



Manitoba Addictions Awareness Week

HOW DO I DECIDE?

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

In our present society, it's a reality that every person will be faced with a decision about whether to drink alcohol, use other drugs, or gamble. This decision is up to each individual and that person will base this decision on his/her values, past experiences, and outside messages. Messages about alcohol, other drugs, and gambling can come from many sources and can often contradict one another. It is often very difficult to make decisions based on your own individual needs and personality, especially if the decision goes against what other people are doing or want you to do. Self responsibility is the key to meeting your needs and this requires you to sort through all of the information that may influence you choices. This activity has you examine the messages that you receive regarding alcohol, other drugs, and gambling from various sources and how they might influence your decision making.

Materials

- "How Do I Decide?" worksheet for each participant
- Pens/pencils

Instructions

- Begin with a large group discussion focusing on the following questions and ideas:
 - Who is responsible for a person's health and taking care of us? (self-responsibility)
 - Sometimes it seems like we are always being told what we should be doing and what will happen if we don't follow the advice. How do people decide what to do with this advice/direction?
 - Where do the messages about what you "should" do come from?
 - When it comes to alcohol, other drugs, and gambling, there are lots of different messages. You're going to be asked to take a examine some of these messages.
- Distribute worksheets to participants and give them about 15-20 minutes to complete.
- Have participants hand in sheets without their names written on them. Re-distribute the worksheets throughout the class for discussion. This protects the identity of participants and may help them be more honest during the discussion.
- Keep a group tally on the board for who has the most influence over people decisions about alcohol, other drugs, or gambling.

Debriefing Questions

1. What source seems to have the most influence over the people in this group? Why?
2. Do you think influences change depending on a person's age?
3. How does it feel when you go against the messages of your parents/guardians?
4. How does it feel when you go against the messages of your friends?
5. How have you developed your own messages about alcohol, other drugs, and gambling?

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HOW DO I DECIDE WORKSHEET

In the chart below fill in the boxes by writing an example of some of the messages you have heard from each source regarding the topic.

SOURCE	Alcohol	Marijuana	Tobacco	Cocaine	Crystal meth	Gambling
Best friend						
Parent/ Guardian						
Other friends						
Sisters / Brothers						
Teacher / Boss						
Police						
Music						
Movies						
Television						
Websites						
News						
Self						

Put a plus sign (+) beside the messages that you agree with.

Circle the source(s) that you think have the most influence on you now.