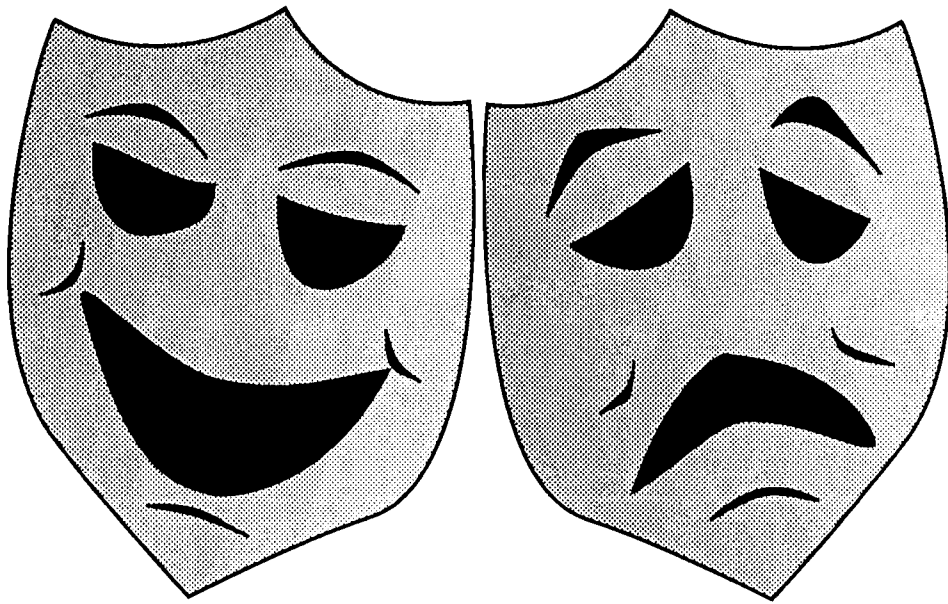


Section 2



Attitudes to drugs

Section 2: Attitudes to drugs

Problem:

Attitudes to drugs, drug use and drug users vary greatly. Cultural variations, class differences, gender, race, age and religion all affect our attitudes to drugs. But if we are not aware of our own attitudes, and the attitudes of others, towards drugs, there is less chance of being an effective influence to bring about a reduction in harmful drug use. Greater self awareness and awareness of others can be a powerful way of bringing about change in behaviour.

Number	Title	Purpose	What To Do	Use with Young People
7	The opinion game	To raise awareness and challenge attitudes to a range of drugs issues.	Card game on statements of opinion.	✓
8	The ranking game	To raise awareness and challenge perceptions about drug use.	Card game on perceptions about drug use (eg. what is socially acceptable).	✓
9	Drugs and male/female assumptions	To raise awareness of gender issues in drug use.	Completing unfinished sentences to establish stereotypes.	✓
10	Drugs, culture and religion	To raise awareness of different cultural and religious attitudes to drugs.	Small group discussion to identify different attitudes, based on participants' experience. Discussion of implications for practice.	

Activity 7:**The Opinion Game****Purpose**

To raise awareness and challenge different people's attitudes to a range of drug issues.

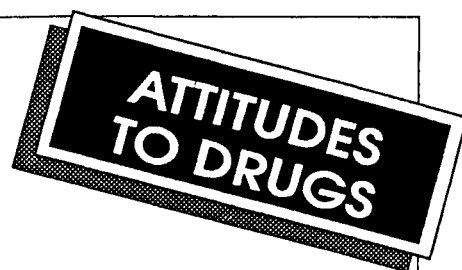
What To Do

1. Work in small groups (5/6 people in a group). Give each group a set of opinion cards (Handout 15). You can use these statements and/or make up your own to go with them.
2. Each person in the group picks an opinion card off the pile and reads it out loud and places the card down on a point on an imaginary line between Agree and Disagree that represents their view, giving their reasons.
3. Other members of the group now say whether they support where the card lies or think that it should be moved, giving their reasons.
4. When everyone has spoken, the original person chooses whether to move the card or leave it where it is, giving their reasons.
5. The next person should pick up the next card and repeat the process.

A more active version of this is to clear the chairs to one side with two chairs at either end of the room, one labelled agree and the other disagree. Participants must then stand where they want on an imaginary line between the two chairs and say why. The rest of the group should say whether they agree with this and put themselves somewhere on that line.

Handout 15

Opinion cards

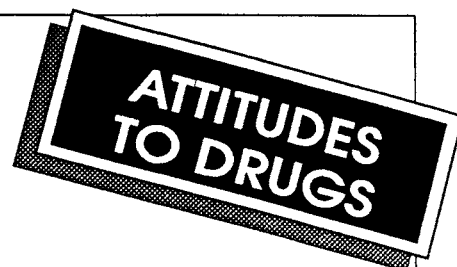


MARIJUANA SHOULD BE LEGALISED	SOME PEOPLE TAKE DRUGS BECAUSE OF POVERTY, DEPRESSION AND LACK OF HOPE
ALL ALCOHOL ADVERTISING SHOULD BE BANNED	USING DRUGS FOR RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES IS O.K.
DRUG TRAFFICKERS SHOULD BE KILLED	ALCOHOL SHOULD BE SEEN AS A 'HARD' DRUG BECAUSE OF ITS HUGE IMPACT ON MOST COMMUNITIES
CIGARETTE SMOKING SHOULD BE MADE ILLEGAL	DRINKING ALCOHOL IN MODERATION IS O.K.
HEROIN DEPENDENTS SHOULD BE MADE TO DO TWO YEARS IN PRISON	TAKING COCAINE IN MODERATION IS O.K.
IT IS NONSENSE TO TRY TO CREATE A DRUG-FREE SOCIETY	MANY 'ANTI-DRUGS' GOVERNMENTS ARE HYPOCRITICAL BECAUSE THEY ALSO MAKE MONEY OUT OF THE SALE OF DRUGS
PEOPLE WHO ARE DEPENDENT ON DRUGS HAVE NO-ONE BUT THEMSELVES TO BLAME	ONE IMPORTANT WAY TO STOP THE SUPPLY OF DRUGS IS TO TACKLE POLICE AND POLITICAL CORRUPTION



Handout 15 (continued)

Opinion cards



TAKING DRUGS IS NATURAL IN MOST SOCIETIES	PUBLIC CAMPAIGNS AIMED AT DRUG USERS SHOULD USE IMAGES AND LANGUAGE THEY CAN IDENTIFY WITH
WE SHOULD AIM TO MINIMISE THE HARM THAT DRUGS CAN DO TO PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES RATHER THAN SIMPLY TRY TO STOP DRUGS BEING USED	DRUG EDUCATION AND DRUG PREVENTION WORK SHOULD NOT BE CARRIED OUT IN ISOLATION FROM OTHER SOCIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES
THE BEST PEOPLE TO TALK TO YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT DRUG USE ARE YOUNG PEOPLE THEMSELVES	PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS LIKE HEROIN AND COCAINE DESERVE PUNISHMENT, NOT HELP
SOME POLITICIANS ARE 'ANTI-DRUG' TO WIN VOTES	PEOPLE SHOULD BE FREE TO TAKE WHATEVER DRUGS THEY WANT TO
TACKLING THE SPREAD OF AIDS IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN REDUCING DRUG USE	THE PEOPLE WHO BENEFIT FROM HEROIN ARE THE PRODUCERS AND PUSHERS SO THEY SHOULD BE PUNISHED AS SEVERELY AS POSSIBLE
DRUG USERS ARE OFTEN BLAMED FOR THEIR HABIT WHEN THE FAULT REALLY LIES ELSEWHERE (e.g. SPONSORED SPORTS EVENTS; LAGER ADVERTS AIMED AT YOUNG PEOPLE)	TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF AIDS AND OTHER DISEASES, DRUG USERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO FREELY EXCHANGE THEIR DIRTY NEEDLES AND SYRINGES FOR CLEAN ONES
POLICE FORCES SOMETIMES USE NATIONAL DRUG USE AS A REASON FOR UNJUSTIFIED HARRASSMENT OF MINORITY GROUPS	THE PEOPLE WHO BENEFIT FROM CIGARETTE SMOKING ARE THE TOBACCO COMPANIES SO THEY SHOULD BE PUNISHED AS SEVERELY AS POSSIBLE



Activity 8:

The Ranking Game

Purpose

To raise awareness and challenge different people's perceptions about drug use.

What To Do

1. The basic idea is for a person to lay out the drug name cards (Handout 14) in a particular order according to an instruction. For example, 'Lay them out from most socially acceptable to least socially acceptable'.

- The individual has to justify why they have put them in that order.
- Others can then give their opinion and try to persuade the person to change the order.
- This will lead to a lot of discussion about the drugs—facts and opinions. There is not necessarily a 'right' answer.

(A variation would be to allow the group to write the names of drugs on to the cards themselves.)

2. The next person can try to put the drugs into a different order using a different criteria. For example, "Lay out the cards from most damaging to the individual to least damaging to the individual". Ideally each person should have a chance to put them into a rank order of some sort. Other rankings could include:

- most damaging to the community as a whole—least damaging to the community as a whole.
- most important to tackle as a problem—least important to tackle as a problem.
- most profit making—least profit making.
- upper-class drugs—middle-class drugs—working-class drugs;
- on the increase—on the decrease.

Activity 9: Drugs and Male/Female assumptions

Purpose

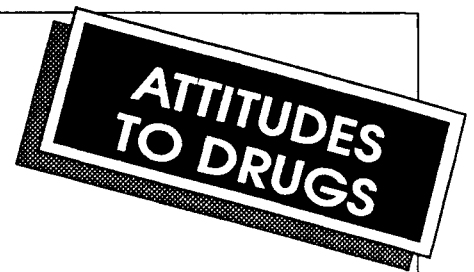
To encourage people to think through the gender assumptions that they make about drug usage. Such assumptions obviously affect the way in which they relate to drug users.

What To Do

1. Handout 16 is a list of unfinished sentences.
2. Ask people to complete these sentences with their first reactions about the use of drugs by men and women.
3. You may wish to uncover or read these statements one at a time in order to encourage such instant reaction.
4. When completed, ask people to read out their responses and discuss the implications for their work.

Handout 16

Unfinished sentences



If I saw a table in a pub with wine, beer and whisky glasses on it, I would assume that the men drank...
and the women drank...

It is only acceptable for a women to get drunk when...

No man in his right mind would order a...

It is mainly men who buy...

Tranquillisers are the only way in which most...

Going to the known club/pub/hotel in the evening is one of the ways in which...

Injecting heroin spoils how attractive you are, so women...



Activity 10:

Drugs, culture and religion

Purpose

To raise awareness different cultural and religious attitudes to drug use.

What To Do

1. Explain to the group that they will be analysing the different cultural and religious attitudes to drug use that exist within their own country(ies). Some points you could make in this introduction are:

History is full of the, sometimes disastrous, consequences of 'borrowing' drug-related customs from one culture to another. The introduction of alcohol by European settlers to the North American Indians and Inuits (Eskimoese) are two well-known historical examples.

Members of majority cultures in a country often hold stereotypes about minority groups that are neither accurate nor helpful.

Religious belief is perhaps as important as race in respect of attitudes and customs around intoxication. Many religions offer instructions or guidelines about the use of alcohol and other drugs—either prohibiting alcohol and other intoxicants completely, or allowing them to be used only on special occasions, such as during religious ceremonies.

2. To get the group thinking about what we mean by cultural or religious groupings, ask people in pairs to briefly interview each other to find out the cultural groupings to which they belong.

Some questions to work through might be:

- Do you have a particular religious faith?
- What music do you identify with most?
- What social class would you describe yourself as?

3. In the large group, brainstorm a list of the cultural or religious groupings that the group know exist in their country(ies).

eg

- | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|------------|
| • Youth cultures | • Middle Class | • White |
| • Elders | • Working Class | • Colonial |
| • Rastafarianism | • Muslim | • European |
| • Asian | • Upper Class | • Hindu |

4. Ask each participant to choose three items from the list which combine to define the culture they identify with, for example, White, Female, Middle Class or Asian, Male, Muslim. Each person should then write each of the three relevant cultural or religious descriptions on separate cards, and pin the three cards to their clothing.
5. Divide the group into smaller groups, as follows:
 - a) Ask the participants to 'mill around' for a short time, studying each other's cards.
 - b) Ask each person to find a partner who shares the most number of common cultural/religious identities. In a multi-cultural group, it is possible that some people will find this difficult or impossible. You should explain that this will not hinder the exercise.

- c) Each pair should then remove the cards describing the cultural groups they do not share, so that each person is left with only those cards which describe the cultural or religious identities they have in common.
 - d) Each pair then tries to find another pair or individual who shares the most cultural identities with them.
 - e) At this stage, there will be a number of groups of three or four people, each of whom share at least one cultural or religious identity.
 - f) There may be a number of people left who share no cultural/religious identities with each other. These can be grouped together to form a 'multi-cultural' group. Explain to this group that they should decide on two of the identities 'owned' by the group members, which they would be prepared to discuss.
 - g) Each of the other groups should now identify one cultural/religious identity they have in common, and one other identity they feel they know something about.
 - h) At this point, you should check back in the large group that there is a wide spread of cultures or religions to work on in the different groups.
6. Ask each group to discuss the same four drugs. You should choose a selection of drugs you think highlight the most differences among the 'cultures' being looked at in the small groups. Ask each group to say what their two chosen cultures' attitudes are to each of the drugs by writing their responses to the questions on Handout 17 for each drug, on a sheet of flipchart paper.
 7. Pin up the flipcharts so that the charts for each drug are grouped together. Ask everyone to read all the charts and then discuss the different cultural attitudes to different drugs and drug use.
 8. Hold a debate with people speaking for and against the view that:

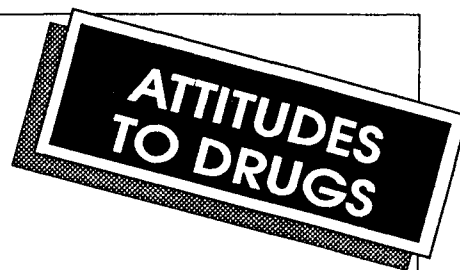
"Actions to reduce the harmful use of drugs should respect different cultural and religious values within a society."

or

Ask the group to do further research on particular cultural/religious attitudes to drug use where ignorance or stereotypes have hindered learning and understanding in the group.

Handout 17:

Drugs, culture and religion



Complete the following questions on a separate sheet of flipchart paper for each drug being discussed. You should respond to each question for your own culture, and another culture you feel you know something about:

1. Do they approve or disapprove of its use for
 - a) medical purposes?
 - b) social/recreational purposes?
2. Why do they hold that view?
3. Given their cultural/religious perspective, what controls over its use would they like to see, and why?
4. What views do they hold about other cultures' attitudes to drugs?

Example:

Drug:		
Question	My Culture	Other Culture
1. a)		
1. b)		
2.		
3.		
4.		

