

People have been using drugs for thousands of years and in almost every human culture.

Drugs can be tremendously helpful

By exploring contexts such as..

- x assess the complex ways in which drugs impact the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and societies
- x explore and appreciate diversity related to reasons people use drugs, the impact of drug use and the social attitudes toward various drugs
- x the place of drug use in different cultures
- x the changing ways cultures have interacted with drugs
- x the various constructs (e.g., social norms, moral weakness, criminal behaviour, disease) that characterize drug use
- x the social, political and health impacts of various patterns of drug use
- x the role of individual experience, ideas and agency as they impact attitudes and behaviours related to drug use
- x the relationship between political, economic and social factors related to drug use and drug policy
- x the relationship of inequality to the harms related to drug use
- x the role of political priorities in shaping drug use patterns and outcomes

¹ Psychoactive drugs (i.e., mind-altering substances) including caffeine, alcohol, cannabis and a wide range of other drugs, tap into the wiring system of the human brain and impact the way nerve cells send, receive or process information thus influencing the way we think and behave.



Students need to learn to ...

- x recognize binary constructs (e.g., good bad) and assess their limitation in addressing complex social issues like drug use
- x recognize how official responses to drugs may have less to do with the drug than with other factors
- x develop social and communication skills in addressing discourse and behavior related to drugs
- x develop personal and social strategies to manage the risks, benefits and harms related to drugs

By exploring contexts such as..

- x the interconnected relationship of personal, drug and environmental factors in understanding benefit and harm related to drug use
- x the use of non-binary models (e.g., venn diagrams or quadrant models) in exploring drug related issues
- x deconstructing messages, rules and policies to determine whose interests are being served
- x the interconnected nature of messages, interests, rules and power (in families, communities and cultures)
- x the range of outcomes that can result from various official responses
- x media awareness and critical thinking
- x the emotional and social appeal of drug use
- x self-examination and the exploration of ideas without immediately passing judgement
- x ways to assess personal risk and distinguish between beneficial and harmful use
- x decision-making skills that incorporate rational processing and emotional regulation
- x support and leadership skills within peer group, family, community

The [Centre for Addictions Research of BC](#) at the University of Victoria has been developing and collecting a variety of instructional examples and professional learning resources to help teachers apply drug literacy curriculum. The centre will continue to develop instructional examples under the [Minds](#) brand and is willing to consult with schools and districts about their particular needs. These instructional examples contribute not only to building the drug literacy competencies outlined

This resource was developed by the Centre for Addictions Research of BC with funding provided by the Government of Canada. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Government of Canada or the Centre for Addictions Research of BC.