

2

FACILITATOR TIPS



CANNABIS & MENTAL HEALTH



This resource is intended for those that are working with youth in the small, focus groups or alternative education contexts (e.g., 1:1 teaching or peer-to-peer tutors), and aims to provide tips on facilitating meaningful conversation about mental health and substance use.

Know your audience!

- Before choosing your lesson materials, you might want to briefly “interview” the youth about their favourite music, relationship with school, friends, family, hobbies, work, likes/dislikes, goals, etc. You might also want to ask if there’s anything in particular they would like to talk about, or any topics or issues that are off limits.
- Before starting a lesson, check in with the youth about how they’re feeling. If they’re tired or not in the right mind frame for conversation, you might want to postpone your session or opt for an activity more in line with their emotions.
- If working with a pair or small group, consider the ages, personalities and experiences of the youth. For example, it can be awkward to facilitate a conversation between a youth with significant substance use experience and a youth with no interest in substance use.

“Factual and fun resources help us engage youth and adults in their lives. It’s important for Educators to know that the resources we provide youth come from reputable sources.”

Educator who attended our resource workshop Jan. 2024



Remember your role

- A facilitator's main job is to encourage youth to express how they think and feel. If a youth is shy or hesitant about expressing their true feelings, you could offer your own opinion or anecdote to get the conversation going. Be sure the youth understands that what you're saying is just your opinion and that they may have a completely different yet equally valid take on things.
- Have a back-up plan. Some youth may be shy at first or just not very talkative, or they may not be interested in the lesson you've prepared. It helps to have more than one activity on hand.
- If a lesson feels awkward, don't give up! Think about what you could do differently next time. Remember that your main role is to listen, without judgement, and let the youth take the lead.
- Keep an open mind. Some youth like to be provocative while others exaggerate. Instead of reacting negatively, ask for clarification or use follow-up questions that invite them to critically assess their beliefs and ideas. You could also just let it go and move on to a new question.
- If exploring song lyrics as part of a lesson, take time to talk openly about any offensive words or expressions. Or choose a 'clean' version of the lyrics.

Location, location!

Meaningful conversation can happen anywhere—at a kitchen table, in a coffee shop, at a food court, in a car. But it's best to work together in a place that is comfortable, easy to get to, not too noisy, and without too many distractions.



Visit our website and book a workshop with our team to learn more about using our resources in your community!

