

## Purpose of the Lesson

The purpose of this lesson is for students to take a closer look at why some teens use drugs. Understanding the reason *why* will help formulate alternatives to substance abuse to stay drug-free. Students will look at influences and examine how positive personal values, beliefs and goals for their future can help them lead a drug-free lifestyle. This lesson will explore the power of personal actions to help avoid substance abuse behaviors. Students will leave this lesson with a visual reminder of why they want to stay drug-free for their lifetime.

## National Health Education Standards

### Standard 1: Comprehending Concepts

*Performance Indicator 1.8.6: Determine reasons and situations that lead to the use of drugs.*

### Standard 2: Analyzing Influences

*Performance Indicator 2.8.2: Explain how the perceptions of norms influence healthy and unhealthy drug use practices and behaviors.*

*Performance Indicator 2.8.3: Explain how social expectations influence healthy and unhealthy drug use practices and behaviors.*

*Performance Indicator 2.8.4: Explain how personal values and beliefs influence drug use practices and behaviors.*

*Performance Indicator 2.8.7: Analyze how relevant influences of school and community affect drug use practices and behaviors.*

*Performance Indicator 2.8.9: Analyze how relevant influence of peers affect drug use practices and behaviors.*

## Healthy Behavior Outcome (HBO)

*Avoid experimentation with alcohol and other drugs.*

## Lesson Objectives

*Students will be able to:*

Objective	Assessment
1. Explain reasons some teens turn to substance abuse and give an alternative to substance abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>“Instead of Drugs I Choose...” reflection sheet and Person Template</li></ul>
2. Identify influences including norms, family, community, peers, personal values, media that affect substance abuse practices and behaviors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>“Instead of Drugs I Choose...” reflection sheet and Person Template</li></ul>
3. Create a visual explaining their personal interests, goals and values that will motivate them to avoid substance abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Person Template</li></ul>

**Time:** 40-45 minutes

## Materials

### *Assessments and Worksheets*

- “Instead of Drugs I Choose...” reflection sheet ([Attachment 1](#)); Person Template ([Attachment 2](#))

### *Resources*

- PowerPoint: G7, L1 Reasons for Substance Abuse
- Markers, colored pencils, (magazines, glue, and scissors can be used too)

## References

National Institute on Drug Abuse: [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)

## Introduction

Today we are going to look at the reasons why some students choose to abuse drugs. After we examine these reasons, we are going to look at the ways our personal values, beliefs and goals can influence our choices in the future to live a drug-free lifestyle. By the time you leave class today, you are going to have a visual of all of the healthy choices you can make to have a bright and successful future.

## Teaching Steps

- Bell Ringer (question for students to answer at the start of the lesson): Why do you think some teens abuse drugs?
  - o Have students report out their answers.
  - o Possible answers: to fit in, boredom, curious, their friends use, etc.
  - o What is substance abuse?
    - Excessive use of a drug or use of a drug without a medical justification.
    - Remember our medication safety principles:
      1. Only take medicine with the help of trusted adult
      2. Never share or take someone else’s medicine.
      3. Follow directions - only take the medicine for the intended purpose and the correct amount.
      4. Store medicines out of reach of children.
      5. If it is unhealthy, unsafe, or you’re unsure – Don’t Touch! Don’t Taste! Don’t Take! Tell a Trusted Adult.

**Activity 1: Why teens use drugs?**

- Refer to the PowerPoint slides and review the reasons why some teens use.
  - **Take students through the five reasons why some teens turn to substance abuse (NIDA):**
    1. **To fit in:** Some teens use drugs “because others are doing it”— or they *think* others are doing it—and they fear not being accepted in a social circle that includes drug-using peers.
      - **Identify Peer Norms:** A majority of teens are not abusing drugs
      - **Check out this statistic:**

**STUDENTS REPORT LOWEST RATES  
SINCE START OF THE SURVEY**

Across all grades, past-year use of inhalants, heroin, methamphetamine, alcohol, cigarettes, and synthetic cannabinoids are at their lowest by many measures.



[www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)



National Institute  
on Drug Abuse

2. **To feel good:** Abused drugs interact with the neurochemistry of the brain to produce feelings of pleasure. The intensity of this euphoria differs by the type of drug and how it is used.
  3. **To feel better:** Using drugs may be an attempt to lessen their feelings, escape or forget. Stress plays a significant role in starting and/or continuing substance abuse.
  4. **To do better:** Our society is very competitive and the pressure to perform athletically and academically can be intense. Some adolescents may turn to substances like illegal or prescription drugs because they think those substances can enhance or improve performance.
  5. **To experiment:** Adolescents are often motivated to seek new experiences, particularly those they perceive as thrilling or daring.
- **What are the consequences of substance abuse?**
    - What are the consequences on your physical, social and emotional health?
    - Brainstorm as a class a list of possible negative consequences of drug abuse.
  - Pass out the “Instead of Drugs I Choose” worksheet ([Attachment 1](#))
    - For each one of the five reasons, students will list two or three personal alternatives to substance abuse based on their values, goals and beliefs.
    - Give students 10 minutes to complete the worksheet.
    - Have students report out answers.

## Activity 2: Student Project

- **Project Directions:** Now that you have identified what you believe in and the goals you have for the future, you are going to create a visual to help keep these goals and beliefs a priority when it comes to decisions about substance abuse. You are going to create a person who reflects what you value and how those values lead you to make healthy decisions when it comes to substance abuse.

### Here are the steps:

1. Cut out the “person” template.
  2. Divide the body into four sections.
  3. For each section, write one reason some teens turn to substance abuse in small writing (to experiment, fit in, feel good, etc.).
  4. Then write your alternate or “Instead of” for each category.
  5. In the center of the body, use words or draw pictures and/or graphics to explain the reason(s) you want to be drug-free. Your reason(s) should reflect your values, beliefs and goals.
  6. Be creative and have fun!
- Pass out the “person” template and art supplies for students to work on their project for the remainder of the class period.

## Closure

Through this lesson, students identified reasons why some teens use drugs. This guided their description of goals, values and beliefs important to them and their decisions about substance abuse. This lesson provided the opportunity for students to reflect personally on the goals they want to accomplish and how these goals can help them stay drug-free in the future.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Instead of Drugs I Choose...

**Directions:** Now that we know the five common reasons why some teenagers may abuse prescription and other drugs, let's look at your values, beliefs and goals when it comes to these five factors.

For each reason below, think of a healthy alternative based on what you believe in and goals you have for the future to keep you away from drugs. Provide 1-2 alternatives for each reason stated below.

**Example:**

<b>To Experiment</b>	<i>My goals, values &amp; beliefs...</i> I could pick up a new hobby or sport
----------------------	--

<b>To Fit In</b>	Instead of drugs, I will....
<b>To Feel Good or Feel Better</b>	Instead of drugs, I will....
<b>To Do Better</b>	Instead of drugs, I will....
<b>To Experiment</b>	Instead of drugs, I will....

## Instead of Drugs I Choose...

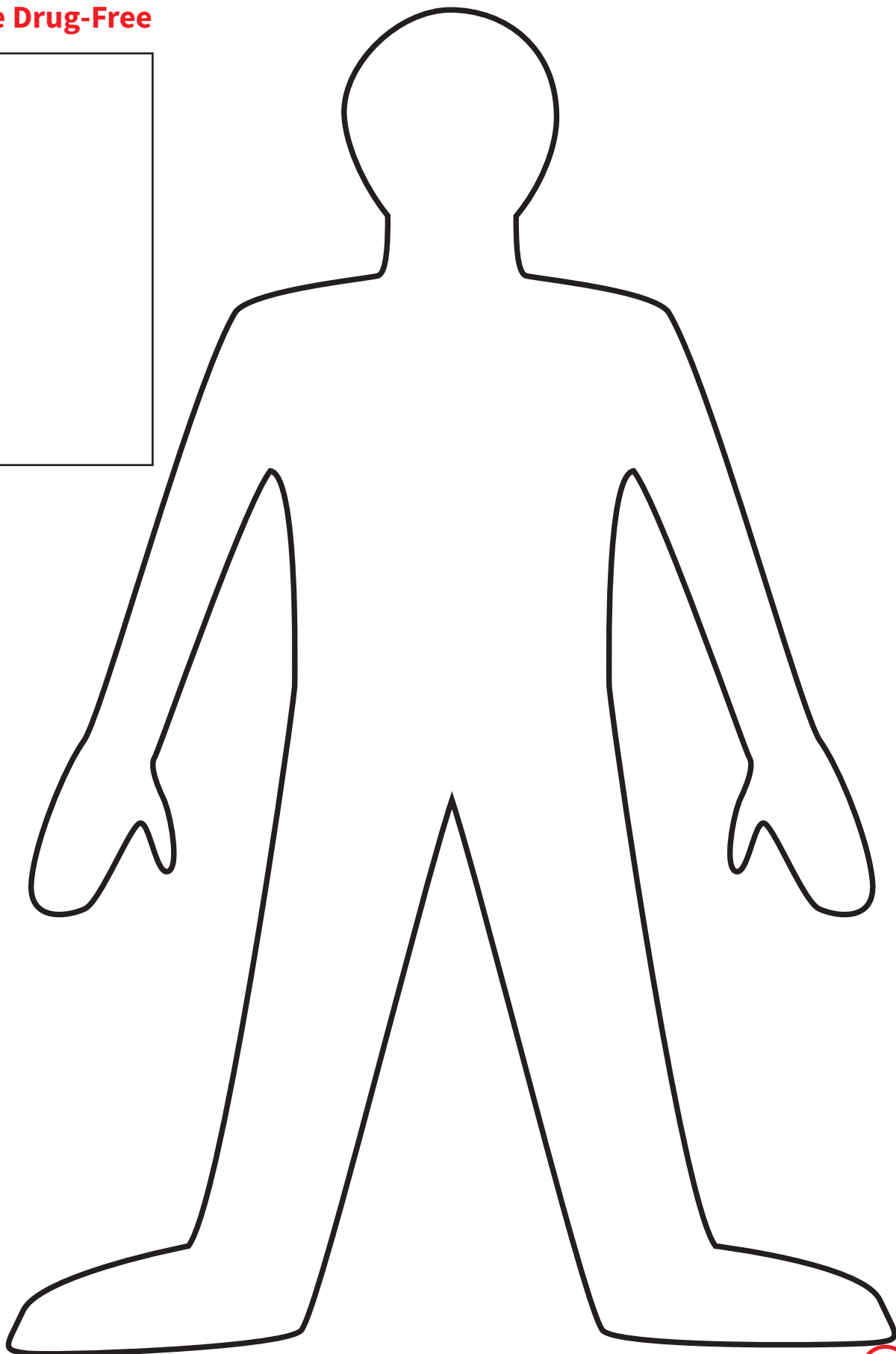
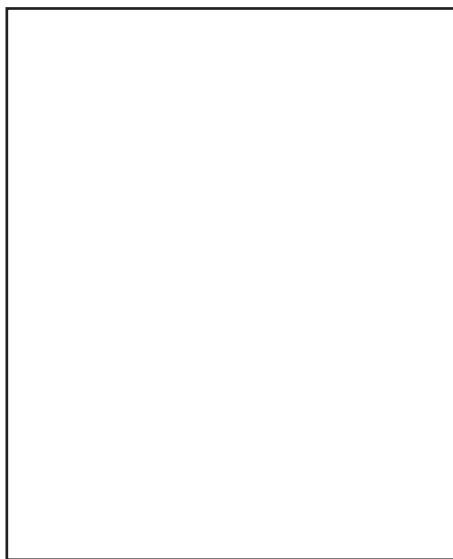
**Project Directions:** Now that you have identified what you believe in and the goals you have for the future, you are going to create a visual to help keep these goals and beliefs a priority when it comes to decisions about substance abuse. You are going to create a person who reflects what you value and how those values lead you to make healthy decisions when it comes to substance abuse.

### Here are the steps:

1. Cut out the “person” template.
2. Divide the body into four sections.
3. For each section, in small writing, give one reason some teens turn to substance abuse (to experiment, fit in, feel good, etc.).
4. Then write your alternate or “instead of” for each category.
5. In the center of the body, use words or draw pictures and/or graphics to explain the reason(s) you want to be drug-free. Your reason(s) should reflect your values, beliefs and goals.
6. Be creative and have fun!

**Use the space below to brainstorm some ideas:**

## Reasons to be Drug-Free



## Instead of Drugs Rubric

Objective	3	2	1
<b>REASONS TEENS TURN TO DRUGS</b>	Identifies a personally relevant reason using your values, beliefs and goals that will prevent you from using drugs for that specific reason	Identifies at least one reason for each of the four sections.	Does not identify an appropriate reason for each of the four sections.
<b>PROJECT</b>	Cuts the person out and divides the person into four sections. Includes four sections and demonstrates creativity to communicate the reasons.	Cuts the person out and divides the person into four sections and includes the reasons.	Does not cut out the person template or identify the four sections and include the reasons.