

Young People's Basic Substance Awareness Course

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Knowledge of substances - how they are used and their effects

Introduction

Hampshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) has developed this e-learning opportunity to enable people working with children/young people, their parents and carers increase knowledge and awareness of substance use and related issues. The e-learning course comprises of three modules allowing people to undertake study at their own pace.

There are three separate modules, each with their own learning outcomes. Collectively they support individuals to explore attitudes and values, develop knowledge, increase awareness and identify and meet needs. The e-learning process consists of the following modules;

- 1. MODULE 1: Knowledge of substances - how they are used and their effects.**
- 2. MODULE 2: Substances and the Law.**
- 3. MODULE 3: Identifying substance related needs.**

Who is the course for?

These modules have been developed for front line staff working with young people in Hampshire from Children's Services, Education, Health, Community & Voluntary Sector, YOT, staff within social inclusion projects and foster carers.

Although the modules have been designed for staff working with children and young people, there will also be relevant learning for staff working with adults.

How to use the programme

To complete each module participants will need to prepare for a variety of study approaches. Individual exercises require participants to source information and provide answers before proceeding to the next exercise.

- Researching information from different websites (links provided)
- Certain exercises require participants to consult colleagues and young people so time should be built in for undertaking this work
- Sourcing agency policies relating to a specific topics

To assist participants process through each module participants should have access to;

- Pen and paper to make notes
- The internet
- Policy documents
- Opportunities to consult with colleagues and young people

How the modules support continuous personal development and building portfolio evidence

The learning modules have been constructed so that individuals can gather information and evidence to complete the exercises. On completion, printed answers and scores to module exercises should be submitted to the Drug & Alcohol Action Team and where necessary feedback will be provided. Completion of all modules will involve learners being awarded a certificate.

The evidence gathered for the modules can be used to demonstrate learning against the outcomes. The completed modules can be used to develop a portfolio of learning which could be used as evidence for NVQ's.

Learning Aim:

To increase knowledge of different substances, how they are used and their effects

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the module participants will have;

- Identified a range of different substances, the forms they are taken in, their names and prices
- Identified the main action and effects of depressants, stimulants, drugs that reduce pain and hallucinogenic substances
- Described different ways of using substances and the equipment required.
- Discussed why young people may choose a specific route of use
- Explored attitudes and values in relation to substances

Key Web Links

During your progression through these modules, you may require additional information. One source of this information may be the internet. All of the websites can be used to obtain further information to aid your development and for future reference:

Hampshire

Hampshire County Council

www.hants.gov.uk

Hampshire Primary Care Trust

www.hampshirepct.nhs.uk

Hampshire Council Voluntary Youth Services

www.hcvys.info

Alcohol

Alcohol Concern

www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

Know Your Limits

www.knowyourlimits.gov.uk

Local Alcohol Profiles for England

www.nwph.net/alcohol/lape

Drug Treatment

National Treatment Agency

www.nta.nhs.uk

Drug Data

National Drug Treatment Monitoring System

www.ndtms.net

Evidence Base

National Collaborating Centre for Drugs Prevention

www.drugpreventionevidence.info

Drug Treatment Outcomes Research Study

www.dtors.org.uk

National Institute for Health & Clinical Excellence

www.nice.org.uk

Key Web Links

Solvents

Re-Solvents

www.re-solv.org

Education

Drugs Education Forum

www.drugeducationforum.com

Wired for Health

www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk

Hampshire Healthy Schools

www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/healthyschools.htm

Educari Teaching Resources

www.educari.com

Children of drug using parents

ADFAM

www.adfam.org.uk

Drugs & The Law

Release

www.release.org.uk

Young Peoples Websites

Frank drugs website

www.talktofrank.com

RU thinking about it sexual health website

www.trashed.co.uk

Lifebytes health website

www.lifebytes.gov.uk

Key Web Links

Drug Policy & Resources

Drugscope

www.drugscope.org.uk

Home Office drugs website

www.drugs.gov.uk

HIT

www.hit.org.uk

Daily Dose Drugs News

www.dailydose.net

Turning Point

www.turning-point.co.uk

Drink & Drugs Net

www.drinkanddrugs.net

Knowledge of substances, how they are used and their effects.

In the first section of this module, you will cover the following:

- **A-Z of substances**
- **What do substances look like?**
- **What forms do substances come in?**
- **How much do substances cost?**

Definition of ‘substance’

The definition of ‘substance’ to be used in Hampshire, based on DAAT guidance, is as follows;

‘Substance’ is used to refer to any psychotropic substance (capable of affecting the mind – changing the way we feel, think and or behave) including alcohol, tobacco, drugs sold as ‘legal highs’, illegal drugs, illicit use of prescription drugs and volatile substances such as solvents (gases, lighter and other fuel) some plants and fungi (magic mushrooms); over-the-counter and prescribed medicines that are used for recreational rather than medical purposes.

The A-Z of Substances

Using the A to Z below, think of an example of a substance you know about for each letter of the alphabet. You can use a real name or a slang name. Choose these substances based on the Hampshire DAAT definition. If you run out of ideas ask people what they know, ask young people (where appropriate), look them up in a book or visit www.talktofrank.com. Do not worry if you cannot think of an example for each one.

A		N	
B		O	
C		P	
D		Q	
E		R	
F		S	
G		T	
H		U	
I		V	
J		W	
K		X	
L		Y	
M		Z	

Commonly used substances...

The most commonly used substances by children/ young people are tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, amphetamines and ecstasy. National surveys give annual statistics on the patterns and prevalence of young people's use (see www.dfes.gov.uk for further information). Caffeine is rarely mentioned in the statistics, but given that caffeine is present in tea, coffee, soft drinks, confectionary, and medicines then this is also a widely used substance.

Identifying Substances

Below there are 2 substances, using your own knowledge or the following link (www.talktofrank.com) identify the 2 pictures of different substances, then complete the name of the substances, as well as the forms that it is available in, and its price:



Answer

Name:	
In what form is this substance available?	
What is the price of this substance (per stamp) (circle the correct answer)	<p>£1 - £5</p> <p>£6 - £9</p> <p>£10 - £15</p>



Answer

Name:	
In what form is this substance available?	
What is the price of this substance (1/8th of an ounce) (circle the correct answer)	<p>£50</p> <p>£60</p> <p>£70</p>



Answer

Name:	
In what form is this substance available?	
What is the price of this substance (per pill) (circle the correct answer)	<p>£3 - £8</p> <p>£10 - £15</p> <p>£18 - £23</p>



Answer

Name:	
In what form is this substance available?	
What is the price of this substance (per gram) (circle the correct answer)	<p>£1 ></p> <p>£30 - £60</p> <p>£60 - £90</p>

Answer



Name:	
In what form is this substance available?	
What is the price of this substance (per gram) (circle the correct answer)	£10 £20 £30

A collection of various alcoholic beverages including bottles and cans.		Answer
	Name:	
	In what form is this substance available?	

Routes of Use

In this second section of this module - you will cover the following:

- **Routes of Use**
- **How can substances be taken?**
- **What equipment is used to take substances?**

Routes of use

The A-Z exercise highlights that substances come in many different formats e.g. tablet, powder, liquid etc.

The format in which a substance is made or produced influences the way in which it is taken e.g. medicine (liquid) is swallowed. However, other reasons can also influence the route of use, such as;

- **wanting to conceal use**
- **gain a quicker or slower effect**
- **experimentation**
- **other routes being no longer effective or damaged**

Routes of Use - Question 1

Look at the diagram of a body to the right, and think of as many ways as possible that you can get a substance into a body, then compare your thoughts with the possible answers shown below. Select all the correct answers: (tick box)

	anally or vaginally
	eye
	injecting into the muscle
	injecting into under the skin (subcutaneous)
	injecting into veins
	inside mouth and under the tongue (membranes)
	mouth (swallowing)
	Nose and/or mouth (to inhale smoke or vapours)
	Nose septum (membrane between nostrils)

Routes of Use - Question 2

Assuming that a substance is taken via the mouth (to swallow substances to be digested in the stomach), which 3 of the following pieces of equipment could be used:

	cups
	needle and syringe
	food
	straws
	patches

Routes of Use - Question 3

For which reasons would someone choose to take a substance via their mouth?

	to swallow substances to be digested in the stomach
	to inhale smoke or vapours to be taken into the lungs
	for rapid absorption via membranes (gums and under tongue)
	All of the above

Routes of Use - Question 4

Which 9 pieces of equipment listed below can be used to inhale a substance via nose or mouth?

	pipes
	bongs
	hot knives
	syringes
	joints
	plastic bags
	tablets
	foil
	clothes/material
	tabs
	aerosols
	cans

Routes of Use

You have completed Section 2 - Routes of Use.
You should now know the following:

- Routes of use
- How can substances be taken?
- What equipment is used to take substances?

Substance Use Categories

In this third section of this module - you will cover the following:

- How do we class substances (by effect)?
- What are Depressants?
- What are Stimulants?
- What are Hallucinogens?

Substance Use - Introduction

Exercise 1 and 2 highlight the many different types of substances young people can use. Substances can have many slang names. Names can change from one geographical area to another and the names young people use for substances in the same area can be different. It is almost impossible to know all the substances that exist and there are also new ones being made.

What this highlights is the importance of asking the young person what they have used, and if s/he uses slang terms clarify what this is e.g. bush, dope, draw, ganja, grass, = cannabis. Making assumptions can cause problems. For example, the word 'gear' could mean cannabis or heroin. Not checking this out could result in giving wrong advice and information, not assessing needs appropriately etc, plus losing credibility with the young person

Effects of Substance Use

Although it is impossible to know the effects of every substance it is important to know what category they fall into. The effects a young person may experience is influenced by;

- the way the substance acts on the brain and body
- the mind set of the young person
- the setting in which it is taken (who, where etc).

The effects are very subjective, and therefore can vary from individual to individual. For example, if you asked everybody that you work with, or a group of your friends, to drink a pint of lager, do you think they would all experience the same effects?. Some of them may not even want to drink it in the first place (reasons may be health, cultural or religious reasons). Others might sip it and think it vile, may drink it and feel sick, may feel relaxed, or even feel drunk!

Complete the next exercise to test this out.

Reflective exercise

Think of a substance (see Hants DAAT definition) you have taken recently, it can be anything. You do not need to state what it was in this exercise but think about the effects in relation to the following:

Reflective exercise

What effects did you experience the last time you took it, if any?

If you have taken this substance before, do you get the same effects every time and what are they?

If you get different effects on different occasions, identify what might influence this. Is it your mood, or where you are, who you are with, time of day, if used with other substances etc.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the question above.

Substance Categories

Substances generally fall into one or more of the following four main categories;

- **Depressants ('Downers')**
- **Drugs that reduce pain (also central nervous system depressants)**
- **Stimulants ('Uppers')**
- **Hallucinogens - substances that alter perceptual functioning (affect the 5 senses; seeing, hearing, touch, taste, and smell)**

As substances that reduce pain also act as depressants on the brain, this module will include pain reduction substances in the depressants category

Depressants...

such as alcohol, tranquillisers, heroin, methadone and solvents slow down the central nervous system (brain). They can;

- **Relieve tension and anxiety**
- **Promote relaxation**
- **Impair mental and physical functioning e.g. decrease self control, mind and body**
- **Cause drowsiness or induce sleep**
- **Higher doses may result in 'drunken' behaviour or loss of consciousness.**
- **Depressant effects can be increased if more than one depressant substance is taken.**
- **Very large doses can lead to a fatal overdose as the vital systems of the body like breathing are slowed to the point where they stop.**



Stimulants...

...such as amphetamines ('speed'), ecstasy, cocaine, tobacco, anabolic steroids and caffeine stimulate the central nervous system (brain). They can;

- **Increase alertness**
- **Reduce fatigue**
- **Delay sleep**
- **Increase ability to maintain attention and perform physical tasks over a period of time**
- **High doses can cause nervousness and anxiety**
- **Some stimulants may cause paranoid psychosis**



Hallucinogens...

...such as cannabis, LSD and 'magic mushrooms' alter perception: the way you see, hear, feel, smell or touch the world. This can mean that the senses can get all mixed up or changed. They can;

- **Heighten the appreciation of sensory experiences (the senses. These can be good or bad experiences.**
- **Distort the senses e.g. time, colour, sound etc**
- **cause feelings of dissociation (feeling unconnected)**
- **change perception such as insight**
- **Cause anxiety or panic, sometimes severe**



Complex substances

Some substances fall into more than one category; ketamine and ecstasy are two examples. The effects of ketamine are dose related (how much taken at any one time). In low doses (10-75mg) ketamine, acts as a 'hallucinogen'. In contrast large doses (100-250 mg) ketamine acts as a depressant, with very high doses (250 mg+) resulting in unconsciousness.

Cannabis is another substance that causes confusion on how it acts on the body. Research into the effects of cannabis on the brain has shown the two powerful active ingredients THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) and CBD (cannabidiol) produce psychoactive effects by binding with special receptors which are abundant all over the brain and body (www.thegooddrugsguide.co.uk).

The brain makes its own cannabinoid called anandamide which is thought to be involved in pain sensations, memory regulation and the immune system, hence the interest in the medical benefits. However cannabis is mainly taken for relaxation, euphoria, and a general sense of well being, although paranoia, anxiety, and panic can also be experienced as well.

Substance use effects and categories

You have completed Section 3

You should have increased your knowledge of the following:

- **How do we class substances (by effect)**
- **What are Depressants**
- **What are Stimulants**
- **What are Hallucinogens**

Exploring Attitudes

In the fourth section of this module you will have the opportunity to explore your own and other attitudes towards substances and their use.

Exploring Attitudes...

The following statements are examples of most frequently argued points presented by people for or against each statement. It is important to note that these are people's individual opinions not those of the Hampshire DAAT, and there are no right or wrong answers from this exercise. What is your opinion?

1. Everybody uses substances today:

Agree /Disagree

The interpretation of substances is seen as anything that can affect thoughts, feelings and behaviour and this covers a very broad range of things, natural products (tea) and man-made (tablets). People read 'substances' and think of it in its broadest sense, medicines, legal and illegal substances, volatile substances; therefore everybody must use some sort of substance in their daily lives

The key debate in this response is that not EVERYBODY uses substances e.g. babies, children, people for religious, cultural and health reasons.

The following statements are examples of most frequently argued points presented by people for or against each statement. It is important to note that these are people's individual opinions not those of the Hampshire DAAT, and there are no right or wrong answers from this exercise. What is your opinion?

2. People use substances because they enjoy them:

Agree /Disagree

Most people start off perhaps enjoying it, but not always e.g. smoking, but persist because of peer pressure. In the longer term people do not enjoy substance as they become dependent on them, cause problems, or just that have to take substances for health reasons or stay alive. The interpretation of substances is seen as anything that can affect thoughts, feelings and behaviour and this covers a very broad range of things, natural products (tea) and man-made (tablets). People read 'substances' and think of it in its broadest sense, medicines, legal and illegal substances, volatile substances; therefore everybody must use some sort of substance in their daily lives.

The following statements are examples of most frequently argued points presented by people for or against each statement. It is important to note that these are people's individual opinions not those of the Hampshire DAAT, and there are no right or wrong answers from this exercise. What is your opinion?

3. Substance use is a rational choice that young people make:

Agree /Disagree

Young people are viewed to be under too much peer pressure, also age and development age can mean they are not informed or able to make appropriate choices.

Alternatively, be sure to consider the alternative - Young people are informed about substances and make a choice what they use, even if they know the dangers. Adults may not understand young people's decision making but this does not mean it is irrational

4. There are many more substances available to young people today

Agree /Disagree

Technology, both in manufacturing and marketing has resulted in a vast increase in the availability of substances to young people. Substances like Ecstasy come in so many different colours formats etc, it is difficult to track. The police estimate there are between 2000 – 3000 types of ecstasy alone. New substances are also been made, or prescribed medication is having broader appeal outside its original intention e.g. ketamine.

Alternatively, be sure to consider the alternative – Substances have been available since the dawn of time. People are not always aware of the level of substance use through the ages and just think it is worse now. As awareness has increased people think it is more prevalent. Also substances come and go in popularity, so substances used in the 60's and 70's may not be popular now.

5. Illegal substances are more harmful to people than legal ones.

Agree /Disagree

Illegal substances can cause harm just like legal ones, but the potential for harm is greater because these substances are often impure, no-one knows the dose when taking them, many can cause bad reactions and overdose or trigger mental health problems.

Alternatively, be sure to consider the alternative– Legal substances kill more people than illegal ones, particularly alcohol and tobacco. They impact on more people than illegal ones. Alcohol is also linked to many other forms of harms such as violence, drink driving, impact on children and families, health problems, financial problems, both for individuals and society

6. We need to protect young people from the dangers of substances

Agree /Disagree

As responsible adults we should be in the business of protecting young people from the dangers of substances. However we should be educating them as part of this process not removing them or being over protective. By educating them we can inform them of the dangers.

Alternatively, be sure to consider the alternative – We cannot protect young people from the dangers completely it would be impossible and unrealistic. What we need to do is raise their awareness, educate them of the dangers, look at both the positives and negatives of substances and their use, not wrap them in cotton wool.

7. The government should legalise all substances

Agree /Disagree

To be able to tax you must have to legalise first. Legalising all substances would help get rid of the criminal element, control supply, purity etc. It would also allow restriction of sales to certain ages and quantities sold. Legalising would mean that all substances could be taxed, therefore revenue could be used to fund those needing treatment. Legalising substances could take away the appeal for young people and they would stop using them.

Alternatively, be sure to consider the alternative - We already have so many problems with legal substances like prescribed medication, alcohol, tobacco etc, to add more would cause even more problems. If alcohol had just been invented it would be banned straight away given what we know about the effects. Legalising drugs is condoning use, and we should be discouraging this approach.

8. Cannabis should be available to buy over the counter.

Agree /Disagree

Cannabis can cause significant mental health problems, sometimes irreversible. To allow it to be bought over the counter would condone use of another potentially harmful substance.

There would also still be a black market for this substance.

Alternatively, be sure to consider the alternative - As cannabis can have benefits for certain medical conditions like MS, then it should be available to buy over the counter like in Boots. If cannabis, could be bought in a shop it can be controlled in terms of who it is sold to, age restrictions can be put in place, quantities sold, etc. Advice about its use can also be given as with the sale of medications.

You have now completed the fourth section of this module. You should now have explored your own and other attitudes towards substances and their use and you should be able to see how other people's attitudes and your own may differ in many ways, and in many situations

Module 1 - Key Learning Points

Having completed this module, you should consider the following key learning points and think about how to address them within your role:

- **Where a young person talks about substances or discloses their use, always check any slang or jargon even if you think you know what it is**
- **Ask the young person how they use this substance (route and equipment) as this can help identify any potential risks. For example, a young person sniffing glue from a crisp packet with a group of friends is different to a young person enclosing their face or body in a bin-liner and using alone**
- **Ask the young person to describe the effects of the substance they have taken, rather than make assumptions - remember this is a very subjective experience. Also the young person may not have taken what they think they have!**
- **Think about what category the substance or substances are in, so that risk assessment, and appropriate advice and information can be given. For example, are they taking prescribed medication and drinking as well?**

Well Done!

Thank you for completing Module 1 of the Young People's Basic Substance Awareness Course. You should now have an understanding of the importance of substance knowledge -

We hope that you have enjoyed this module and that it has achieved its aims. We would appreciate it if you would spend a few minutes to provide us with some feedback to help us improve our services:

[Feedback Form](#)

Please forward pages 9 – 12 and 15 & 16, along with your name, job title and address to the address below and we will forward you a certificate:

Hampshire DAAT, Capitol House, 12-13 Bridge Street, Winchester, SO23 OHL