might best go in the "caves" representing different reasons why people use those drugs.

Journal Exercise (5 min)

• Give each student an *Explorer Log* and a few minutes to fill in the first entry.

 Debrief with the class, comparing and contrasting the ways different student teams categorized different drugs and their uses.

Lesson z: Exploring Potential Benefits and Harms



In preparation ...

- 1. Familiarize yourself with each of the learning activities in this lesson.
- 2. Make copies of master:
 - Exploring Drug Potential 1 per group
- 3. You will need:
 - Exploring Caffeine master to display using overhead or LCD projector
 - · Wipeboard and markers

Lesson Plan

Brainstorm: Imagine benefits and harms (10 min)

- Ask the students to imagine they are in a desert, sitting on the back of a camel and scanning the sandy horizon. Ask them to consider which direction they would travel left over the large red sand dunes, straight ahead toward the golden sunset, or right toward a gentle sea of white sand.
- Ask the students who chose to go toward the large red dunes what might be the benefit of going in that direction (e.g., there might be a village full of interesting people on the other side of the dunes), and what could be the harm in that choice (e.g., it
- could take too many days to get around the dunes before you and your camel run out of water). Accept a few answers and jot them on the board. Then ask the students who chose to go straight and those who chose the white sand route the same set of questions. Accept a few answers and add them to the board.
- Invite students to comment on the similarities and differences in their choices, drawing special attention to how each group was able to see the potential for both good and bad in their choices.



Group Activity: Exploring potential benefits and harms (30 min)

- Display Exploring Caffeine and invite students to suggest examples of how drinking caffeinated drinks might be beneficial, risky or harmful. Accept some examples of each.
- Then break the class into small groups of 3 or 4 students. Give each group an Exploring Drug Potential handout and have them work together to complete it.

Journal Exercise (5 min)

 Ask students to take out their Explorer Log distributed last class and give them time to fill in their second entry. Debrief with the class, highlighting the drugs that students were able to imagine fitting in all of the categories along the spectrum. If any of the drugs were difficult for the class to identify as beneficial, risky or harmful, briefly work together as a class to discover possible answers. The point of this
exercise is not to
ensure right answers
but to introduce students
to a helpful concept they
can utilize in life.

If a student suggests a clearly risky or harmful example as helpful use, do not dismiss it. Instead you might ask, "Do others agree that this is an example of [the drug] being helpful? Why or why not?"



Lesson 3: Managing Risk, Managing Life

In preparation ...

- Familiarize yourself with each of the learning activities in this lesson.
- 2. Make copies of:
 - Game Cards (2 pages) 1 set, cut up, per small group of 3 or 4 students
 - Serpents and Lifelines Game Board (2 pages) – 1 per small group of 3 or 4 students
- 3. You will need:
 - · Wipeboard and markers
 - Dice 1 per small group

Lesson Plan

Brainstorm: Think about risk and risk factors (5 min)

- Ask students to imagine going out to sea to take part in a diving expedition that involves exploring a mysterious shipwreck. Ask students to think about what, if anything, they are feeling as they travel to the dive site (e.g., excited to get in the water, scared of sea creatures, curious about treasures in the shipwreck). Jot several answers on the board.
- Write "Risk Factors" on the board and ask students to help you make a list of the things that influence the degree of risk involved in exploring the wreck (e.g., depth of water, weather, location, temperature of water, physical fitness level, safety equipment, diving experience, diving gear, personality).
 List the factors on the board.

Small Group Game: Managing risk, managing life (35 min)

- Ask students to suggest "risk factors" related to drug use. List these factors on another area of the board. Feel free to supplement their answers with a few of your own (e.g., drinking too many energy drinks at one time, using antibiotics too often, a person who is too young drinking a full beer, or anyone drinking alcohol in the wrong place or wrong time, like before driving a car).
- Divide class into groups of 3 or 4 students and give each group a set of Game Cards, a Serpents and Lifelines Game Board and a dice. Briefly walk through the instructions before inviting students to start playing.
- Debrief with the whole class about some of the key ways to reduce the risks of using medications and other drugs.

Journal Exercise (5 min)

 Give students a few minutes to fill in the third entry in their Explorer Log.

Snakes and Ladders is an ancient Hindu game designed to teach young people about managing life. This adaptation allows students to absorb ideas about the many factors that contribute to the risk of any activity, including using medications and other drugs.

Notes & Tips

Lesson 4: Exploring the options



In preparation ...

- 1. Familiarize yourself with each of the learning activities in this lesson.
- 2. Make copies of:
 - · First Thought, Second Thought
 - 1 per student

- 3. You will need:
 - · Wipeboard and markers

Lesson Plan

(10 min)

Brainstorm: Consider some alternatives (5 min)

- Write the following question on the board, "What do you do when the bridge is washed out?" Ask students to propose alternative ways to cross the river.
- · Counter the first few answers with a problem. So, for example, if a student suggests swimming or wading across, ask what if there are crocodiles in the river?
- After several alternatives have been suggested, note how there are multiple possibilities to achieve a goal. Explorers have to be open to various possibilities and try to find the best way.

Class Activity: Experiencing two healthy ways to change how you feel

- Remind students that in the first lesson they learned some people use medications or other drugs to change the way they feel.
- · Ask students if they can suggest some nondrug ways to change how they feel. Jot a few of these suggestions on the board.
- Have the students stand up, take a few deep breaths and then begin jogging on the spot. Remind them to pace themselves so they can last a full minute.
- At the 1-minute mark, ask the students to stop jogging. Ask them to focus on the feelings they are experiencing in their minds and bodies, and to consider any noticeable changes experienced during the exercise process.
- Then ask the students to sit in a comfortable position, think about a peaceful place, and slow down their breathing. Once again, ask them to focus on the feelings they are experiencing in their bodies and minds.
- Debrief with students about the way exercise and focused breathing are simple, easy ways to help people change the way they feel.



Notes & Tips

Alternative Opening: Display a Do Bugs Need Drugs? image (available on the internet) and invite students to answer the question. Follow up with a brief discussion about other ways to deal with bugs.





Notes & Tips

This activity is meant to help students understand that, while drugs are often our first thought for relieving pain or solving other problems, there are other options that may be better or safer.

Pair-Share Activity: Exploring the options (25 min)

 Arrange students into pairs (or small groups) and give each student a First Thought, Second Thought sheet. If desired, walk through the instructions to ensure students understand their goal is to explore two or more ways to address each problem.

Journal Exercise (5 min)

• Have each student fill in the fourth entry in their *Explorer Log*.

- After a period of time, have each pair exchange suggestions with another pair and add ideas to their lists.
- Debrief the exercise with the whole class, ensuring a non-drug alternative is identified for each issue discussed.



Lesson 5: Naming the Crew of Heroes and Helpers



In preparation ...

- 1. Familiarize yourself with each of the learning activities for this lesson.
- 2. Make copies of:
 - My Crew 1 per student

- 3. You will need:
 - · Wipeboard and markers

Lesson Plan

Brainstorm: Consider the qualities of a "hero" (5 min)

- Draw a figure of a person on the board and write "HERO" above it.
- Ask the students to suggest qualities of a hero or character they admire. List them on the board. Or, if desired, ask the students to write their own suggestions around the hero figure on the board.

Individual/Class Activity: Naming the crew of real-life heroes (35 min)

- Ask the class to consider the differences between heroes in movies and real-life heroes in their personal worlds. Suggest that:
 - Real heroes are not perfect and are not supernatural or necessarily famous but they all have at least some qualities we admire, look up to and want to copy. That is, they are role models who lift and guide us through life.
 - The best heroes/role models are people we actually know (family members or friends).
 - The more heroes/role models we have, the luckier we are.

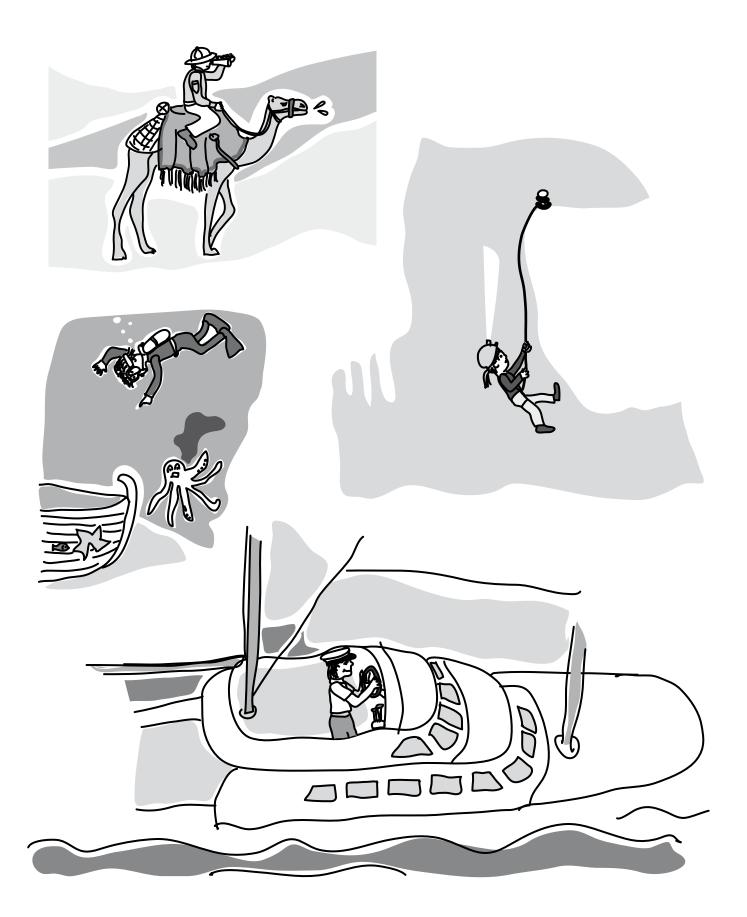
Journal Exercise (5 min)

 Have each student fill in the final entry in their Explorer Log and hand in the sheet for evaluation. See Evaluation Rubric for suggested evaluation criteria.

- Give each student a My Crew handout and ask them to fill in as much of the sheet as possible.
- After students have worked independently, ask them to share with the class about one member of their crew and why that person is important to them.

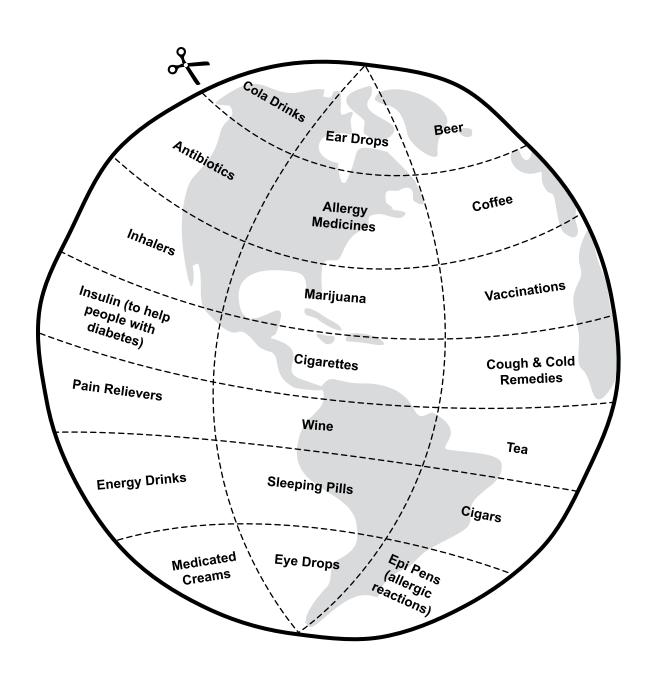
Explorers





Drugs in our World

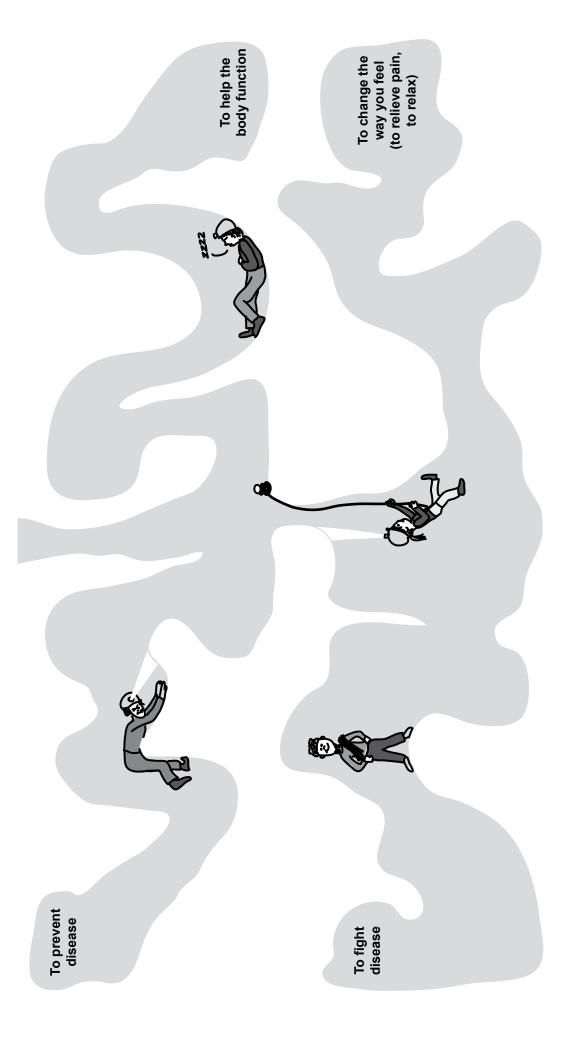




Exploring Reasons for Drug Use



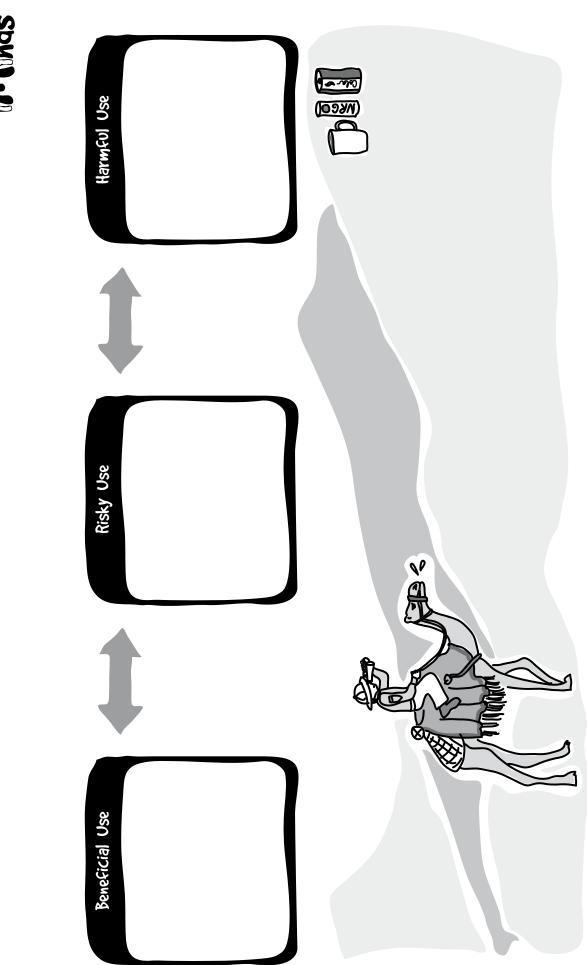
These cave explorers are exploring different reasons people have used different drugs. Help them by first cutting out the examples on the Drugs in Our World sheet, and then pasting them in the most appropriate tunnels of reasons drugs are used.



Explore

plorer Log	
Write, in 1 or 2 sentences, something you learned today about drugs and why people use them.	
Write, in 1 or 2 sentences, something you learned today about how drugs can have different effects.	
Write, in 1 or 2 sentences, something you learned today about making drug use safer.	
Write, in 1 or 2 sentences, something you learned today about non-drug ways you can help yourself feel happy and healthy.	
Write down some ways your role models help you learn and make good decisions about using caffeine, medications or other drugs.	

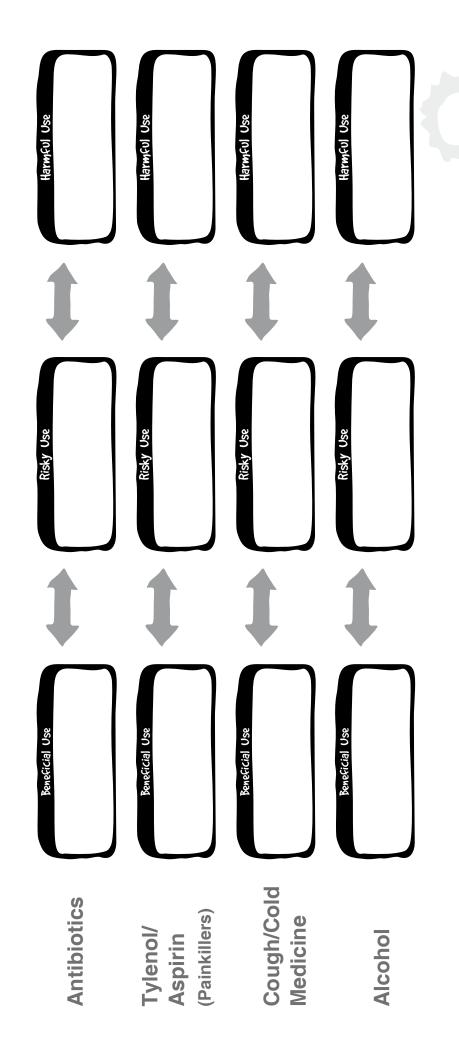
Exploring caffeine





Exploring Drug Potential



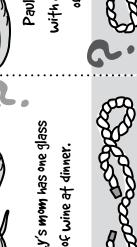




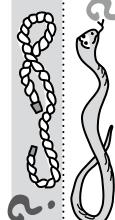
Game Cards



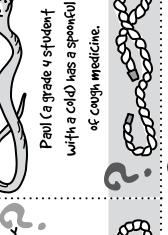
Suzy's mom has one glass



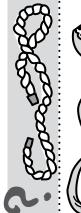
Kafie's older sister drinks a cup of coffee before she goes to work.



fine china af her grandma's house. 10-year-old Emma sips fea from



Jayden eafs z squares of dark Chocolate for dessert.



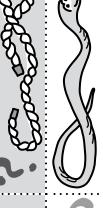
iz-year-old Darrel reads and





at the pub while Mike waits in the car, and then drives home. Mike's dad has z quick beers

though he does not have a cold. Billy takes cold tablets even



Sam decides to use pills from his mom's bathroom cabinet to get rid of his headache.

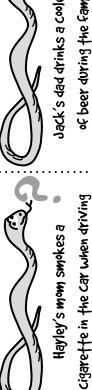
> Sydney has a energy drinks during the Grade 6 track and field meet.



Jack's dad drinks a cooler full of beer during the family's weekend camping trip.







Hayley's mom smokes a

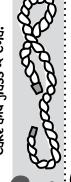
her kids to school.

Game Cards (Confinued)





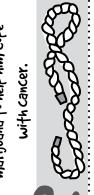
Kim celebrațes her grandpa's • 60†h birthday with a piece of cake and glass of cola.



Tammy's aunt uses a nicotine spray whenever she has a craving to smoke a cigarette.

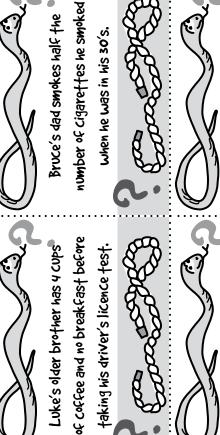












9-year-old Jill thinks the pink pills on her sister's desk are Candies and pops a few in her mouth.

gone and pretends to swallow the

pills his mom gives him.

Shawn believes his virus is



Serpents and Lifelines Game

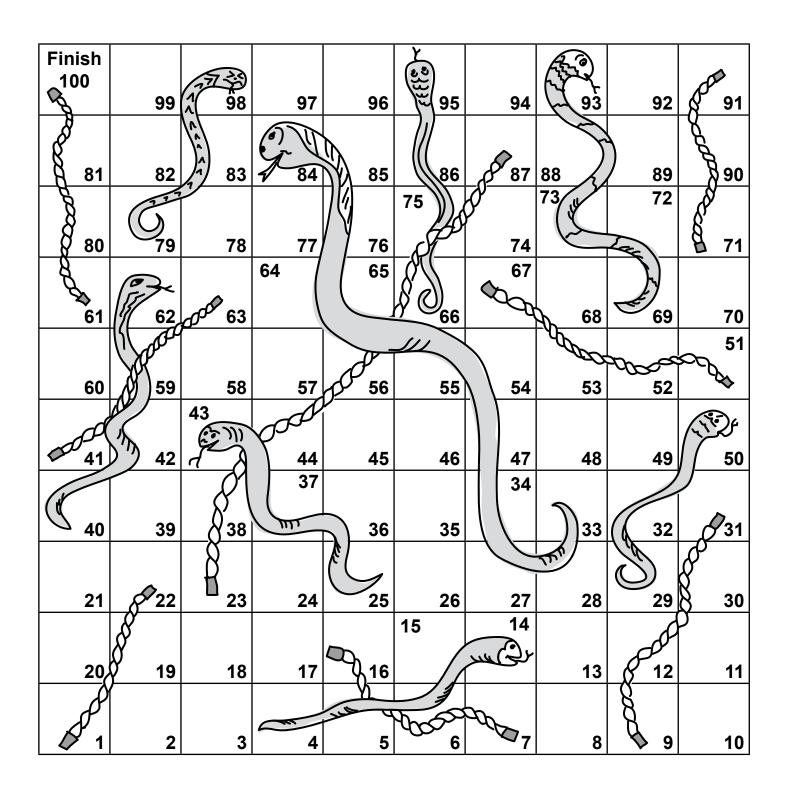


How to play:

- **l.** Each player should pick a token (e.g., penny, eraser, pen top). The game cards should be spread face-up on the table.
- **2.** In turn, each payer rolls the dice and moves his or her token.
 - a. If the player lands at the bottom of a lifeline, they must choose a lifeline card (a helpful use of a drug) and read it out. If the other players agree that the chosen card is an example of helpful use, the player gets to go up the lifeline. Otherwise they must stay where they are.
 - b. If the player lands at the top of a serpent, they must choose a serpent card (a harmful use of a drug) and read it out. If the other players agree that the chosen card is an example of harmful use, the player gets to stay where they are. Otherwise they must go down the serpent.
- **3.** Once a card has been used, it is placed face-down and is out of play.

Serpents and Lifelines





First Thought, Second Thought



Second Thought (or more)									
First Thought									
Problem	Headache in the morning	Earache after swimming	Bored after school	Tired from staying up too late	Stressed out about homework	cut on foot from backyard fun	ltchy eyes from dandelions	car sick during a family road frip	

My crew



Even the strongest, bravest people like to know they are safe and have someone there to talk to. Who supports you and makes you feel safe and cared for?

- (Write your name on the captain.
- **2.** Write the names of people you know and admire, and who are there to help you if you need it, on the other members of the crew.



Evaluation Rubric



Each entry in the *Explorer Log* can be assessed using the following rubric. 4-Star and 2-Star scores can be assigned for entries that fall somewhere between the expectations listed below. A total score out of 25 for the module can be obtained by assigning 1 point for each star across the five lessons.

**** 5-**Star entry** demonstrated a good grasp of the concepts addressed in the lesson, is well communicated and shows some evidence of self-reflection or insight.

*** 3-Star entry demonstrates a basic grasp of the concepts addressed in the lesson but lacks indication of further self-reflection or insight or is not well communicated.

* I-Star entry demonstrates some effort to reflect the content of the lesson.





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