

# ASPIRE

LIFE SKILLS PART 1



WORSHIPARTS

ASPIRE 

# BULLYING

## Outcome

To equip participants to identify and respond when they face, witness or engage in bullying behaviours.

## Related Bible Verse

Someone might be able to beat up one of you, but not both of you. As the saying goes, "A rope made from three strands of cord is hard to break." *Ecclesiastes 4:12 (CEV)*

## Junior

Which of these do you think are examples of bullying?

- Two 12 year olds have a fight over a soccer game and one of them gets punched
- Every day a student in year 10 trips over a year 7 student
- A group of girls always refuse to let the new girl join their conversations
- Several times a week the teacher tells the same student that he is stupid

All but the first of these are examples of bullying.

Bullying is harmful behaviour that keeps on happening again and again. It might be something a person does, like punching, pinching or tripping, or something a person says that makes another person feel hurt or unsafe. Often a group of people will target someone who is smaller or slower or newer or who has fewer friends. Bullying might happen face to face, in writing or using technology. It might be other kids or adults that are the bullies.

Nobody deserves to be treated this way.

So what can we do?

*Hand out post-it notes and markers. Allow time for everyone to write down some responses about how they think they can handle bullying. Make a space for post-it's to be displayed. Make three headings*

- *Speak up*
- *Stand up*
- *Stand out*

There are things that we can do to help stop bullies! You might be the one being hurt, the one who see it happening or the one who is hurting others.

*Read out each response and ask the group to decide under which heading it best fits.*

- Speak up
  - » If you find that you are being bullied, don't be afraid to ask for help
- Stand up
  - » *Optional: Choose a 'bully' and a 'victim' – try to avoid the stereotypes! Place a piece of paper on the floor and have the victim stand on it. Ask the bully to push the victim off the paper. The victim can try to resist but must not fight back. Ask a volunteer to come and stand back-to-back with the victim. Now ask the bully to push the victim off the paper again. The bully is only allowed to touch the victim, not the volunteer. Continue to ask volunteers to join the victim until the bully can no longer push the victim off the paper.*
  - » When bullying happens the victim is hurt again and again. But when someone stands alongside the victim, they become a little stronger. They can no longer be pushed around quite so easily. When more people support the victim, it becomes even harder for the bully to hurt the victim. Eventually, no matter how strong the bully is, they can no longer even get close enough to hurt the victim.

» When you see or hear that someone else is being bullied you have the power to make a difference! Stand up for them by standing by them; a bully is less likely to take on a whole group of people who are supporting each other.

- Stand out

» Choose not to join in with bullying. Make a decision to speak and act with respect. Treat other people as you would like to be treated

### Senior

Which of these do you think are examples of bullying?

- Two 12 year olds have a fight over a soccer game and one of them gets punched
- Every day a student in year 10 tells trips over a year 7 student
- A group of girls always refuse to let the new girl join their conversations
- Several times a week the teacher tells the same student that he is stupid

All but the first of these are examples of bullying.

Bullying is harmful behaviour that keeps on being repeated. It might be physical, verbal, social or psychological. It leaves people feeling hurt and unsafe. Often a group of people will target someone who is smaller or slower or newer or who has fewer friends. Bullying might happen face to face, in writing or using technology. It might be our peers or adults that are the bullies.

Nobody deserves to be treated this way.

So what can we do?

*Hand out post-it notes and markers. Allow time for everyone to write down some responses about how they think they can handle bullying. Make a space for post-it's to be displayed. Make three headings*

- *Speak up*
- *Stand up*
- *Stand out*

*Read out each response and ask the group to decide under which heading it best fits.*

- Speak up

» If you find that you are being bullied, don't be afraid to ask for help

- Stand up

» Optional: Choose a 'bully' and a 'victim' – try to avoid the stereotypes! Place a piece of paper on the floor and have the victim stand on it. Ask the bully to push the victim off the paper. The victim can try to resist but must not fight back. Ask a volunteer to come and stand back-to-back with the victim. Now ask the bully to push the victim off the paper again. The bully is only allowed to touch the victim, not the volunteer. Continue to ask volunteers to join the victim until the bully can no longer push the victim off the paper.

» When bullying happens the victim is hurt again and again. But when someone stands alongside the victim, they become a little stronger. They can no longer be pushed around quite so easily. When more people support the victim, it becomes even harder for the bully to hurt the victim. Eventually, no matter how strong or the bully is, they can no longer even get close enough to hurt the victim.

» When you see or hear that someone else is being bullied you have the power to make a difference! Stand up for them by standing by them; a bully is less likely to take on a whole group of people who are supporting each other.

- Stand out

» Choose not to join in with bullying. Make a decision to speak and act with respect. Treat other people as you would like to be treated

## RELATIONSHIPS

### Outcome

Participants equipped to recognise and develop healthy relationships.

### Related Bible Verses

You will keep your friends if you forgive them, but you will lose your friends if you keep talking about what they did wrong. Proverbs 17:9 (CEV)

Giving an honest answer is a sign of true friendship. Proverbs 24:26 (CEV)

### Junior

What does a healthy relationship look like?

Think about a relationship where you feel valued, loved and safe. What is it about that relationship that helps you to feel that way?

*Ask for verbal responses or print several copies of the response scatter cards, cut them and scatter them around the floor. Ask each participant to move around and choose one that they think is important.*

*In groups of two or three ask the young people to share their responses to these questions*

- Who is one person that you have a healthy relationship with?
- Which card did you choose?
  - » When have you seen this happen?

*Ask the young people to return all the cards to the floor*

Respect each other	Listen to each other	Talk about problems	Work out disagreements together
Negotiate when we have different ideas	Try to see things from each other's point of view	Apologise when mistakes are made	Give each other space alone
Have some shared interests	Encourage each other	Like to spend time together	Accept each other even when we look, think or act differently
Support each other to try new things	Respect each other's privacy	Trust each other to keep secrets	Laugh together

In a healthy relationship we feel valued, loved and safe but not all relationships are healthy. Sometimes we can leave a relationship when it is unhealthy but sometimes we don't have that choice.

- Think about a relationship that you have that is not so healthy
- Even if you can't end this relationship you might be able to do some things to make it more healthy
- Choose a card that describes something you think you could do to make that relationship a little bit healthier
- Share your card with your group and give an example of how you could do that

### **Senior**

Think about a healthy relationship that you have

- Who is the relationship with?
- What is it that makes that relationship healthy?

In a healthy relationship there is

- Respect
- Wanting the best for each other
- Sharing

*Ask everyone to sit in the middle of the room and think about a healthy relationship that they have experienced. Write the words 'RESPECT', 'WANTING THE BEST FOR EACH OTHER' and 'SHARING' on large sheets of coloured paper or cardboard and place them in different parts of the room.*

*After you describe each of these elements of a healthy relationship (respect, wanting the best for each other, sharing) ask participants if they can think of an example of this happening in their own relationships. When they share an example, have them move to that part of the room.*

### **Respect**

- Physical
  - » Respecting boundaries for touch
  - » Zero violence
  - » Demonstrating affection through appropriate touch

*Ask participants if they can think of an example of physical respect happening in their own relationships. Invite one or two participants to share an example. When they share an example, have them move to the 'respect' area.*

- Verbal
  - » Listening
  - » Discussion about needs and wants
  - » Negotiation and compromise

*Ask the remaining participants if they can think of an example of verbal respect happening in their own relationships. Invite one or two participants to share an example. When they share an example, have them move to the 'respect' area.*

- Emotional
  - » Honesty
  - » Confidentiality
  - » Acceptance

*Ask the remaining participants if they can think of an example of emotional respect happening in their own relationships. When they share an example, have them move to the 'respect' part of the room.*

### **Wanting the best for each other**

- Encourage you in what you are doing
- Inspire you to try positive new things
- Support you wherever you are at

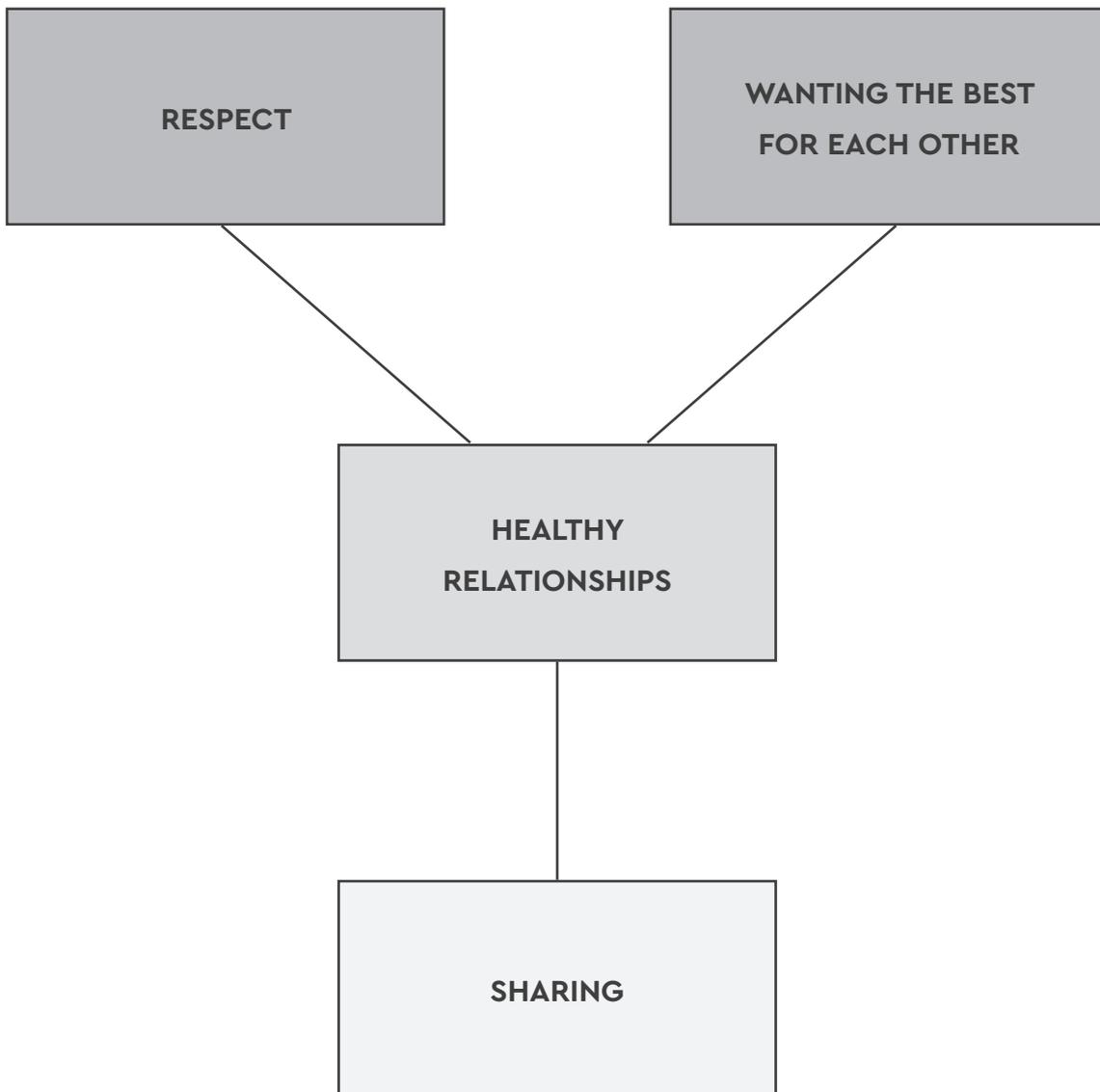
*Ask the remaining participants if they can think of an example of encouragement, inspiration or support happening in their own relationships. When they share an example, have them move to the 'Wanting the best for each other' area.*

### **Sharing**

- Values
  - » These are the things that are of extreme importance to you
  - » Values guide your decisions, even when you are not aware of them
  - » Some examples are
    - \* Authenticity
    - \* Education
    - \* Equality
    - \* Faithfulness
    - \* Freedom
    - \* Generosity
    - \* Imagination
    - \* Intelligence
    - \* Patience
    - \* Power
    - \* Reputation
    - \* Teamwork
    - \* Wealth
- Goals
  - » Our goals give us direction and help us to know when we have succeeded
  - » It can be very important to know when we are heading
- Interests
  - » Hobbies, sports, activities that we enjoy doing and that give us life and energy
  - » Sharing in these interests gives us an opportunity to relax and have fun together, to build trust and to create lasting memories

*Ask participants if they can think of an example of shared values, goals or interests in their own relationships. When they share an example, have them move to the 'sharing' area.*

We have heard lots of examples of how healthy relationships operate. Now think about whether there is an element of one of your relationships that needs some improvement. Move to that area of the room. Choose someone in the same area as you and share a little about what you could do to see this improve.



## DECISION MAKING

### Outcome

Participants to feel confident to make more positive life decisions

### Related Bible Verses

Without good direction, people lose their way;  
The more wise counsel you follow, the better your chances.

*Proverbs 11:14(MSG)*

Trust God from the bottom of your heart. Don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go, he's the one who will keep you on track.

*Proverbs 3:6-12 (MSG)*

### Junior & Senior

This week we are going to talk about decision making.

To start, I'm going to give you two options to choose between.

Stand to your feet. If you choose the first option, go to the left of the room. If you choose the second option go to the right of the room.

1. Pepsi or Coke?
2. Krispy Kreme or Donut King?
3. Toilet paper scrunched or folded?
4. iPhone or Android?

These are all obviously fairly trivial decisions, unlikely to have much impact on us or the people around us. Whatever choice we make, these decisions don't really matter.

As we get older we get faced with increasingly important decisions. Some of them can have a huge impact on our lives.

Let's try some more serious scenarios. Just like before, go to the left of the room for the first option or the right side of the room for the second option.

- Your friend is self-harming (secretly hurting herself/ himself) and no one else knows. Do you:
  - » Tell an adult OR Keep it a secret
- In your final year of school you get offered a good job. Do you:
  - » Leave school and take the job OR finish your final year at school
- A student in your year is isolated and is being verbally abused or hurt by someone's words. Do you:
  - » Say something OR Stay out of it
- You notice that your new friends are pressuring you to things you don't want to do. Do you:
  - » Find new friends OR Keep the same friends
- You find out someone is stealing money out of another kid's bag because their family doesn't have enough money to buy lunch. Do you:
  - » Pretend not to see OR Let a teacher know about it

Great! You can all sit down.

As we did that exercise some of you were probably thinking that there isn't a black-and-white right-or-wrong answer to any of these. You wanted more information before having to choose. This is good! Here are 3 practical things you can do to help you make good decisions:

1. Get an advisor - Ask for help from someone you trust

Does anyone have someone who gives them great advice to help them make good decisions?

2. Make a list

List the pros and cons (good and bad/ all the options that you have) of each choice and weigh it up

3. Listen to your gut

Take some time to block out distractions and listen to your gut. Does it feel right? You could also ask God to guide you to the right choice.

Separate into group of two or three. With your group, choose a decision that one of you is facing right now or think about a hard decision you have had to make in the past.

Ask your friend for advice – what would you do in this situation? Is there an option I haven't thought of? If it's a really big decision then you might still need to ask someone else that you trust for help.

Make a list together of all the pros and cons.

Think through all the options. Which one feels right?

If this is a decision that one of you is facing right now then you might like to pray together and ask God to help you.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

### Outcome

Participants will be equipped with and feel confident to use positive conflict resolution skills.

### Related Bible verses

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. *James 1:19 (NLT)*

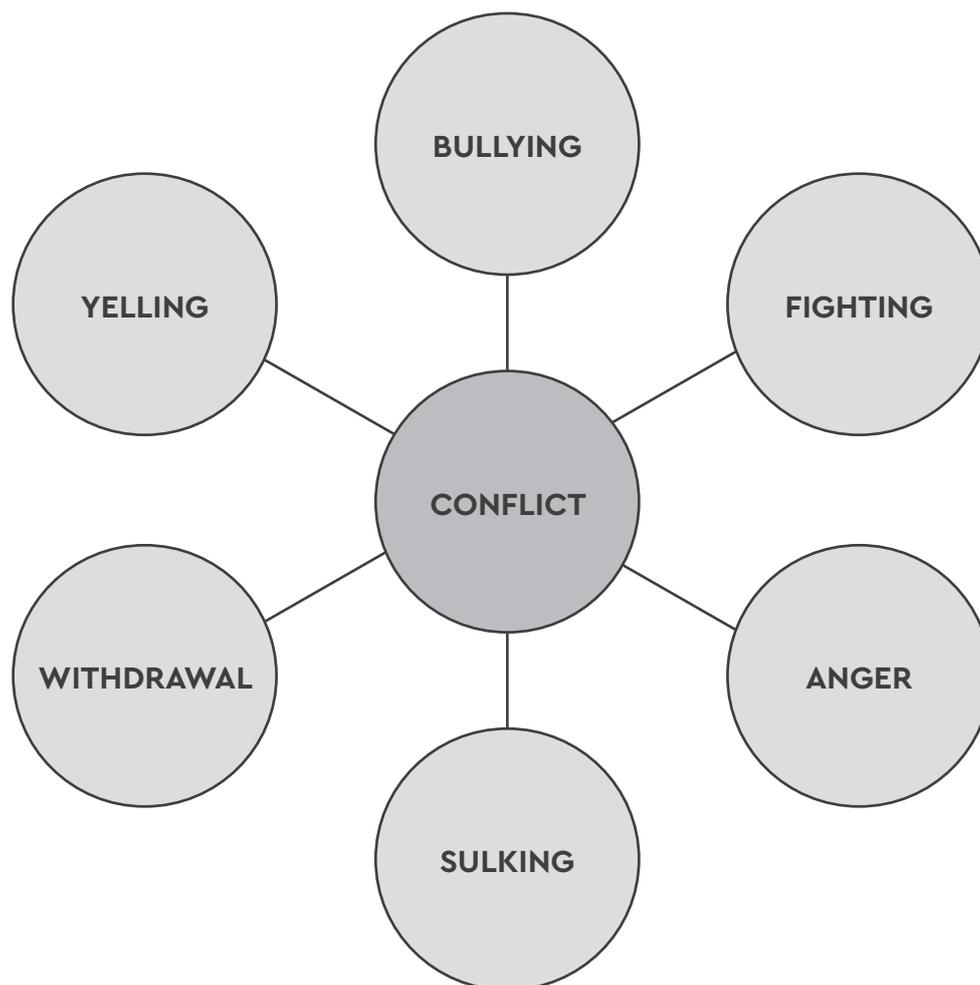
A gentle answer deflects anger,  
but harsh words make tempers flare. *Proverbs 15:1 (NLT)*

Conflict between people is a common and normal part of life. Conflict is something that is often linked to fighting, and is seen as destructive, unpleasant, and undesirable. Sometimes conflict is pushed down, avoided, or fought over.

Where do you see or experience conflict with others?

*Answers might include families (siblings and parents); peers / friends; school (teachers / students); TV news (international conflict, politicians); superhero movies.*

What thoughts, behaviours and feelings do you associate with conflict?



Hand each person a sheet of paper and a marker or pen. Allow them a few minutes to chat about their ideas.

On your paper, write one negative word that you associate with conflict (e.g. *anger, fighting, bullying, yelling, violence, not listening, arguments, silence, withdrawal, avoidance, disagreement* etc).

Write the word 'conflict' on another piece of paper and place it in the centre of your space.

Invite everyone to bring their paper and stand around the word 'conflict', like a living mind map.

Ask each of the young people to read their word aloud.

Conflict is often seen from a negative perspective, however, if conflict is handled in a healthy way, it can lead to better understanding and stronger relationships.

### **Junior**

Read James 1:19 and Proverbs 15:1.

Ask the group the following questions.

Below each question we've included some possible answers to help you as you guide the conversation.

1. What advice or wisdom do these Bible verses give in handling conflict with another person?

*Listen carefully to the other person; take care to speak carefully and gently; avoid peaking too quickly with angry and harsh words*

2. Why is it important to listen carefully to the other person?

*It is helpful to understand the other person and how they see the conflict. It helps us to understand what the other person needs and why it is important to them.*

3. Why is it important to speak carefully and gently to the other person?

*Angry words or yelling makes the other person defensive and angry. It makes it hard for the other person to listen to your concerns and more likely for them to respond with anger. It helps the other person to learn what you really need and why it is important to you.*

How you handle conflict with others can depend on how old the other person is and what you're disagreeing about.

- Ignore it or laugh it off if it's something minor.
- Walk away and count to ten to cool off and avoid saying something that could make the situation worse.
- Talk to someone outside the situation. Getting a different perspective from a friend, parent or teacher can help you understand why there might be conflict and work out strategies to improve things.

If you feel threatened or afraid of being hurt in a conflict situation it is important to seek help immediately. Walk away and find someone you can trust – a teacher, or parent or grandparent.

### **Senior**

Read James 1:19 and Proverbs 15:1.

Ask the group the following questions.

Below each question we've included some possible answers to help you as you guide the conversation.

1. What advice or wisdom do these Bible verses give in handling conflict with another person?  
*Listen carefully to the other person; take care to speak carefully and gently; avoid peaking too quickly with angry and harsh words.*

2. Why is it important to listen carefully to the other person?  
*It is helpful to understand the other person and how they see the conflict. It helps us to understand what the other person needs and why it is important to them.*

3. Why is it important to speak carefully and gently to the other person?  
*Angry words or yelling makes the other person defensive and angry. It makes it hard for the other person to listen to your concerns and more likely for them to respond with anger. It helps the other person to learn what you really need and why it is important to you.*

An effective way of resolving conflict, listening and speaking carefully, involves the use of 'I' statements:

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. <i>I feel . . .</i>               | an expression of your feelings                       |
| 2. <i>when I . . .</i>               | a description of behaviour that leads to the feeling |
| 3. <i>because I . . .</i>            | a description of the effect of the behaviour         |
| 4. <i>What I would like is . . .</i> | a description of preferred behaviour                 |
| 5. <i>Would this be possible?</i>    | a request to listen to feedback                      |

Read the following examples of ways this can be used. Note the use of 'I' rather than 'you' statements.

- I feel angry . . . when I am interrupted . . . because I lose my train of thought. What I would like is for you to wait until I have finished speaking. Would this be possible?*
- I feel hurt . . . when I am put down behind my back . . . because I don't have the opportunity to speak for myself. What I would like . . . is for you to speak to me directly if there is a problem. Would this be possible?*

*Give each of the young people a copy of 'I Statement' framework and a pen or marker.*

Think of a situation where you would like to resolve conflict and complete the sentences below:

*I feel* \_\_\_\_\_

*when I* \_\_\_\_\_

*because I* \_\_\_\_\_

*What I would like is* \_\_\_\_\_

*Would this be possible?*

### **Juniors and Seniors**

*Reuse the papers from the mind map activity.*

On the other side of your paper, write one positive thought, behaviour or feeling that you now associate with conflict (*solutions, listening, communication, understanding, growth*).

*Invite everyone to bring their paper and stand around the word 'conflict', again.*

*Ask each of the young people to read their word aloud.*

## MENTAL HEALTH (STRESS AND ANXIETY)

### Outcome

Participants will explore healthy ways to address feelings of stress and anxiety.

### Related Bible verses

'The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.' (*Philippians 4:6-7*).

### Junior and Senior

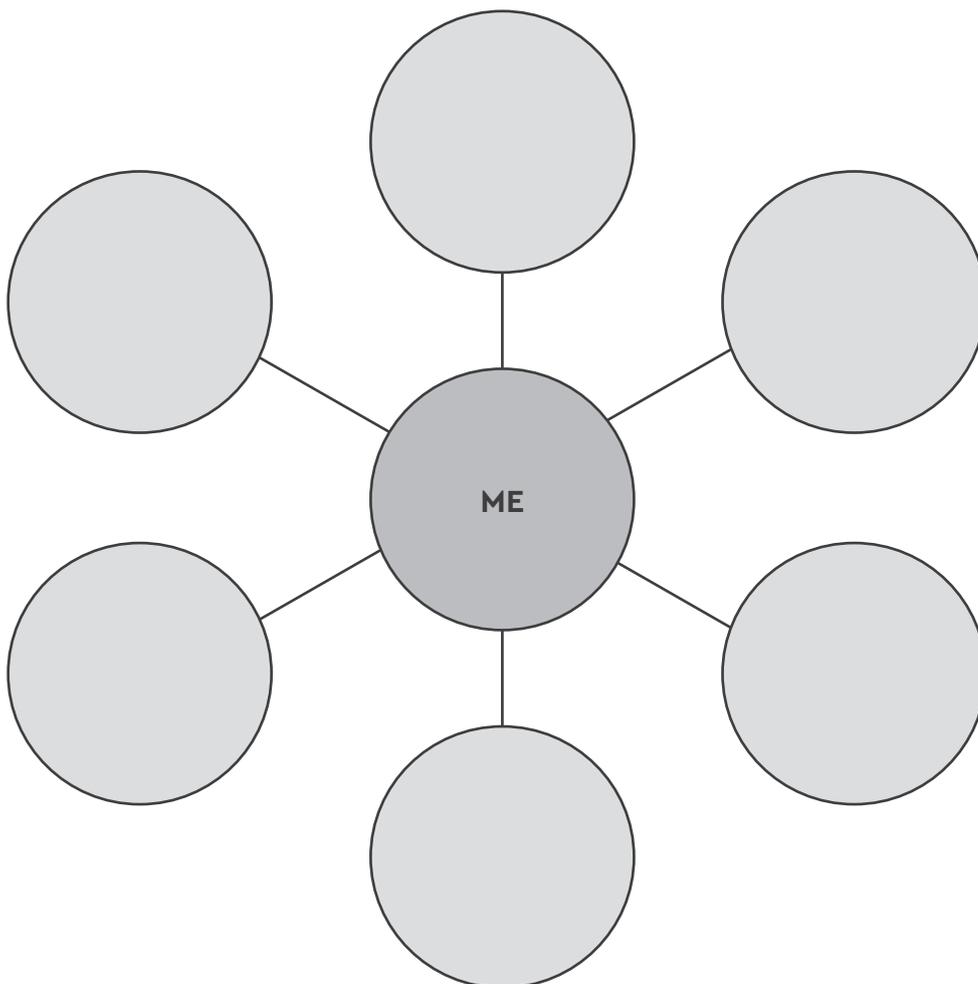
What might cause you to feel anxious or stressed?

What strategies have you found helpful when you are feeling anxious or stressed?

### 1. People

Hand each person a copy of the blank mind map below and a pen or marker.

When feeling anxious or stressed, we need to reach out to other people. This could mean making a telephone call, sending a text message or posting a message on social media. In the circles on the handout, write the names of the people you could go to talk with and ask for help. It's good to be honest and share how you are feeling – even if it makes you feel vulnerable! These could be friends, neighbours or family members.



## 2. Places

What places lift your spirits and make you feel better? These might be a particular beach, park, music venue, river, café or national park. Where could you go when feeling stressed or anxious? Share your responses.

## 3. Activities

What activities lift your spirits and make you feel better? These might be listening to music, bike riding, computer games, praying, watching a movie, walking, swimming, going to the gym or dancing. What activities could you do when feeling stressed or anxious? Think about how you could represent one of these activities with a freeze frame. When I say 'go', we will all do our freeze frames at the same time.

## 4. Self-talk

The way you speak to yourself in your mind is called 'self-talk'. Negative or critical self-talk can bring you down while positive self-talk can help keep you from feeling down. Positive self-talk is important in challenging negative attitudes and thoughts. You can learn to do it.

Instead of negative self-talk such as 'I'm hopeless' or 'My life is pointless,' try saying the following:

'I know that this is tough . . . but I will get through it.'

'This is just a phase I am going through . . . but I will make it.'

When I say each of the following examples of negative self-talk, chat with the person next to you about how you could reframe it into a positive statement.

'I'm so stupid. I never do anything right.' (E.g. *Everyone makes mistakes. I'll get it right next time.*)

'I'm so clumsy. I'm always dropping things.' (E.g. *I dropped it but it didn't break. I'm going to concentrate more so that I don't have so many accidents.*)

## 5. Prayer

For thousands of years, people have found prayer to be important and helpful. Have you tried prayer?

Christian prayer is based on the promise of a loving God who is always with you and knows your needs. This is a great comfort and encouragement to many people when they are feeling stressed and anxious. This merciful and compassionate God forgives and wants you to live a full life.

*'The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'* (Philippians 4:6-7).

## THE POWER OF WORDS

### Outcome

The participants will have a better understanding of the impact of both positive and negative words on their relationships.

### Related Bible Verse

Kind words are like honey - sweet to the soul and healthy to the body" Proverbs 16:24

There is an old saying that says: "sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me." Have you ever heard that said? It's not true, is it? Names DO hurt. Words actually have incredible power. They can build people up or they can tear people down. They can help to heal or they can start wars.

In the Bible the tongue is described as: "a restless evil, full of deadly poison" (James 3:8).

- Where have you seen words used to create damage?

Allow time for people to share

The Bible also says that, "Kind words are like honey - sweet to the soul and healthy to the body" Proverbs 16:24.

- Where have you seen words have a really positive effect?

Allow time for people to share

### Junior

*Print or write the following statements on strips of paper or cardboard. You will need two copies of each. Place each set into a separate bowl or cup. You will need two more empty bowls or cups. Adjust the number that you use so that you have enough for one each. If you have an odd number of young people, allow one person to have two turns or join in yourself.*

You are good for nothing
You are lazy
You are stupid
I wish you had never been born
I hate you
You are full of talent
You bring a smile to my face
I love you
It's wonderful to spend time with you
You are full of potential

Divide the group into two teams and explain that they will be participating in a relay race.

Place the empty bowls or cups at one end of the room and ask the teams to line up at the other end.

When I say 'go', the first person in each team must take a slip of paper. If the statement on the paper is something positive then you must dance, leap or run to the other end of the room. If the statement is negative then you must crawl or slither to the other end of the room.

Place your paper in the empty cup/ bowl then run back and tag the next person. They must then take a new piece of paper. Continue until everyone in your team has had a turn.

Negative words can be very powerful. They can hurt us, drag us down and stop us from reaching our potential. Positive words are also powerful. They can make us stronger, fill us with energy and help us to believe in ourselves and others.

### Senior

Write the following phrases on separate pieces of paper; scrunch them up and place them in a bowl. (If you have a large group, write multiple copies of the same phrases or add some of your own.)

Have everyone stand in a circle.

Choose someone to begin and pass them the bowl.

That person must take a paper ball and throw it at someone else in the circle.

The person who receives the ball must read the phrase aloud

- If the phrase is negative then the person who has received the message must go down a level (standing – kneeling - sitting)
- If the phrase is positive then the person who has received it can go up a level (sitting – kneeling – standing)
- If a person who is sitting receives a negative statement then they are out and can no longer send or receive messages
- If a person who is standing receives a positive statement then the bowl of messages goes to them and they take a turn at throwing a paper ball

The bowl is then passed to the next person in the circle.

Finish when all of the messages have been sent and received.

You are good for nothing
You are lazy
You are stupid
I wish you had never been born
I hate you
You are full of talent
You bring a smile to my face

I love you
It's wonderful to spend time with you
You are full of potential
You are weak
You are strong
You disgust me
You are incredible
Keep on going, you are doing so well
Don't give up, I believe in you
I'm proud of you
You are amazing
You make the world a better place to live in
You are a failure
You will never amount to anything
You are beautiful

The words of other people can be very powerful. They can knock us down further and further in life. They can also build us up and make us stronger.

### **Junior and Senior**

Your own words can be as powerful for others as their words are for you.

We are going to take time right now to practice using powerful positive words.

Here are some pieces of paper with sentence starters. We are going to go around the circle. Say a positive sentence to the person on your left.

Sentence starters:

- You are really good at...
- I really appreciate the way you...
- My favourite thing about you is...
- I'm inspired by the way you...
- You brighten my day when you...
- I like your...

This week, I encourage you to use powerful words to build others up.

## YOUR INFLUENCE

### Outcome

The participants will have an increased awareness of their power to positively influence others.

### Related Bible Verses

13 "You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavour? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.

14 "You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden.

*Matthew 5:13-14 (NLT)*

Always set a good example for others. Be sincere and serious when you teach. 8 Use clean language that no one can criticize. Do this, and your enemies will be too ashamed to say anything against you.

*Titus 2:7-8 (CEV)*

Influence equals impact and change. Influence can change the way a person thinks, acts or speaks.

- Which celeb do you think has the most influence over young people at the moment?
- How do they influence people?

*Allow time for group members to answer.*

- Who has had a positive influence on your life?
- How have they influenced you?
- Who do you think is influenced by you?

No matter who you are, you have influence over a lot of lives. Psychologists estimate that even the most introverted person influences about 2000 people per year.

*Put a piece of butcher's paper in the middle of the room.*

- *In the centre of the page, in a circle, write the words: "People we Influence".*
- *As a group, brainstorm all of the places you go during a week. (E.g. Train, supermarket, medical centre, school, work, home.) Write these all in one coloured marker.*
- *Ask individuals to take a pen and write names of people they personally interact with in those places.*
- *Ask each person to choose just one person that they have added to the page.*
- *Whenever we interact with someone we have the opportunity to influence them – even the impact or change might be small.*
- *What could you do to influence that person in a positive way the next time you interact with them?*

You don't need to be the boss of someone to influence them! You can change their life with an act of kindness or even a smile.

Jesus is famous for telling his followers that they are and should be: "The Salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13). He said this in a time when salt was used to keep meat from going off. What do you think he was trying to say?

Yes - He was telling them that they should influence the world around them and make it better or "fresher".

What is one way you can make the world around you better this week? *Share around the circle.*

## SELF-ESTEEM

### Outcome

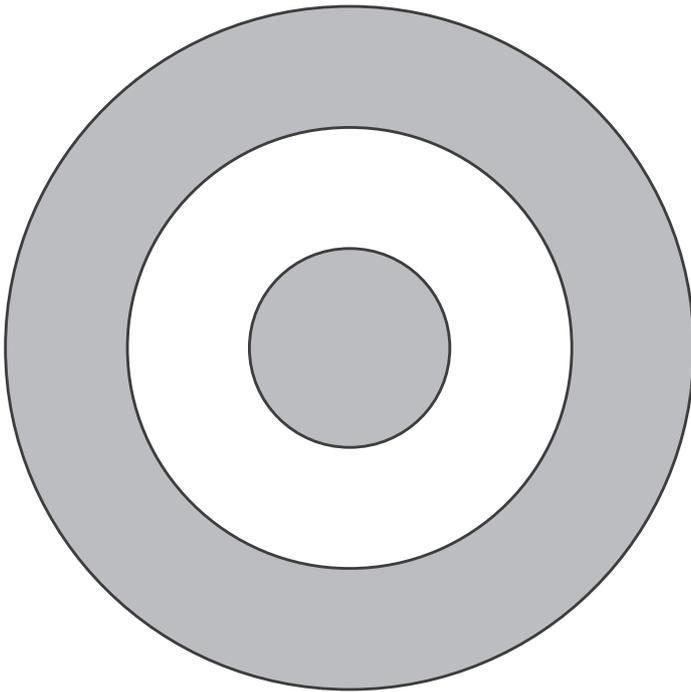
Participants will be equipped with tools to promote positive self-esteem.

### Related Bible Verse

"You created my inmost being. You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." *Psalm 139:13-14*

### Junior and Senior

On a large sheet of paper, draw a bullseye target.



*Scrunch up three pieces of paper to form 'balls'.*

*Give each participant an opportunity to throw the three balls at the target.*

*Challenge them to hit the small centre circle.*

*Cheer and applaud each successful hit.*

*Keep a tally for the whole group of how many times the bullseye is hit.*

*Give everyone a second turn.*

*This time, challenge them to hit anywhere on the target.*

*Cheer/ applaud/ high five/ fist pump/ victory dance etc. for each successful hit.*

*Again, keep a tally for the whole group of how many times the target is hit.*

- How did you feel about your first attempt?
- What difference did it make when you were shooting for the larger target?

Often, we have expectations on ourselves or set goals for ourselves that are very difficult. When we fail to hit the mark we can start to feel negatively about ourselves.

Sometimes we really set ourselves up to fail.

Most of the time, if we can hit the wider target, it's enough.

## Junior

- Did you notice that your leader really celebrated when the target was hit?

It's encouraging when someone else celebrates our success. This is actually something that we can do for ourselves too. When you get something right or when you hit your targets, celebrate! Remember to keep positive self-talk

- Tell the person next to you two things you are not good at.
- Tell the person next to you two things you are good at.
- Did you find it easier to think of things you are good at?

Many people are excellent at putting themselves down. They can easily list all the things that they are not good at doing. But, if you ask them about their strengths, they really struggle to come up with anything.

In the Bible, it says that God was there when you were being "knit together in your mother's womb". Each of us is "amazingly and wonderfully made", even if we don't feel like it.

It's important to understand the areas that we need to grow in, but it's equally important to know where we are already strong.

To work towards a healthy self-esteem:

- Set realistic targets
- Celebrate your success

## Senior

*Heads or tails*

Everyone stand up. I'm going to give you some statistics. Some are true, some are false.

For each of the stats, if you think it is true put your hands on head, if you think it is false put your hands on your bottom. If you get it wrong, you're out - sit down.

1. Self-esteem refers to how we feel about ourselves (TRUE)
2. Low self-esteem is when you have a day where you don't feel good about yourself
3. (FALSE. We all have bad days. Low self-esteem is more than that).
4. You can't change your Self-esteem (FALSE. There are lots of steps you can take to improve your self-esteem).

*As a group, make a list of things we can do to improve our self-esteem.*

*Leaders, see examples.*

1. *Surround yourself with people who build you up*
2. *Positive self-talk*
3. *Inspiring Facebook quotes*
4. *Remind yourself that everyone has different strengths*
5. *Making a list of strengths/achievements*
6. *Get help in the areas you are not happy with*
7. *Exercise*
8. *Don't aim for perfection*
9. *Celebrate achievements, however small*
10. *View mistakes as learning opportunities*

## ATTITUDES TO EDUCATION

### Outcome

To help participants to recognise the value of education and to promote positive views of education for its present and future value.

### Related Bible Verse

Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still;  
teach the righteous and they will add to their learning. *Proverbs 9:9 (NIV)*

### Junior

- What do you like most about school?
- What is the most important thing you have ever learnt?
- If you could change any one thing about school what would it be?

Did you know that before you even started school, you had already learned how to do thousands of things that will help you have a great life? You learned to watch people, to smile, to stick out your tongue, to drink through a straw, to take yourself to the toilet, to talk, to throw a ball, to put your toys away – so many things you already knew!

Babies are born clever, and they are born to learn.

When we go to school, we start to learn lots of new things. Let's think about some of the things we are learning, and why we learn them.

*Print/ write each of the following subject areas, with their description, each on a separate A4 page:*

*ENGLISH – reading, writing, listening and understanding*

*MATHS – using numbers, counting, measuring, doing sums, using calendars*

*SCIENCE –living and non-living things, the environment, how things work, what things are made of, what happens when we mix things*

*HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY and LANGUAGES – our families, how life in our country has changed, where other countries are, what life is like there, ways to speak and write in other languages*

*HEALTH and PHYSICAL EDUCATION –Being active, eating well, keeping healthy, playing sports and games, dancing, how we grow, keeping safe*

*CREATIVE ARTS – Colouring in, drawing and painting, making things, singing and playing music, acting in plays, dancing*

*Divide into three groups. Give each group two subject areas. Ask them to write on their sheet a few ways that this subject area is important in helping us to have happy lives. Then give each group the opportunity to share their thoughts with the larger group.*

Apart from what we learn at school, we can still learn lots of other ways. For example, all of us learn dance. Who goes to other classes or lessons outside of school? (E.g. *music, karate, tennis*).

*If you don't already have lessons or classes outside of school, are there things that you might like to learn one day? What are they?*

It's really important that as we grow we keep on learning. Even adults need to constantly learn new things. Our world keeps changing so we have to make changes too.

To learn well we need to take advantage of the opportunities we have to learn, pay attention to our teachers and make an effort to do the work.

*What change can you make this week to make the most of learning opportunities?*

**Senior**

Take a minute to think about everything you have learned in your life so far. What have you learnt from your parents, from teachers or tutors, from friends, or from experience?

- Try to answer these two questions:
  - » What are you glad that you have learned?
  - » Which one thing did you most enjoy learning?

Share your answers with one other person.

- In school, what has been your very favourite subject? Why?
- Tell one person your answer to these questions.
- Which has been your least favourite subject? Why?
- Share your answers with your partner.

*Whole group discussion: Why do you think the government makes people go to school?*

Even if school is not your favourite thing, it gives you a great foundation for living. Once you've finished school you will have a lot more choice about what you learn and how you learn it. Some things you might want to learn so you can get the job you want; others you might want to learn just for fun or for interest, or because they will help you do things that you want to do, like travel or write a book or build your own house.

*Give out the attached sheet and encourage participants to write their answers as you ask the questions.*

What is the most important thing you have ever learnt?  
What would you still like to learn?  
What steps can you take to learn that?  
What sort of work would you like to do? Are there courses you need to take to get this kind of job?

You probably haven't got all the answers to these questions today. I encourage you to think more about them, and take steps to learn all the things you want to learn. That might mean talking with people already doing these things, or checking out libraries, career counsellors or the Internet.

What is the most important thing you have ever learnt?

What is the most important thing you have ever learnt?	What would you still like to learn?
What steps can you take to learn that?	What sort of work would you like to do? Are there courses you need to take to get this kind of job?

## ALCOHOL / DRUGS / SMOKING

### Outcome

The participants will better understand the benefits of drug-free living and be equipped with strategies to say 'no' to drugs.

### Related Bible Verse

It isn't smart to get drunk!

Drinking makes a fool of you  
and leads to fights. – *Proverbs 20:1 (CEV)*

### Junior

Today we're going to talk about the kinds of medicines and drugs that we might see or hear about at home or in other places.

- Why is being healthy important to you?
- Has anyone had to take any medicine or tablets lately?
- How did you know which medicine to use and how much to take?

*(E.g. Parents/teacher/doctor nurse administered them. I read the instructions on box or label.)*

It can be really dangerous to take the wrong amount of medicine or tablets, so we always have to read the instructions on the box or packet.

It can also be really dangerous for little children to take them. So we need to keep the tablets and medicines somewhere where children can't get them.

- How do we do that at home? (E.g. locked cupboard or up high)

Medicines and tablets are types of drugs. A drug is any substance, not counting food, which is taken into our body and causes a change in how our body works. Some drugs also cause changes in how our mind works.

Some drugs are helpful; they help us to get better when we've been sick, as long as they are taken according to the instructions.

Can anyone tell me the names of any drugs that are not so helpful?

*(E.g. nicotine/smoking/cigarettes; alcohol/beer/wine; ecstasy; ice; heroin; marijuana/pot/hash)*

Let's look at some of the problems that taking unhelpful drugs can cause.

*Print out the table on the template below and cut into individual cards.*

*Ask each person to pick up a card and read out the name of a drug and its bad effects.*

*Draw a large outline of a body on a whiteboard, butcher's paper or use chalk on the ground. As each side-effect or illness is listed, have the young people mark a red cross on the part of the body that is affected.*

Sometimes on the TV news we hear that someone was arrested for producing drugs or bringing them into Australia. But most of the people that try to give us drugs are not the ones on TV. If we are offered drugs, it's usually by a friend, or someone that a friend knows.

No one can make us take drugs, but if we are not prepared, it can sometimes be hard to say 'no'. Here are some things that you can say when offered drugs.

Firstly, just say 'No thanks'.

If that doesn't seem to be enough, you could add something like:

- I don't like drugs.
- Those things make me sick.
- just want to stay healthy.
- I have plenty of fun without drugs.
- My parents would kill me if I did that.

*What would you say if one of your friends offered you drugs?*

<p><b>Nicotine</b></p> <p>Nicotine is found mainly in cigarettes. It can lead to lung cancer and diseases of the heart and lungs. These may cause heart attacks or strokes, other cancers, eye cataracts, and pneumonia.</p>	<p><b>Alcohol</b></p> <p>Drinking alcohol can cause mood changes, aggression and fights. Heavy drinking can cause heart and liver disease, strokes and cancer, and makes you not as able to fight off other illnesses.</p>
<p><b>Marijuana (Cannabis)</b></p> <p>Using marijuana causes slower reflexes, poor coordination and concentration, nausea, glassy eyes and increased heart rate and appetite. Regular users can get chest infections</p>	<p><b>Ecstasy (MDMA)</b></p> <p>People using ecstasy may hallucinate, sweat, grind their teeth and shake. They may be exhausted and have damaged nerves and cracked teeth. Some people have died from over-heating after taking ecstasy.</p>
<p><b>Heroin</b></p> <p>Heroin is usually injected with a needle. Use of heroin can cause infections of the skin, heart and lungs. Sharing needles can cause HIV/AIDS and other serious illnesses, and taking too much can cause death.</p>	<p><b>LSD (Acid)</b></p> <p>People who take LSD have 'trips' or hallucinations. They see sights and hear sounds that aren't really there. This can be very scary and dangerous.</p>
<p><b>Ice (Crystal Meth)</b></p> <p>Using ice can cause heart attacks, lung problems and strokes that stop parts of the user's body from working. They end up looking older than they are and their teeth are badly damaged.</p>	<p><b>Cocaine</b></p> <p>Using cocaine causes a racing heart, tremors, reduced appetite, overheating and sweating. Regular use can cause fits, kidney failure and poor mental function. Sharing needles can cause dangerous infectious diseases.</p>

## Senior

Today we're going to talk about drugs and their effects, and look at some ways to say 'no' if someone offers us drugs.

Probably the drugs we are most used to are the ones we take when we're sick or have a headache. Some of these we can buy at a supermarket or pharmacy, and others we can't buy unless we have a prescription from a doctor or dentist.

- Why do you think we need prescriptions for some drugs?

*(E.g. bad effects, dangerous if we take them the wrong way, too expensive if they're not on the National Drug Scheme)*

When we take medicine or tablets, with or without a prescription, it's really important to read the instructions and only take the medications when and how we are meant to. Taking too many tablets or taking them too often can be dangerous. And not taking enough can mean that the medication won't work properly.

It's also important to keep medications away from children and anyone else who might not understand how to use them properly.

- How can you do that at your place?

Let's talk about some of the drugs that are not sold in supermarkets or pharmacies. They are sometimes called recreational drugs.

- Can you tell me the names of some of these drugs?

*(E.g. nicotine/smoking/cigarettes; alcohol/beer/wine; ecstasy; ice; heroin; marijuana/pot/hash)*

- What do you think are some of the reasons people take these drugs?

*(E.g. peer pressure; to fit in; for fun or relaxation; bored / something to do; they're curious; to help cope with pain or upsetting circumstances; because they're addicted)*

So drugs can have some good effects, like helping someone feel better. But when drugs are used long-term, they can have some very dangerous effects.

*Print out the table on the template below and cut into individual cards. Ask each person to pick up a card and read out the name of a drug and its bad effects.*

*Draw a large outline of a body on a whiteboard, butcher's paper or use chalk on the ground. As each side-effect or illness is listed, have the young people mark a red cross on the part of the body that is affected.*

- Has anyone been offered these kinds of drugs?
- Who offered them to you?

It has been found that when teenagers are offered drugs, it is nearly always by someone they know, like a friend or a friend of a friend.

No one can make us take drugs, but if we are not prepared, it can sometimes be hard to say 'no'. Here are some things that you can say when offered drugs.

Brainstorm (aloud) some things that you could say if someone asked you to take drugs.

E.g.

- *I don't like drugs.*
- *Those things make me sick.*
- *I just want to stay healthy.*
- *I have plenty of fun without drugs.*
- *My parents would kill me if I did that.*

What would you say if one of your friends offered you drugs?

### **Nicotine**

Nicotine is found in cigarettes, including electronic ones. The immediate effects may include feelings of relaxation, increased blood pressure and heart rate, bad breath, dizziness, nausea, abdominal cramps and vomiting, headache and coughing due to smoke irritation. Over time, tar in cigarettes coats the lungs and can cause lung and throat cancer in smokers. Other long-term effects include increased risk of stroke and brain damage; damage to sight and hearing; loss of sense of smell and taste; yellow fingers and teeth; tooth decay; cancer of the nose, lip, tongue and mouth; miscarriages, damaged sperm and reduced sperm.

From <http://www.mydr.com.au>

### **Marijuana (Cannabis)**

Marijuana is a depressant drug that slows down the messages to and from your brain. The active ingredient in marijuana is tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Marijuana might make you feel 'chilled out', relaxed, happy and chatty, and may lead to hallucinations if a large dose is taken.

Marijuana also has many negative effects. It causes slower reflexes, poor coordination and concentration, nausea, glassy eyes and increased heart rate and appetite.

Regular users can get chest infections, lower sperm count, irregular menstrual cycle and lowered sex drive. They can become dependent.

There is also some evidence that cannabis can produce psychotic symptoms in people with a family history of mental illness. It can also make psychotic symptoms worse and harder to treat if you already have a mental illness like schizophrenia.

Marijuana users can have social and financial problems, and don't do as well in education. Problems are more common for people who start using marijuana at early age, and for people who use it regularly.

From <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au>

## **Alcohol**

Binge drinking (heavy drinking over a short period) has short-term effects such as nausea and potential injury to the person drinking, and to others around them. It can also cause long-term effects on their health and wellbeing. These effects include significant damage to the brain and liver, physical and psychological dependence on alcohol, and the risk of developing emotional and mental health problems such as depression and anxiety.

From <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au>

## **Heroin**

Heroin is a depressant drug which means it slows down the messages to and from your brain. One of these messages is to breathe – heroin can stop you breathing.

Heroin produces an immediate 'rush', which makes people who use it feel good, as well as drowsy and very relaxed. It also dulls physical and psychological pain.

People who take heroin have slurred speech, slow breathing and reduced coordination. If they take a high dose, they can have an irregular heartbeat, very slow breathing, blue lips, and cold and clammy skin.

People who use heroin regularly are more likely to get skin, heart and lung infections, loss of sex drive in men, and menstrual and fertility problems for women, and risk infectious diseases like HIV and hepatitis C from sharing needles.

From <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au>

## **Ice (Crystal Meth)**

Ice produces an intense rush that can last for hours. Coming down takes days.

Users find their heart is racing and they breathe very quickly. Their blood pressure and temperature also goes up. They also repeat simple actions such as scratching and itching.

People who use it repeatedly can get lung and heart problems, and have a stroke.

People who overdose can have heart palpitations, a heart attack, fits and become unconscious.

People who use ice regularly look much older than they should, and find their teeth badly damaged. They also lose a lot of weight and can become unhealthily thin and are likely to become addicted.

Ice is also linked to lots of brain and mental health problems including the risk of stroke, anxiety, depression, violent behaviour and psychosis.

From <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au>

### **Ecstasy (MDMA)**

MDMA starts to work about 20 minutes after it is taken. Some people hallucinate, sweat, clench their jaws, grind their teeth and have tremors.

People can overheat and become dehydrated when using ecstasy in hot and humid conditions. Some people have died in this way.

People coming down from an ecstasy high can feel exhausted, anxious and unable to sleep. These effects can last a few days.

People who use MDMA regularly can develop high blood pressure, damaged nerves, exhaustion and cracked teeth from clenching and grinding.

From <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au>

### **LSD (Acid)**

Trips, or hallucinations, start about an hour after taking LSD. People taking LSD can see sights and hear sounds that aren't really there. They can feel wonderful and relaxed, or scared, anxious and paranoid.

People having trips can feel sick and vomit, and they can have seizures. They can also feel dizzy, have a racing pulse, breathe fast, have trouble seeing, or have chills and sweats.

A bad trip can involve terrifying hallucinations. People on a bad trip can misjudge dangerous situations and do things they would not normally do, like try to fly or try to kill themselves.

From <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au>

### **Cocaine**

People who use cocaine get a rush, making them feel happy, confident and alert. But they also have a racing heart, tremors, reduced appetite, overheating and sweating. People who use cocaine regularly can have fits, poor sexual performance, kidney failure, poor mental function and an increased risk of contracting infectious diseases by sharing needles. Snorting cocaine can also damage the inside of your nose including destroying the septum (middle part) of your nose, leading to collapse of the nose.

An overdose can cause seizures, or a stroke, leading to coma and death.

From <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au>

