

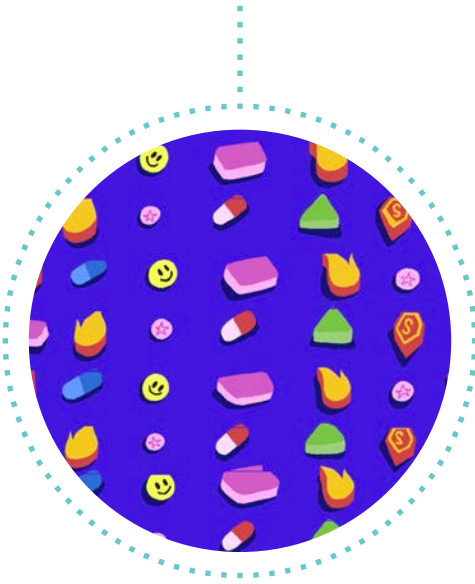
ELEMENTARY  
AND MIDDLE  
SCHOOL

# TOPIC SERIES ACTIVITY

Stimulants



# ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



## Stimulants

### Overview

During this activity, students will identify stimulant types and their impact on the brain and the body. To support students in developing confidence in avoiding health risks, students will view the DEA Operation Prevention Stimulants video and work collaboratively to create refusal skits. Students will research refusal strategies and work with their team to develop skits that highlight specific strategies used to avoid taking part in risky behaviors such as drug use.

### Modifications

Please note that all activities can be adjusted to accommodate both a face to face and a virtual learning experience.

### Grade Level

Grades 3–8

### Activity Duration

30–45 minutes

### Objectives

Students will:

- Create refusal skits that highlight strategies for avoiding health risks like the use of stimulants.
- Develop questions that help engage in learning about stimulants.

### Materials

- DEA Operation Prevention: Stimulants Video
- Stimulant Fact Sheet
- Question Starter Handout
- Refusal Strategy Page 1-2 Handout

# HEALTH STANDARDS

## National Health Standards:

- 4.5.2 Demonstrate refusal skills that avoid or reduce health risks.
- 1.8.1 Analyze the relationship between healthy behaviors and personal health.
- 5.5.6 Describe the outcomes of a health-related decision.
- 8.5.1 Express opinions and give accurate information about health issues.

## ELA Common Core State Standards

- SL.6.6 Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
- SL.5.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- W.5.2.D Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

# ENGAGE

- Begin the activity by showing the class the fact sheet on stimulants; it can either be distributed or projected on the board
- Distribute one *Question Starter Strip* to each student. Direct students to use their question starter to create a question about stimulants from information found in the chart. As students finish writing their questions, direct students to pass their strip to the person beside them, and create a new question.
- This process can be repeated once more, or as many times as you see fit.

**NOTE:** for younger students, it may be helpful to set a direction for passing the questions as

well as leading a group read-through of the handout to help build context for reading.

- As students finish using their question starter strips, provide them with the chance to collaborate by organizing themselves into groups of three. As students discuss their questions, ask the groups to select their three most important questions. During this time, students should be discussing their questions and why the final questions they write are the most important.
- Using chart paper or a whiteboard, invite student groups to share their three priority questions. When finished, the class should have several important questions they want to find answers to about stimulants.

# INVESTIGATE AND VIEW

- After you have collected student questions, post them around the room so that they are visible to all. Tell students that they are about to watch a quick video that will help them further investigate stimulants.
- Show the DEA Operation Prevention Video on stimulants and remind students that as they watch the video, they should be considering answers to the starter questions they posted as a class. Note for students that as they watch, they may not find all the answers and may even have more questions!
- After the video is complete, hold a class discussion to determine which questions they have found answers for and which still need to be researched. Also, invite students to share other questions that have come to mind after they have seen the video.
- Some guiding questions for students could include:

- What are the types of stimulants?

- Why might someone want to try them?
- What should you do if offered stimulants?

- To help clarify misconceptions for students, it may be helpful to explain to students that both caffeine and nicotine are legal stimulants that effect the brain and body in similar ways. To help students understand more about caffeine and nicotine, you can visit <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/>
- Next, distribute the *Refusal Strategies Page 1–2* handout to each student. Explain to students that there are some specific strategies they can use if ever offered stimulants or other drugs.
- Allow students time to review the list of strategies, take a few moments to review each one with students before moving on.

# APPLY

- Next, explain to students that they are now going to use page 2 of their handout to create a short skit highlighting how to use the refusal strategies.
- Divide students into small groups: direct students to turn their handouts over to the backside. When students are in groups, assign each group a refusal strategy to write out. Review with students that they are going to be creating short skits that demonstrate the refusal strategy assigned and that the skits should be written to include information that has been learned from the previous activities.
- As students are working on their skits, ensure that each group has an assigned strategy and that they have a clear understanding of how stimulants impact the brain and the body.
- Finally, provide students with the opportunity to act out their skits for the class.

# STIMULANTS FACT SHEET

## How do people use and misuse prescription stimulants?

Most prescription stimulants come in tablet, capsule, or liquid form, which a person takes by mouth. Some common prescription stimulants include Adderall,<sup>®</sup> Ritalin,<sup>®</sup> and Concerta.<sup>®</sup> While doctors can prescribe stimulants for adolescents who need them for health reasons, they can be misused in several ways. Misuse of a prescription stimulant means:

- taking medicine in a way or dose other than prescribed
- taking someone else's medicine
- taking medicine only for the effect it causes—to get high

## How do prescription stimulants affect the brain and body?

Prescription stimulants increase the activity of the brain chemicals *dopamine* and *norepinephrine*. Dopamine is involved in the reinforcement of rewarding behaviors. Norepinephrine affects blood vessels, blood pressure and heart rate, blood sugar, and breathing.

## QUESTION STARTER STRIPS

Why...?

What are the reasons...?

What if...?

What is the purpose of...?

What would change if...?

What if we knew...?

Suppose that...?

# REFUSAL STRATEGIES

## HANDOUT PART 1



### 1. Say "NO THANKS."

The easiest but some forget to try it. This often works when you are faced with friendly or teasing pressure.



### 2. Give a Reason, Fact or Excuse.

The excuse needs to get you away from the person or situation. Practice an excuse so that you won't hesitate and will sound confident. Have a code word to use with your parents. Text them the word and have them call to say you need to come home.

"My mom just called. Sorry. I gotta go. Something's going on at home".

"My parents would ground me for life"

"I forgot that I have a doctor's appt. this afternoon"

"I already lost my phone privileges. If they find me doing this stuff I won't be able to go anywhere for a month!"



### 3. Walk Away.

One of the most effective refusal skills is just too walk away. You may feel obligated to stand and face "the enemy" but you need to just leave. Say no and walk away while saying it.



### 4. Change the Subject.

You can offer another alternative activity: "No. Let's go play ball instead" or "Let's go get a snack at my house. I'm hungry." or "I wanted to play my Xbox this afternoon"



### 5. Use Humor.

"No thanks. This stuff stunts my growth. I want to be tall to play ball!"

"Man, I need all the brain cells I can get. No thanks."

"Pot makes you stupid and gives you yellow teeth..I'll pass."



### 6. Broken Record or Repeated Refusal.

Keep saying "no" over and over again. It will buy you some time to use another refusal technique or be an annoyance.



### 7. Cold Shoulder or Ignore.

Avoid directly confronting the person. Turn your shoulder and talk to someone else or just ignore them like you don't hear them.



### 8. Avoid the Situation.

Common sense tells you the places and times where there may be problems with peer pressure. Avoid these situations.



### 9. Strength in numbers.

The truth is simple. If you surround yourself with friends that make good choices then you will too. The opposite is true as well. One of your most important choices you can make is the choice of your friends. Choose to hang out with non-users.

<https://www.poehealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/RefusalSkills WEBPDF-1.pdf>



# REFUSAL STRATEGY

## HANDOUT PART 2

### Scenario #1

Please write the name of your refusal strategy here: \_\_\_\_\_

When you write your skit, keep these helpful ideas in mind

- Make sure the name of the drug is in your skit
- Make sure your skit is written in a way that your classmates can understand
- Be sure that your classmates can identify which refusal strategy you are using
- Remember that all group members need to have an active part in the skit.

Script: