Background Information:
Drugs refer to those drugs not permitted by law (illegal) and lawful drugs (prescription or over-the-counter) which are obtained or used illegally unless otherwise specified. Drug abuse means drugs are being used excessively or misused in some way. Drug abuse may lead to addiction. Addiction is defined as a chronic, relapsing brain disease that is characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences.

It is well known that tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs have many negative consequences on both our health and our appearances. As a whole, these substances can affect almost every part and every organ in the human body, including the brain. The brain is undergoing tremendous change and development during the teen years. Using alcohol and other drugs during this time may cause long-term damage.

Some experiments and activities can be done in order to better understand how even just minimal substance use can affect the body. An old saying is: “Experience is the best teacher.” In the two activities, you will see first-hand how tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs can affect you and your health. You need to know that not all drugs have the same effects on the user. Consequences and potential health hazards may be short-term or long-term and could affect your future.

Instructions:
Divide into two separate groups, rotating after each activity is completed. When the groups have finished, review the Open Ended Questions with the participants.

Activity One:
1. Give each participant a piece of paper and a pencil/pen.
2. Read the following list of 20 words and ask youth to write down as many as they can remember without discussing them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marijuana</th>
<th>Brain</th>
<th>Experiment</th>
<th>Cigarette</th>
<th>Health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inhalant</td>
<td>Prevent</td>
<td>Prescription</td>
<td>Risks</td>
<td>Choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>Addiction</td>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>Danger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick</td>
<td>Tar</td>
<td>Methamphetamine</td>
<td>Causes</td>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Read the list again and have youth mark how many they got right.
4. Have a couple of the youth/adult leaders or participants stand in pairs in different parts of the room and carry on a loud conversation.
5. Read the following list of 20 different words. Ask participants again to write down as many as they can remember.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Craving</th>
<th>Lungs</th>
<th>Cocaine</th>
<th>Heart</th>
<th>Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ecstasy</td>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Chew</td>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td>Decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>Consequences</td>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>Hallucinations</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>Smoke</td>
<td>Beer</td>
<td>Illegal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Before they count the number they got right, ask participants to “guess” whether they did better or worse the second time.
   - Why might their scores have changed? Compare the numbers.
   - What do they think just happened?

Share with youth that, just like the disruptive participants talking, marijuana interferes with normal information transfer and memory. What is the consequence? What was the cause?

**Activity Two**

1. Have participants work in pairs. Have one hold a yardstick vertically (up and down). The other person puts their thumb and forefinger spread apart so that their fingers are level with the bottom of the yardstick.
2. When the person holding the yardstick releases it, the other person tries to grab it with their thumb and forefinger. Write down the number of inches that passed before they grabbed it.
3. The person who is catching the yardstick then puts their fingers in a bowl of cold water for one minute. Repeat releasing and grabbing the yardstick. Record the number of inches that passed before they grabbed the yardstick.
4. Have participants switch places and repeat the experiment.
5. Now have one person put on a pair of old glasses or goggles that have the lenses covered with wax paper. Try grabbing the yardstick again. Record the inches.
6. Participants need to switch places and repeat Step 5.
   - How does this experiment show how alcohol affects a person?
   - How did the cold water change the results of what happened? What were the results? What was the consequence?

**Learn More**

The following website provides additional information:

http://drugabuse.gov