



Educator guide: The influence of social norms and marijuana lesson

Recommended for grades:

7th grade

Time:

6 minutes

National Health Education Standards:

This activity aligns with the following National Health Education Standards:

- Standard 1: Use functional health information to support health and well-being of self and others.
- Standard 2: Analyze influences that affect health and well-being of self and others.

For more information about the National Health Education Standards, visit the SHAPE America website: shapeamerica.org.

Learning objectives:

After completing this lesson students will be able to:

1. Understand health risks associated with substance use.
2. Analyze the impact of external influences on health behavior.
3. Summarize the negative consequences of using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
4. Explain how perceptions of norms influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.

Lesson description:

In this lesson students will learn what social norms are and how they may vary in different social groups. They will take some time to reflect on different groups that they are a part of, and how the groups may influence their behavior in different ways. Students will also learn about marijuana, as well as THC and CBD. They will hear different scenarios from some of the characters, and they will help to give advice about what to do in each situation.



Pre and post-test question:

Use the following question with your students in any way that you see fit (on paper, using a survey tool etc.). You may choose to combine questions from various lessons and activities that your students participate in. Correct answer choices are bolded.

1. How do social norms influence healthy and unhealthy practices and behaviors?
 - a. Social norms only influence healthy behaviors.
 - b. Following social norms is the best way to fit in.
 - c. Social norms have no influence on healthy and unhealthy behaviors.
 - d. **Social norms can influence how people feel about behaviors.**

Vocabulary:

Use the following list of vocabulary as a reference for yourself or your students as you complete The influence of social norms and marijuana lesson. You may choose to use this list in any way that fits your needs.

- Analyzing influences – anything that has an effect on feelings, actions, behaviors and beliefs
- CBD – or cannabidiol, is found in the cannabis plant, but doesn't result in a "high" feeling
- Influence – anything that has an effect on feelings, actions, behaviors and beliefs
- Peer pressure – when people your age try to influence how you act or try to get you to do something
- Perception – the process of becoming aware of something through the senses
- Social group – two or more people who interact with each other, have a characteristic in common or a common identity
- THC – or delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, is the main active ingredient in marijuana that affects nerve cells to cause a "high" feeling

Supplemental activity: Marijuana perceptions versus reality activity

Objectives:

After completing this activity, students will be able to:

- Explain how perceptions of norms influence healthy or unhealthy behaviors.

Materials needed:

- Marijuana perceptions versus reality worksheet (included below)
- Internet access

Time required:

25 minutes

Instructions:

This activity will give students the opportunity to compare what they think is happening to what students actually report about marijuana use. Oftentimes, students think that everyone is engaging in a certain behavior, and this activity can show them that isn't always the case.

Start by giving students an overview of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which could include:

- The survey is completed by high school students to monitor behaviors in six different areas.
- The survey is taken in high schools across the country every two years.
- Students answer the questions about their behavior in six different areas and answers are tracked over time.
- The place where the results are stored is called the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) so answers can be compared from different years.

Next, have them search the CDC website (or a local website, such as the Wisconsin Department of Instruction) for results at a local level. Students are asked to find the answers to two YRBS questions, share their thoughts about each, and then find another result they find interesting. They will finish the activity by reflecting on the results.



Some of the webpages may be hard to navigate, so students may need your help to find the information to complete this activity. If it makes sense, you could find the percentages as a class, then have the students answer the questions reflecting on the results on their own.



Marijuana perceptions versus reality worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

About the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS): The YRBS is led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and it's taken every 2 years by high school students across the country. Students answer questions in six areas and one of the areas is alcohol and drug use. It's a good way to find out what students are doing and track how behaviors change over time.

Instructions: Complete this worksheet after completing The influence of social norms and marijuana lesson. For this activity, start by finding the most recent YRBS results for the state in which you live. If it's not available for your state, find the national level data and complete the activity for the country as a whole.

The Youth Risk Surveillance System (YRBSS) keeps all of the data overtime and the CDC website ([cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)) is a good place to start. Be sure to search for YRBSS.

1. What percentage of high school students currently use marijuana?

- a. Is this number higher or lower than what you expected?

- b. What does this tell you about what you thought was happening, and what students actually report about current marijuana use?

2. What percentage of students reported first time marijuana use before the age of 13?

a. Is this number higher or lower than what you expected?

-
- b. What does this tell you about what you thought was happening and the percent of students that used marijuana before the age of 13?

3. Now, choose another result that you think is surprising or interesting. What is the topic the question is about?

a. What surprised you or interested you about this result?

4. What did you find out about what you thought your peers were doing versus what they are actually doing?



Handouts

Included on the following pages are additional resources that you and your students' families may find useful.



Resources and services: Alcohol and other drug-use prevention

- American Lung Association Lung Help Line, 1-800-LUNG-USA (800-586-4872)
- Children's Wisconsin, www.childrenswi.org
- KidsHealth, www.kidshealth.org
- LifeStance Health, www.lifestance.com
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), www.drugabuse.gov
- Partnership to End Addiction, www.drugfree.org
- Rogers Behavioral Health, www.rogersbh.org
- The Tobacco Control Resource Center for Wisconsin, www.tobwis.org
- United States Government-Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov
- Wisconsin Tobacco Quitline, 1-800-QUIT-NOW

Transcript

Slide 1

Risa: After completing this lesson, you will be able to explain how perceptions of norms influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.

In this lesson, you will learn what social norms are and how they can impact behavior. You will also learn about marijuana and then complete an activity to practice analyzing influences.

Slide 2

Risa: Social norms are the unwritten rules about how we think we need to behave, or how we think we should act in different social situations. Every social group has their own norms, and you're probably part of multiple social groups. How you behave may change depending on what group you're with.

For example, you might have friends at school that are different from your friends outside of school. Also, the people you live with at home make up a social group, and the norms at home may be different than they are outside of your home.

Take a moment to think about different social groups that you belong to, and how these groups influence your behavior in different ways.

Slide 3

Kade: Even though every group has its own social norms and there may be pressure to go along with those norms, you are able make decisions about what you do or don't do. One decision you can make is whether or not you will use marijuana. It's important to know the risks and understand what could be influencing your decision to use or not use it. Let's learn more about the drug.

Slide 4

Kade: Marijuana goes by many names and some common ones include pot, weed, grass, and hundreds of others. No matter what you call it, if you use it marijuana can impact your health and other areas of your life.



Slide 5

Risa: The main chemical in marijuana, called THC, interacts with your body's nervous system in a way that can have short-term impacts on thinking, memory, concentration, and coordination. These effects are typically referred to as getting high.

Long-term use of marijuana can lead to breathing problems, immune system issues, changes in the brain, and emotional problems.

Slide 6

Kade: Marijuana is being legalized in many parts of the country, but that doesn't mean that it's safe or okay for everyone to use. In some places, it's legal as medical marijuana, or medical cannabis. This is when it's prescribed by a doctor to treat serious and long-term health symptoms.

Recreational marijuana is legal in some areas too, and that means that it can be bought by anyone over a certain age.

It's important to know that if someone buys marijuana where it's legal, it's a crime to take it to a place where it isn't legal.

Slide 7

Risa: THC isn't the only chemical found in marijuana or cannabis.

CBD is a compound found in the cannabis plant. CBD does not have the same impacts of THC and it doesn't get you high. There is still a lot we don't know about the benefits and risks of using CBD products, even though it's widely available in many products for a variety of uses.

Slide 8

Kade: Now you're going to hear about what's going on with some of my friends, and you'll help me give them advice.



Slide 9

Risa: My friend told me that everyone our age is trying marijuana. Do you think I should try it too?

Kade: Help me decide, what should I tell Risa? Click on one of these choices. Yes, your friend said everyone's trying it, so it must be true. Or, no, just because your friend said that everyone's trying it doesn't mean it's true.

Yes: Actually, studies show most people our age don't use marijuana. Even if it seems like everyone's doing it, that's not true. Just because your friend tells you something doesn't mean it's a fact.

No: That's a good choice. It's true that most people our age don't use marijuana.

Slide 10

Anton: My brother told me that marijuana can't be bad for your health because it's legal in some places. What do you think?

Kade: Help me decide, what should I tell Anton? Click on one of these choices. Yeah, that makes sense. If it's legal in some places, it can't be bad for you. Or, no, I don't think that's right. Just because it's legal doesn't mean it's not bad for you.

Yeah: Well, marijuana can still be bad for you even though it's legal in some places.

No: You're right, even though marijuana is legal in some places, it can still be bad for you.



Slide 11

Taylor: My friends decided they want to try marijuana. I don't really want to, but I'm afraid that if I don't go along with what my friends are doing, they won't wanna be friends with me anymore. What should I do?

Kade: Help me decide, what should I tell Taylor? Click on one of these choices. Go along with your friends, even if you feel uncomfortable. Or, do what you think is right and tell your friends you don't want to.

Go along: You don't need to do anything you feel uncomfortable with, especially when it comes to drugs.

Do what you think is right: This is a good choice. Doing what you think is right, even when it's hard, is always the smart choice.

Slide 12

Risa: Great job, you've completed this lesson!

Acknowledgements

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