# The Factors Game

**The Factors Game** was developed by the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research for use in school classrooms and other places where young people gather.

The game encourages critical thinking and conversation about the things that influence our substance use choices. Players draw from their backgrounds and experiences as well as information learned from others.

## Activity steps

1. Prepare what you need for the game.
    - Space to play (table and chairs, or area of the ground for youth to sit in a circle)
    - Instructions, game board and game cards (1 set per group of 3-5 players)
    - Tokens (e.g., paper clip, eraser, nickel)

2. Walk players through the instructions. Allow time for players to get into it and really enjoy the game. Check in with groups to see how they're doing.

3. After playing, debrief about the game experience. Ask participants to identify at least one thing they learned about themselves or substance use issues.

# The Factors Game

## Instructions

1. Randomly sort the Factor Cards and place them face down in a pile.

2. Player 1 constructs a modern-day drug use scenario involving person(s) using a drug in a particular context and then places a marker on the spectrum representing their estimation of the level of risk involved.

   *e.g., Player 1 imagines a group of teens in a park*
   *getting drunk on a Saturday night*
   *and places a marker indicating low potential benefit*
   *and mid-high potential harm.*

3. All players discuss the placement and come to a consensus on final placement.

   *e.g. Players debate the level of risk and agree to move*
   *the marker slightly higher on potential benefit.*

4. Player 2 turns over a factor card, proposes a change in the scenario related to the indicated factor, and moves the marker to reflect the change in risk.

   *e.g., Player 2 picks up a Person card, changes the ages of the*
   *people to "young adults," and moves the marker to*
   *indicate slightly less potential harm.*

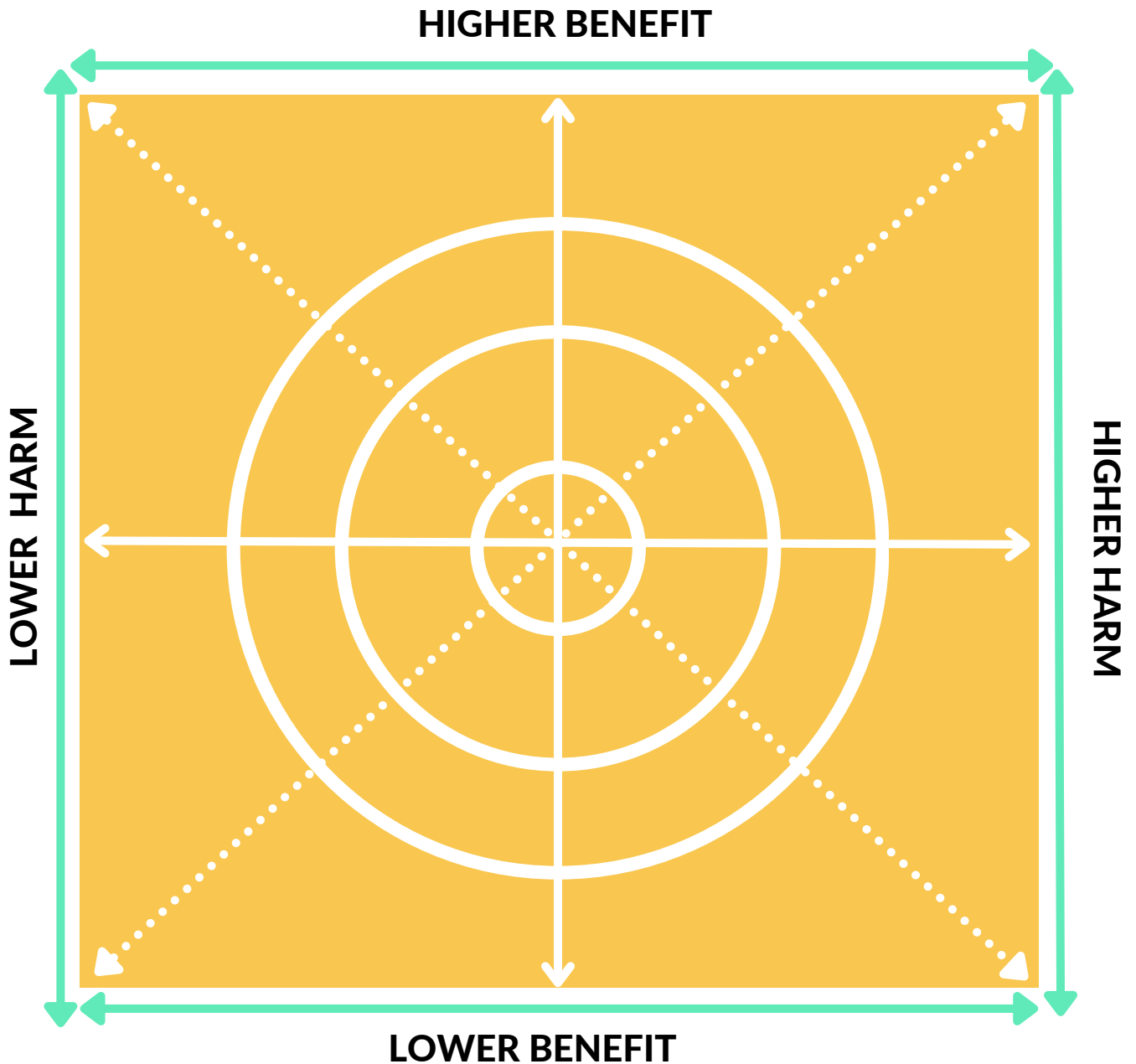5. All players come to a consensus on the placement, and then the process continues.

   *e.g. After some debate, players agree with the placement.*

6. Game ends when time runs out, or when each player has had several chances to modify a scenario.

**HIGHER BENEFIT**

**LOWER HARM**

**HIGHER HARM**

**LOWER BENEFIT**

# The Factors Game

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|---|---|---|
| Factor Card<br><br>**DRUG**<br>type, quantity, purity, frequency, method | Factor Card<br><br>**PERSON**<br>age, gender, physical health, mental health, sexual orientation, personality, job | Factor Card<br><br>**CONTEXT**<br>peers, location, situation, access, drug laws, culture |
| Factor Card<br><br>**DRUG**<br>type, quantity, purity, frequency, method | Factor Card<br><br>**PERSON**<br>age, gender, physical health, mental health, sexual orientation, personality, job | Factor Card<br><br>**CONTEXT**<br>peers, location, situation, access, drug laws, culture |
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