

Theme 1: Values and drugs

Suggested content

Teacher notes

My values

Understanding values

- definition of values
- influences on values about drugs (e.g. family, friends, media, acquaintances, role models, education, personal goals, culture, environment, religion)

Values underpin behaviours and attitudes. Decisions which individuals make about health behaviour are founded, not just on the knowledge they have gained, but also on the values they hold to be important. The lifestyle which a person leads is influenced by his or her values.

It is important that students understand how values influence behaviour and attitudes, and that opportunities are provided for students to be involved in activities that allow them to explore and reflect on issues.

Changing values about drug use

- from primary school to high school
- in Years 11-12
- at home
- at school
- in the community

Values change because of such factors as experiences, information available, family, friends, social networks, acquaintances and media. Students should be able to identify that attitudes and values may change over time and that there will be different influences at different stages of their life.

My values (continued)

Personal values about drug-related issues

- binge drinking
- drug use within a friendship group
- polydrug use
- alcohol and driving
- drugs and driving

Friendship networks are often the means by which young people are introduced to drug use (although the family may play a role in some cases). The drug user is not necessarily a passive victim. Some research focuses on “friendship networks” as the forum for the shaping of attitudes and behaviours, as young people influence, and are influenced by, each other. The process of socialisation assumes that, like adults, young people will form friendship networks on the basis of personal affinity or attraction. There will then be a tendency to reinforce similar attitudes and behaviours.

Conflicting values

Situations when personal values conflict with others

- identifying conflict
- recognising and acknowledging others’ values
- resolving conflict

An individual’s values may not always coincide with the main values of society, family or social groups. For those who have different values, this can cause conflict. It is important for students to have the opportunity to develop skills in managing these conflicts, should they arise.