

Active and experiential ways to teach about smoking and alcohol

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Teaching about Smoking and Alcohol

This is a challenge for many reasons.

- Is there any way of teaching this that will actually change the way pupils behave ?
- Only a minority of pupils will get into trouble with these substances but we teach everyone .
- What is the balance between information and encouraging thinking about the issues?
- What do we teach at which age so that we revisit the issues without being repetitive ?.

My starting point for this part of the programme is my own question *why on earth would anyone try a cigarette nowadays when they know the risks?*

When pupils say to me “well, you have to try things out – didn’t you

do it ,Miss “I reply “ No, and the reason is precisely because I *might* have liked it ! - why would I want to discover that I liked cigarettes or any other drug if I had already decided that I didn’t want to do that to myself ?”

I am still puzzled by this and yet our year eights experiment in their droves, so, puzzled, I asked the experts - our older and now much wiser sixth formers. They are my A level girls. All passionate about social justice and citizenship. With a number of As and Bs at AS two wanting to be an RE teacher and one a lawyer, they are future pillars of society. Did they smoke when they were younger - yes !. did they regret it ? yes. Had they given up ? two said “yes” and it was hard and one “no” and wished like crazy she could.

When we quickly worked out how much she was spending a year smoking ten a day - almost eight hundred pounds - she was very shocked and we hadn’t added in what she spent on alcohol! (don’t tell the kids about the money - get them to work it out for themselves for maximum effect)

Turning to that other problematic subject they all three admitted drinking to excess at weekends. When I tried a visualisation on them involving having more and more drink until they were unable to make the same decisions and choices that they would when sober asked them to add up the cost and imagine how they felt the next day they told me the amount I asked them to imagine was too low. six drinks , three times the legal limit to drive. They said it would take about ten drinks plus a few shots maybe for them to feel they had overdone it. One said “It took going to hospital in an ambulance to make me feel I had gone too far. I thought I was going to die”.

However much we talked about it they said they weren’t going to stop - but they disapproved of the younger ones drinking and smoking! “Line the glasses up one by one and write the cost on the glasses” they said. “Tell them how silly they look standing on the street corners and how we all laugh at them and how bad it is to be refused at the bar and have to walk the walk of shame through all of us, laughing at them”

Cider, they tell me is the drink to drink, underage in the park at about

£3 a litre bottle. It is these youngsters, they added, who quickly get out of control and damage and vandalise the environment. "If you are in a pub you are dancing or chatting and don't cause problems".

"By eighteen you have learned how much you can drink without embarrassing yourself or making yourself really, really ill, don't cause problems at parties and are less likely to do something you regret."

They and the year eleven class I talked with, thought six or seven drinks was a normal amount for an evening and they would still know what they were doing.

"I think it would take about ten drinks and a couple of shots for me to really not know what I was doing and feel really ill the next day" said one.

My estimation would be that this would cost about thirty pounds so if we add £30 a week to the tobacco bill. Its really beginning to add up. £10 a week will be £520. £30 will be £1,560 to add to nearly £800 on cigarettes

Autumn Term Year Eight: Smoking and Alcohol:Lesson One:

Aim:

- To see drugs in a wider sense than just illegal ones
- To consider the pros and cons of legal drugs
- To ensure all have information about the harmful effects of smoking and alcohol(they may know this from primary school)
- To consider whether tobacco ,alcohol, caffeine and aspirin would be legal if they were discovered today

Outcome;

Realisation that there are no *pros* to tobacco

Over use of others affects others and damages oneself.

Any use of tobacco affects others and damages oneself.

Resources:

- Red and green voting cards for game and true false exercise at the end.
- Copies of the drug information pages for groups preparing for drugs on trial game
- Copies of each for class or copy for OHT for the class to question the advocates
- Paper and pens for the scribes to prepare the cases for each advocate
- Special chair for each advocate in turn

This is what you do:

Ask: Who in the class takes drugs ?

Put your own hand up

Lets look at my supply.

Take out aspirin paracetamol, coffee, tea, lemsip, alcohol minature may also be an inhaler or antibiotic, cola drink – any thing else you might have at home.

Why do we take these ?

Are they good for you ? all have side effects , explore, but all have good effects

After all, as we have seen in healthy eating , food is essential for life but it can kill you if you abuse it !

lets take some common ones drugs that are widely used and explore the good and bad points

Drug

Advantage

Disadvantage

Alcohol

Cannabis

Caffeine

Aspirin

Tobacco

Conclusion : did they *all* come out with good points ? Was there any one that people struggled to find good points for ? Smoking perhaps?

Drugs on trial

These are all very old substances that humans have used for a long time as mood altering drugs, pain relievers or relaxants. If they were coming on to the market now would they be allowed ? Lets put them on trial and see.

- What conditions does a drug need before its allowed on the market to buy without a prescription ?
- What conditions does it need to be available on prescription only ?
- Why doesn't the doctor just tell you what you need and send you off to get it ?

Providing facts can be dull and tedious for pupils, especially if they have seen them before . They do need to be reinforced so it might be

quite a good idea to give out information sheets (or put on the overhead projector for each substance) to the whole class before the advocate makes each case so that pupils are better informed to ask their questions.

Playing the game : The following instructions can be put on overhead or a copy given to each group

Instructions for playing drugs on trial

The **object of the game** is to see if your substance can be introduced to society. **It is not about banning them** but, out of interest, to see if we would allow them now if they were being put on the market for the first time

1. Each group has a **substance** to put before the drugs regulator. Each group should **make a case to put towards the rest of the class to have it declared safe**. Each **card** contains information for and against each substance
2. People need to argue using all the **positive** points in the information. They can also argue by using the **rights of an individual** to choose what he or she does with their body.
3. Each group should chose a **scribe** to write the points in favour and

should choose an **advocate** to go up to the stand to make the case. (a chair put in an appropriate place.)

4. The advocate should go to the **special chair** to make their points and then **the class can ask questions** such as are there side effects ? does it affect other people? Does it cause any damage to people? **The advocate has to tell the truth** about the drug but they only have to answer the questions they are asked. Eg if no one asks does it cause death then they don't have to answer

5.The rest of the class will decide by **voting** with red and green cards to decide if the drug should be allowed or not

6.After each one pupils can vote using their cards to say whether it would have been allowed if it was appearing today for the first time.

Caffeine,

- Sharpens concentration, increases alertness, increases ability to think clearly .
- Found in tea coffee chocolate and certain soft drinks eg cola and Red Bull and Dr Pepper
- May reduce risk of stroke and improve blood flow in moderation. In excess, (too much) causes palpitations and heart damage.
- Increases anxiety .
- May need higher and higher amounts to feel affects leading to irritability and anxiety and palpitations .
- Feel tired and lethargic when the effects wear off so take more.
- Addictive.
- Withdrawal from caffeine causes big headaches.
- Takes two weeks to wean oneself off.

- Not known to have caused any serious medical problems(though thought to be the cause of Tony Blair's hospital admission with heart problems - too much use to enable him to work long hours)
- Not known to cause problems for anyone other than the user

Cannabis,

- Relaxes people, can relieve pain in some conditions.
- Available on prescription until 1973.
- Said not to be addictive.
- Mixed with tobacco leads to addiction to smoking.
- Can be a pathway to other drugs.
- Taken to excess regularly can lead to a drop out lifestyle and general not caring about anything.
- Stops clear thinking and concentration.
- Affects judgement
- Holds back studying and doing jobs well.
- Shuts down sense of responsibility.
- May cause long term mental damage .
- May cause cancer of the mouth in the long term.
- Heavy users seen as irritating and dull to non using friends and family, because of inactivity and lack of conversation

Alcohol,

- lowers inhibitions, relaxes people,
- A depressant,
- small amounts of red wine may be good for the heart.
- Strong beers like Guinness rich in iron, a glass a day used to be used after childbirth or operations to build person up.
- Addictive, more you have, the more you need .
- 14 units a week safe for women 21 for men.
- Needs to be spread over the week not taken all at the weekend. (binge drinking)
- 2 units is the safe limit for driving.
- Most people think their judgement and reactions are fine after two drinks. Tests show that they are not . Their reaction times and coordination is impaired (reduced not so good)
- 26% of adults drink more than recommended for health.
- Over 50% of hospital admissions are alcohol related (people

hurting themselves and others ,wives children, road accidents because they are drunk)

- million people are alcohol dependent (alcoholic).
- Alcoholism can lead to death through liver failure.
- Money spent on alcohol can cause problems in some families
- Violence because of alcohol can be a family problem
- Binge drinking very bad for health and causing increasing social disorder and vandalism

Tobacco,

- Relaxes people, because it is a depressant
- Tar in cigarettes causes cancer of tongue, mouth stomach and lung cancer.
- Causes emphysema lung disease affecting breathing from which patients can not recover patients need oxygen from a machine towards the end.
- nicotine addictive.
- Giving up smoking is very difficult
- Most regular smokers wish they had never started
- Causes problems in blood vessels. Walls harden so its harder to pump blood.
- Damages heart leading to heart disease and early death
- Affects breathing .
- bad for sports people, linked to asthma.
- Increases risks in operations using general anesthetic because of clogged lungs and general affect on ability of body to recover and

repair itself

- Uses up vitamin C in body so affects body's ability to repair itself and fight infection
- Taking up vitamin C means smokers more prone to wrinkles and signs of early ageing. Smokers faces are lined and skin is dry
- Passive smoking causes lung cancer,
- Passive smoking causes asthma and glue ear in children.
- Slows down growth of babies in the womb depriving them of oxygen.
- People smoking ten cigarettes a day are more likely to die because of this than by any kind of accident or form of violence.
- 40% of heavy smokers will die before they retire.
- Giving up reverses all the bad effects in two years. The lungs will clear and the body will repair itself. Life expectancy will become normal

Aspirin

Useful for Pain relief .

Cures headaches.

Good for period pain, colds, flu, muscle pain.

Irritates the stomach and causes stomach bleeding each time it is used. (paracetamol can damage the liver)

Children under twelve may have allergic reaction.

Dilutes blood so good for heart conditions and stroke prevention.

Tiny amounts good for people flying long haul to prevent clotting.

Now sold in small amounts to reduce risk of overdose

Plenary

True false exercise

- Six units of alcohol is safe for driving
- 20% of smokers will die before they retire
- 1 unit of alcohol is a bottle of wine
- A glass of wine a glass of sherry a pint of beer and a shot of whiskey are each one unit of alcohol
- The amounts of liquid are different because the amount of alcohol is different ie there is much more alcohol in whiskey than wine or beer
- There are good reasons to take aspirin and other pain killers
- There are some advantages to taking some caffeine
- More than about four cups of tea or coffee is not good for a person
- Cannabis can relieve pain in some medical conditions
- It is nicknamed dope because it makes users dopey

- Heavy use can affect peoples lives in a negative way.
- There are no good reasons or positive arguments for smoking tobacco ever

Lesson Two: Year eight: Alcohol and Smoking

Aim:

- To look at why people start smoking
- To think about how hard it is to say no
- To consider safe ways to enjoy alcohol

Outcome :

- Increased awareness about pressures and risks

Introduce lesson to class which is, to look at why people start smoking. To do that we are going to look at some true stories most of them from older people at our school.

Text to read or use in class

Most children of primary school age disapprove of smoking and believe that they will not smoke or take drugs when they are older .

If their parents smoke they worry about them and nag them to give up.

Smoking in public places is coming under serious control now because of the discovery a few years ago that *passive* smoking causes lung cancer. In other words people who live with, or work with smokers, are at serious risk from breathing other people's smoke. Smoking is banned from workplaces and now from pubs and restaurants. The only safe place to smoke is outside. Parents of young children are being encouraged to go outside into the garden to smoke to protect their children from asthma, bronchitis and glue ear.

When my son was ten months old he was diagnosed with asthma. The doctor listening to his chest asked which one of us smoked. We were horrified as neither of us did. Then we remembered, we had just come home from a holiday staying with friends where the husband smoked. He was out all day but just spending the evening indoors with him for a week had been enough for the doctor to hear the damage to a baby who was asleep upstairs.

Not long after wards our little niece was born. As the nurse delivered the placenta she saw that it was blue rather than bright red from all the healthy oxygen filled blood vessels taking food from the mother to the baby. She pointed it out to the mother pointing out the damage she had been doing to her baby as she grew inside her . look she said it is blue because there was not enough oxygen. What is going to happen now that the baby is born and you are taking her home to breathe smoke all over her ? The baby's mother was very, very upset - she did not smoke and would never have dreamed of harming her baby – *the smoker was the baby's father*. The mother breathing in the fathers smoke was enough to damage her growing baby.

"I will give up when I get married he said

I will give up when my wife gets pregnant he said

I will give up when the children are born he said

Eighteen years later, Now very ill with asthma unable to sleep lying down and too sick to work he still cannot give up and the family, trying to get by on benefit spends a hundred pounds a month on cigarettes. He started smoking with his mates when he was fourteen

Research shows that most smokers start when they are in their early teens twelve or thirteen, some start younger, some older, few start in their twenties. **It seems that year eight is the danger zone.** So what happens ? why do young people who decided at age eight that they would never smoke and can tell us all about why it is not a good idea change their mind at age twelve?

What risks will our little brothers and sisters face when they reach ten eleven and twelve ? What will our own children face when they reach this age ?

The following accounts are from pupils at our school, one is 17 the other two are 18.

Here is the **seventeen year old** talking about her experiences when she was in year eight at BRCC. She has high grades at AS level and is applying to university. She hopes to become a teacher.

“Why did you try smoking when you know how harmful it can be ?”

“I hate it actually, my Mum is a heavy smoker .I did it to be naughty, to go against my Mum. There were loads of us in lower school. We went to the park .It felt grown up and rebellious and it helped that I could take the cigarettes from her.

Her reason for starting was

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.....

How do you think she was feeling about herself at the time ?

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.....

What sort of image does smoking have on TV? Is it good or bad characters who smoke?

.....
.....

Does making smoking seem “wicked” make it more attractive to the very young?

.....
.....

“The most addictive thing about it is that it makes you feel bigger but when you get older you look down on people who do. By year eleven you think its disgusting. By then people can’t stop and they smell. You realise that the popular people don’t smoke”.

Why do you think older pupils look down on people who do?

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.....

Do you think she regrets her decision to smoke?

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.....

What do you think it was that made her change her mind ?

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.....

How do you think her feelings about herself changed as she got older?

.....
.....

“Are you still smoking ?”

“Oh, No I didn’t smoke for very long. I didn’t do it for long enough to get addicted”

“What made you stop.?”

“It was my friend actually. She was the person who offered me the cigarettes in the first place .Her brother is really ill with a lung disease. She said to me one day “I can’t believe I am doing this when my brother is so sick so we both stopped there and then”

How important do you think friends are in all of this?

.....
.....

“I worry about my own brother. I don’t want him smoking dope. He’s 14. I don’t want him going down that road. People think its not harmful but you see them hanging around no jobs”

Here is a male in his twenties talking about smoking. He is very fit and plays sport. He is looking back on the time when he was in year eight and being offered cigarettes

“There is more of a culture about not smoking nowadays but when you are twelve and someone lights up a cigarette and says “do you want one? You have got to have so much strength to say “no” Its really, really hard.

Do you agree with him? How important do you think this is in people having their first cigarette?

.....
.....

“Lots of popular people play sport and it was that which made me popular and allowed me to achieve. I was quiet and If I hadn’t had sport I would have had a hard time at school, that makes it especially hard to say no.

Do you agree with him?

.....

“Once I started rugby even a couple of cigarettes made a difference, I could really feel it in my lungs. I only have the occasional one now but when I have to stop altogether for two or three weeks I feel so much better its amazing . Just those few seem to make a difference . Do you think he minds that he smokes, do you think he wishes he had managed to say “no” or does he think that the few he has don’t matter ?

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.....

This next pupil is almost nineteen. She has a number of AS levels some at grade A and is applying to university to read Law. She starts for a different reason , almost by accident, really

“When did you start smoking ?”

“I didn’t start until I was 15 or 16.”

“What made you start , that’s quite late.”

I really don’t know .I have always thought it was stupid to smoke, my

parents don't smoke and I never wanted to do it but now I think about it I guess it was because I was smoking pot . It was mixed with tobacco, that's the way we took it.

This girl got through the year eight danger zone so what do you think it was that made her smoke, even though she thought it was "stupid"

.....
.....

"I didn't think smoking pot was doing me any harm, people say its not addictive, but then I got hooked on the nicotine. In the tobacco I was taking it with. I just didn't think about it. I got so many sore throats and if I got a cough or a cold it would last such a long time .I couldn't run for a bus and it was costing a lot . Money has always been an issue for me."

What do you think she about what she did looking back on it .Do you think she would make the same decision if she could go back in time?

.....
.....

"So you gave up."

"Yes but it was really hard. My mum kept telling me I smelt all the time. I went to the doctor and got patches. At one point I had five on my leg and my dad just laughed at me. It didn't work. In the end my boyfriend threw them in the bin and I just had to use will power in the end

What was it that made her decide to give up ?

.....
.....

"What was that like ?"

"It was so hard . I used to sit watching the telly after dinner and feel like crying, I wanted a cigarette so badly .I would get so stressed .I don't know how my boyfriend put up with me."

Are you through it now ?

Oh, yes. It took a couple of months but I still want one . The craving never goes.

The final girl is eighteen. She is applying to university and still smokes. Her reasons for starting are slightly different from the other two.

“When did you start ?”

“I was about thirteen. It felt big to do it and I wanted to be rebellious. The more people told me how harmful stuff was the more I wanted to do it .”

“It made you feel independent?”

“Yes, no one was going to tell me what to do.”

“How do you feel about it now ?”

“Bad, I really want to give up. I really enjoy smoking but I don’t like what it does to me .I tried gum but it tastes horrible. I don’t smoke enough to be allowed the patches on prescription and every time I try to give up I get so irritable and snap at every one. I feel bad that I haven’t had the will power to do it.”

How much do you smoke ?

How much does it cost ?I smoke about ten a day that costs £2.55.

So how much is that a week?

How much is that a month?

How much is that a year ?

I never realised it was that much, just think what I could do with the money?

That’s your car insurance for the year.

I guess so, I hadn’t thought about it like that before.

When did they start ?

Why did they start ?

Do they have any regrets ?

What advice do you think they might want to give to you?

What advice would you give to them?

What do you think the most tempting aspect of smoking is ?

For homework try a bit of research. Talk to anyone who smokes
Ask them how old they were when they started?

Why they started?

Do they want to give up ?

If so why do they want to give up?

Do they regret starting?

Plenary

Anonymous thought sharing circle

Year Eight : Smoking and Alcohol. Lesson Three:

Aim:

- To build on previous lessons introduction to alcohol and to consider issues about drinking sensibly
- Developing emotional literacy - especially being able to imagine and describe someone else's feelings

Outcome:

To have explored the dangers of drinking too much – the main one being that the more you drink the less you are able to decide what is enough.

Resources:

- **Story to read**
- **Paper and pens for thought sharing**
- **Sweets or biscuits**
- **Information sheets**

This is what you do:

(Test to see how many can go for deferred gratification don't explain

why until we get to that part of the lesson)
Dish of sweets or biscuits or cake set out at beginning
You can have one piece now or two if you wait until the end of the lesson

Visualisation: Cindy's night out

Close your eyes and imagine you are being transported to a comfy seat in a tree. It is in a park near where you live. It is dark and cold but you are in a magical place, comfy in your tree and nice and warm.

Nearby is a pen where some Shetland ponies are kept for the children to play with during the day. Over in the corner is the edge of a pond. The ducks are asleep now and all is quiet. In the centre is a fountain. There are concrete containers of flowers everywhere. During the day it is full of summer visitors enjoying themselves but at night it is deserted.

Looking out of the tree you see a group of people, older than you, coming down the path. They seem very lively and happy. They sit below the tree where you are and quickly you realise that you are invisible. They cannot see or hear you

What do you think they do ?

Pause

After about an hour they get up to leave what do you think they do then ?

Pause

Come back into the classroom and write down what you thought they did while they were under the tree and what you think they did as they left

Fold it in four and put it in the centre

All pick one and share - what did people think they did ? was it get drunk and wreck the place if so why did they think that ?

Let's continue with the story

Continue to use your imagination to think about how a person might be thinking and feeling and what they might do.

We will focus on one person in the group. She stays behind . Her name is Cindy . She is very pretty with long blonde hair and blue eyes she wears dark clothes and has finger less black lace gloves. She is seventeen. She begins to drink.

She has had one drink. How do you think she feels ? how much money has she spent ? Her boyfriend is very drunk he giggles and cannot walk in a straight line.

“Come on let me drive you home”, he says

What do you think Cindy replies?

Half an hour later Cindy has had three glasses of wine
How do you think she feels ?

Cindy suggests they go to a club to dance. Her boyfriend agrees

At the club, an hour and a half later Cindy has drunk nearly two bottles of wine (10 glasses of wine) and some Vodka

- How do you think she feels ?
- How much money has she spent if she bought this at the club?
- What will she say when her boyfriend offers to drive her home ?
- How will she feel when she wakes up the next morning ?
- What will be happening if she does this every weekend ?
- How much will she spend a week, a month, a year ?
- How much is she drinking over the limit for driving and for the safe limit for women over a week?
- What happens if you drink it all in one go?

Consequences sheet. Pupils can work in pairs or small groups on this. (My ideas for what could happen follow the sheet .) See who can come up with the most ideas

If a person has had five or six times the safe limit for alcohol and most 16 year olds drink that and more when they are bingeing. What could be the consequences for them on a journey from the club or pub or party to their home?

How many different consequences for them can you think of ?

Get into a fight

Fall over and get hurt

Vandalise property steal

Be sick bad headache pass out lose coat wallet purse forget property
and leave it somewhere be slipped drugs . have unsafe sex have sex
and not remember

Get in car driven by drunk driver

End up in hospital with stomach pumped

Say things that are regretted

Get knocked over

Get arrested

**Autumn Term year eight : Lesson Four: Alcohol and smoking
unit: Drink and the law**

Aim:

- To know and understand the safe limits for alcohol for men and women
- To be aware of the consequences for society of too much alcohol
- To be aware of our own capacity to take risks

Look at an information sheet about what a unit of alcohol is.

How much is the safe limit for men and women.

21 units for men
14 for women

how much is that a day for an adult ?
big problems if you save it all up until the weekend !!!

Causes just as much damage so you should not have more than two or three units a *day*

Why is it different ? body size and the ability to metabolise it.

- million people are dependant on alcohol
- 26% of people drink more than the safe limit each week
- smoking 10 cigarettes a day will be more likely to kill you than any form of accident or violence

How can you drink safely ?

Be with friends

Decide how much you should have and keep to it

Be sure you can always remember what happened

How can you bring your children up to drink safely ?

Set a good example

Teach them to appreciate good beer and wine

Don't let them see you drunk and behaving badly.

Be aware of how what you are doing affects others

How do you know when to stop?

Television and drinking

How does that affect our views?

How do the new licensing laws affect us ? is it a good thing or a bad thing?

Draw a picture of a drug pusher

Hold up picture of a class group

The problem is a friend, not the evil stranger, who are you going to be? the pusher? the pushed, or the one who says no.

Apply this to smoking and alcohol. What part do your mates play in getting you to do something that isn't a good idea?

Plenary

Design your own true false exercise to reflect the facts that you have taught the class about alcohol and the law .