A guide to conversations with young people about 

DRUGS & ALCOHOL
DID YOU KNOW: ALCOHOL

While no use is safest, use these videos to explore the facts before discussing options.

DID YOU KNOW THAT ONE STANDARD ALCHEOLIC DRINK TAKES AT LEAST ONE HOUR TO LEAVE YOUR BODY?

IN NEW ZEALAND ALL ALCOHOLIC DRINKS MUST BE LABELED WITH THE STANDARD DRINKS THEY CONTAIN.

THE MORE YOU DRINK, THE LONGER IT TAKES TO BE SOBER AND SAFE.

HOW IT WORKS

WHEN YOU DRINK, ALCOHOL GOES INTO YOUR STOMACH WHERE IT MIXES WITH ANY FOOD. SOME ALCOHOL GOES INTO YOUR BLOODSTREAM. THE MIX THEN MOVES TO YOUR SMALL INTESTINE.

MOST OF THE ALCOHOL HEADS TO THE BRAIN FROM HERE, AFFECTING YOUR CO-ORDINATION, CONFIDENCE AND JUDGEMENT. FOOD SLOWS DOWN THIS PROCESS, WHICH IS WHY EATING BEFORE YOU DRINK IS A GREAT IDEA.

THE BLOOD THEN MOVES TO YOUR LIVER WHICH WORKS HARD TO GET RID OF THE ALCOHOL, BREAKING IT DOWN SO IT CAN LEAVE THE BODY IN URINE. IT'S ALSO A DIURETIC, MAKING YOU THIRSTY AND DEHYDRATED.

FIRST YOU CAN GET FLUSHED, ENERGETIC AND TALKATIVE

THIS CAN LEAD TO RISK TAKING, MEMORY LOSS AND AGGRESSION

YOU CAN EXPERIENCE BLACKOUTS, WET YOURSELF, AND YOUR VITAL ORGANS START TO SHUT DOWN.

DRINKING WHILE PREGNANT CAN CAUSE BIG PROBLEMS FOR BABY.

NEXT YOU COULD GET MORE CONFIDENT, EMOTIONAL AND UN-COORDINATED

THEN YOUR BODY TRIES TO RID ITSELF OF THE ALCOHOL THROUGH VOMITING

IT CAN ALSO CAUSE HANGOVERS, EMOTIONAL STRESS, MAKE IT HARDER TO ENJOY LIFE AND LEAD TO PHYSICAL AND MENTAL DAMAGE.

SO, REMEMBER TO

• EAT BEFORE YOU START DRINKING
• COUNT THE STANDARD DRINKS
• ALWAYS LOOK OUT FOR YOUR MATES

WANT TO FIND SUPPORT FOR A YOUNG PERSON IN NEW ZEALAND? CALL THE ALCOHOL AND DRUG HELPLINE ON 0800 787 797

Funded by Counties Manukau Health
DID YOU KNOW
ALCOHOL

Conversations about drugs & alcohol

Key tips for conversations:

- Eat before you drink
- Count the standard drinks
- Avoid drinking while pregnant
DID YOU KNOW: CANNABIS

While no use is safest, use these videos to explore the facts before discussing options.

DID YOU KNOW THAT... CANNABIS IS NEW ZEALAND'S MOST POPULAR ILLEGAL DRUG?

BUT ONLY 3% OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS SAY THEY USE IT ON A WEEKLY BASIS.

HOW IT WORKS

CANNABIS IS A DEPRESSANT AND CAN BE PHYSICALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY ADDICTIVE.

WHEN CANNABIS IS SMOKED THE ACTIVE CHEMICAL THC GOES INTO THE LUNGS, IS ABSORBED INTO THE BLOODSTREAM AND CARRIED TO THE BRAIN. THE EFFECTS START WITHIN MINUTES AND CAN LAST FOR HALF AN HOUR OR MORE.

CANNABIS IS TAKEN TO THE BRAIN IN A DIFFERENT WAY WHEN EATEN. THIS MEANS IT CAN BE HARDER TO KNOW HOW STRONG THE EFFECTS WILL BE, AND THE EFFECTS CAN LAST FOR LONGER, WHICH CAN BE AN UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCE.

SMARTSCAN

CANNABIS AFFECTS DIFFERENT PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT WAYS.

SOME PEOPLE FEEL RELAXED, LIKE LISTENING TO BOB MARLEY AND GET THE MUNCHIES.

OTHERS CAN FEEL PARANOID, DEPRESSED AND CONFUSED, WITH A HIGHER RISK OF TRIGGERING MENTAL ILLNESS AND SEEING, HEARING OR FEELING THINGS THAT AREN'T THERE.

SO, REMEMBER TO

• STOP IF YOU START TO FEEL UNWELL OR UNCOMFORTABLE
• DON'T SMOKE AND DRIVE
• ALWAYS LOOK OUT FOR YOUR MATES

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AOD Provider Collaborative
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DID YOU KNOW
CANNABIS

Conversations about drugs & alcohol

Key tips for conversations:

- Smoking a lot of cannabis can affect your health
- Stop if you start to feel unwell or uncomfortable
- Don’t smoke and drive
DID YOU KNOW: VOLATILE SUBSTANCES

While no use is safest, use these videos to explore the facts before discussing options.

DID YOU KNOW THAT INHALING SUBSTANCES IS COMMONLY KNOWN AS 'HUFFING'? THERE IS NO SAFE LEVEL OF USE, WHICH CAN LEAD TO 'SUDDEN SNIFFLING DEATH,' EVEN IF YOU ONLY TRY IT ONCE.

HUFFING IS NOT VERY COMMON IN NEW ZEALAND.

ONLY 1.2% OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE EVER TRIED HUFFING TO GET OUT OF IT, AND ALMOST TWO THIRDS OF THOSE HAD ONLY DONE IT ONCE.

HOWEVER, HUFFING LED TO THE DEATHS OF 25 YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER 17 WITHIN 10 YEARS.

INHALANTS ARE TAKEN INTO THE LUNGS AND DIRECTLY ABSORBED INTO THE BLOODSTREAM. THESE POISONOUS CHEMICALS IMMEDIATELY REACH THE BRAIN AND THE PEAK EFFECT IS FELT FOR AROUND A MINUTE.

MOST PEOPLE WILL EXPERIENCE A NASTY HANGOVER OR HEADACHE, WHICH CAN LAST FOR HOURS OR DAYS, DEPENDING ON HOW MUCH YOU INHALE.

POISONOUS

HUFFING CAN MAKE YOU FEEL FLOATY OR DROWSY, UNCOORDINATED AND SLOW TO REACT, WITH BLURRY VISION AND UNPLEASANT BREATH.

VOLATILE SUBSTANCES ARE ALSO HIGHLY FLAMMABLE AND CAN CAUSE DANGEROUS BURNS AND EXPLOSIONS.

IT CAN LEAD TO EXTREME AGGRESSION, DEPRESSION, IRREVERSIBLE BRAIN AND ORGAN DAMAGE, SEIZURES, COMA AND DEATH.

SO, REMEMBER

- THERE IS NO SAFE LEVEL FOR INHALING SOLVENTS OR VOLATILE SUBSTANCES
- HUFFING CAN CAUSE YOU SERIOUS HARM
- ALWAYS LOOK OUT FOR YOUR MATES

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DID YOU KNOW
VOLATILE SUBSTANCES

Conversations about drugs & alcohol

Key tips for conversations:

- Huffing can cause you serious harm
- Solvents are highly flammable and dangerous.
- There is no safe level for inhaling solvents or volatile substances
DID YOU KNOW: METHAMPHETAMINE

DID YOU KNOW THAT... METHAMPHETAMINE USE IS VERY UNCOMMON IN NEW ZEALAND. ONLY 0.6% OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE REPORTED EVER USING METH, AND HALF OF THOSE HAD ONLY USED IT ONCE.

BUT SOME PEOPLE WILL START USING METHAMPHETAMINE TO HELP DEAL WITH THINGS.

HOWEVER, IT CAN BE HIGHLY ADDICTIVE AND EXPENSIVE.

METHAMPHETAMINE IS A STIMULANT THAT CAN BE FOUND IN MANY FORMS.

HOW IT WORKS

IT SPEEDS UP THE BODY, AND AFFECTS THE REWARD PATHWAY IN THE BRAIN.

THIS PATHWAY USES DOPAMINE TO MAKE A PERSON FEEL GOOD WHEN THEY ARE DOING THINGS LIKE EATING, HAVING FUN, OR HANGING OUT WITH FRIENDS.

METH FORCES THE RELEASE OF DOPAMINE IN THE BRAIN, TO CREATE FEELINGS OF PLEASURE AND CONFIDENCE.

PHYSICAL SIGNS OF METHAMPHETAMINE USE INCLUDE ENLARGED PUPILS, ITCHY SKIN, INCREASED ENERGY, AND APPETITE LOSS.

ALSO BEING HYPERACTIVE, AND VERY TALKATIVE.

USING METH IN LARGE AMOUNTS OR FOR A LONG TIME MAY LEAD TO PARANOIA, HALLUCINATIONS, AND AGGRESSIVE OR VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR.

SHAREING EQUIPMENT ALSO INCREASES CHANCES OF INFECTION.

SO, STOP AND THINK:

• IS THIS ME?
• HOW IS MY USE AFFECTING THE PEOPLE AROUND ME?
• AND REMEMBER, ALWAYS LOOK OUT FOR YOUR MATES.

Want to find support for a young person in New Zealand? Call the Alcohol and Drug Helpline on 0800 787 797

AOD Provider Collaborative
Funded by Counties Manukau Health
Conversations about drugs & alcohol

Key tips for conversations:

- Methamphetamine can affect how you make decisions.
- Using a lot or for a long time can change how you feel and act.
- Avoid sharing equipment.
DID YOU KNOW: SYNTHETIC PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

While no use is safest, use these videos to explore the facts before discussing options.

DID YOU KNOW... THAT SYNTHETIC PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES ARE A LARGE AND GROWING GROUP OF MANUFACTURED CHEMICALS FOUND IN NEW ZEALAND.

SOME CHEMICALS OFTEN HAVE MUCH MORE UNPLEASANT EFFECTS AND DANGEROUS SIDE-EFFECTS, THAN THE TRADITIONAL DRUGS THEY MIMIC, SUCH AS CANNABIS, MDMA, LSD AND SPEED.

THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF MANUFACTURED CHEMICALS AVAILABLE ON THE BLACK MARKET.

NONE OF THESE CHEMICALS HAVE BEEN TESTED AS BEING SAFE, AND IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW HOW YOU WILL BE AFFECTED.

THOUGH THEY MAY LOOK SIMILAR TO THE DRUGS THEY MIMIC, THEY SMELL DIFFERENT, AND CAN BE A LOT STRONGER WITH VERY DIFFERENT EFFECTS.

SOME OF THESE CHEMICALS MAY MAKE YOU FEEL RELAXED, OTHERS CAN MAKE YOU FEEL AGITATED, PARANOID, AND UNCOORDINATED.

THE COMEDOWN FROM SYNTHETIC PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES CAN LAST FOR SEVERAL DAYS.

USING LARGER AMOUNTS OR LONG TERM USE WILL INCREASE THE UNPLEASANT EFFECTS.

SOME SPEED UP BODILY FUNCTIONS AND ARE USUALLY FOUND AS PILLS OR POWDERS. SOME, USUALLY SMOKED, SLOW THE BRAIN AND BODY DOWN, AND SOME CAUSE HALLUCINATIONS.

ALSO MIXING PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES WITH MEDICATION OR OTHER DRUGS CAN HAVE UNPREDICTABLE AND HARMFUL RESULTS.

SO, REMEMBER, IT'S BEST TO AVOID USING SYNTHETIC PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES AS THEY CAN BE UNPREDICTABLE AND UNPLEASANT.

IF YOU CHOOSE TO USE THEM, THEN:

• ONLY USE A SMALL AMOUNT
• TAKE BREAKS TO EAT AND SLEEP
• ALWAYS LOOK OUT FOR YOUR MATES

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AT THE HEART OF THE MATTER, NZ DRUG FOUNDATION.
Te Tiāpapa Tarākino o Aotearoa
DID YOU KNOW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

Conversations about drugs & alcohol

Key tips for conversations:

- It’s best to avoid using synthetic psychoactive substances.
- Using a lot, or for a long time will increase the unpleasant effects.
- Chemicals, effects and dosage are unpredictable, and none have been tested as safe.
TALKING TIPS FOR ADULTS

Get the facts on alcohol and other drug use by young people.

**Every** young person will make a decision about whether or not to use alcohol and other drugs.

**Many** will try alcohol and other drugs

**Some** will experience short-term harms

**A few** will develop long-term problems

Having an early, rational conversation gives your young person confidence that if something comes up, they can speak to you. Having the conversation is more important than the outcome.

**Tips for conversations**

- Listen to what they have to say
- Avoid interrupting or having a strong reaction
- Let them know you care about them
- Set clear expectations, with realistic consequences if these expectations are broken. This is especially important for younger children, who are just beginning to develop more control over what they do.

**Also remember**

If you are a parent or caregiver, have fun with your young person without drugs and alcohol. This makes it easier for them to learn to relax, reward themselves, or address feelings in ways that don't involve drugs and alcohol.
Now that you have the key facts about each drug, make some notes to prepare for a conversation with your young person. Here are the main things you need to be prepared for.

1. When?

An opportunity to start a conversation may emerge naturally. For example, if drug use is shown on TV, ask your child or young person what they think about it. This technique works well for children, as it helps them understand what they see around them without providing too much information for their age.

You might need to initiate a conversation. Try to do this in an uninterrupted time when you can give your full attention to what your young person is saying.

Make a note of when you plan to have this conversation
2. The main message

People usually leave a conversation remembering one or two main messages. Write what you would like yours to be here. Give clear and encouraging messages and let them know that you care.

Hint: A common message is, “I care about you, and want to help you make choices that will help your future.”

Make a note of your main message.
3. Other points that reinforce the main message

These are other points that you can be ready to raise in conversation. Choose points that reinforce your main message. This avoids the conversation being side-tracked by other issues and your main message getting lost.

Make a note of any other points you plan to raise.

Using the Did You Know? videos

- Watch them together.
- Ask open ended questions like:
  - “What do you think about these substances?”
  - “What stood out to you?”
  - “What was in these videos that you would want your friends to know?”
- Listen to what they have to say
- Offer any support they need.

Remember, starting a conversation is the most important thing, and it can be revisited in the future. You can call the alcohol and drug helpline on 0800 787 797 for information on how to get extra support.
Watch the videos at
drugfoundation.org.nz/didyouknow