

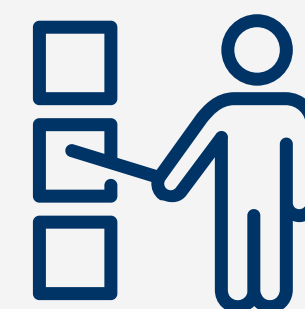


CELEBRATING 30 YEARS  
**PHIMC**  
Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago



## Facilitator Guidelines

Facilitator lesson plan for the Regional Substance Use Prevention Integration Centers (RSUPICs) program



# Overview

## Page 3

- Why We Wrote This Curriculum
- Realistic Approach
- Support for Out of School Time Instructors

## Page 4-6

- Youth Facilitators Guided Content
- Key Insights from youth
- Insights from out of school facilitators

## Page 7-10

- Basic Materials for Implementation
- Creative Supportive Engagement

## Page 11-13

- Lesson Plan Flow

## Page 14-21

- How to use the curriculum

## Page 22-29

- Things all great facilitators should do
- Different Learning Styles
- Reflection and Sharing



## Why We Wrote This Curriculum

We created this curriculum to help high school students ages 14-18 make informed decisions about substance use. Our goal is to provide realistic and supportive education that promotes harm reduction and healing.

## Realistic Approach

Our approach emphasizes harm reduction, offering strategies to minimize risks associated with substance use. Whether students are not using, using occasionally, or using regularly, we aim to help them make safer choices.

Unlike the old DARE and "Just Say No" programs, our curriculum takes a realistic approach to substance use. We recognize that simply telling teens to avoid substances isn't effective, so we focus on providing practical and accurate information with the aim that...

1. If you're not using substances, you stay that way.
2. If you are using, you can learn to use less.
3. If you won't stop or reduce, you at least have the knowledge to stay safe and help your friends.

## Support for Out of School Time Instructors

In developing this curriculum we spoke to two different groups:

1. Chicago youth, ages 12-20 years
2. Adult facilitators and practitioners who run out of school time programs.



## Youth and Facilitators Guided the Content

In developing this curriculum we spoke to two different groups:

1. Chicago youth, ages 12-20 years
2. Adult facilitators and practitioners who run out of school time programs.

### Key Insights from Youth

**Trust is Essential** and starts well before this content is ever covered; if the educator/facilitator has already done a poor job of building trust with the students, it will make it hard for students to trust in what they are teaching on the subject. If the educator/facilitator is brand new to the students and there is no prior history, then it is important they address the issue by first doing the work of building trust and connections with the youth.

**Non-Judgemental spaces** are essential. Youth expressed desire for open and honest communication where they are not being talked down to, are treated with respect, and have their own experiences, knowledge and questions validated. They want more empathy from adults when discussing the issue, as they feel misunderstood when they try to bring it up. Several youth commented that adults can sound like hypocrites when they tell students not to do something (e.g. smoke weed or drink) but they are doing it themselves.

**Engaging** activities are important. Youth expressed the need to move around and do visual and tactile things. Participate in games connected to the content, listen to Podcasts and videos that are engaging and informative and even create their own multi-media content.



## Insights from Youth Cont.

**Be Direct, Honest and Practical** and don't hide things: Youth are interested in the full spectrum of knowledge around the issue (meaning understanding the benefits of certain substances) and not just only learning about the negative effects. Listed below are some of questions that came up several times during the focus groups:

- What substances can be mixed/not be mixed
- What is natural vs. synthetic
- How to support a friend who is having an overdose
- How to support a friend who is addicted or abusing
- How to tell a good pill from bad pill | How to test a pill
- What is the impact of drugs on your body, brain and exterior
- What withdrawal looks like with different substances
- How they can tell if they are using vs. abusing vs. addicted
- Healing strategies
- How to approach adults with questions without feeling embarrassed, judged, or stigmatized.



## Insights from Chicago Out of School Facilitators

### **Easy to Use and Accessible**

Instructors desire easy-to-access lesson plans that integrate seamlessly into their existing curriculum. They value keyword searches and prefer resources similar to those available on popular educational portals.

### **Foundational Topics Before addressing substance use**

Instructors emphasize the importance of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), trust, identity, and cultural awareness. One-on-one conversations are preferred over group discussions for sensitive topics like substance use.

### **Social Media as a Resource**

Instructors increasingly turn to social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram to find educational resources. They prefer content that is engaging and easily shareable with students.

### **Content Preferences**

There is a high demand for videos, games, and audio resources to make learning about substance use more engaging. Instructors agree on separating cannabis from other more serious substances in educational materials.

### **Desire for Community**

Many instructors feel isolated in their efforts and expressed a strong desire for a peer network to share experiences and strategies. They seek opportunities to connect with others working on substance use prevention.



## Basic Materials for Implementation

You will need the following materials to implement most of the lesson plans.

- You will need the following materials to implement most of the lesson plans.
- Projector
- Markers (regular and dry erase markers)
- Pens
- Butcher paper/Flipchart paper
- Bluetooth speaker
- Wifi
- Post it notes and/or index cards
- Painters tape so you don't take the paint off the walls.
- HDMI Cord
- Laptops, tablets or phones with wifi access'(good to have)
- Name tags (good to have)
- Printer and paper (good to have)
- Stickers (good to have)
- Music Playlist (good to have)



# Creating a Supportive & Engaging Learning Environment

## Arrangement of Physical Space

Every space will have different sizes and constraints. To the greatest extent possible, create a physical space to ensure a collaborative work environment that is:

- Good for small group work.
- Allows everyone to move freely while carrying out activities
- For large group setups try to create a circle or U-shape.
- Avoid rows of desks with the facilitator station at the front (traditional classroom setting).
- Allow for flexible seating arrangements.





## **Building Community**

Engage your group in a selection of community-building activities to establish a spirit of respect, familiarity, empathy, and collaboration that you will continually build on throughout the year.

## **Establishing Norms and Routines**

Involve Young People in establishing the norms, guidelines, and expectations for the group.

## **Warm Welcome & Body Language**

Try to greet all Young People as they arrive or at the start of the session. Use a warm tone of voice and respectful language. Allow for differentiation -- people socialize differently.

## **Celebration**

You want to build a culture of support and celebration. It is important to celebrate key achievements of individuals and the group. Celebration should occur on a regular basis and the Facilitator should use a variety of activities & techniques.



## **Vibe**

Depending on your group you can play music, dance, and lead activities that incorporate visual arts. As much as possible post colorful pictures or quotes on the walls.

## **Model Wellness**

Provide an environment and create activities that help the group experience wellness. Making sure water is always available, when possible serve healthy snacks, take regular breaks, encourage the group to stretch, use relaxation techniques and lead energizers to get everyone's brains in motion.



## Lesson Plan Flow

Most of our lesson plans have a certain structure. While there are some exceptions most will flow in the following way:

### **Hook & Check-in (Approx 10 min)**

- Prepare the Youth for the upcoming material that they will be learning.
- Activate prior knowledge.
- The Hook is meant to be a short engaging moment prior to the start of your session to grab the interest and attention of the group .
- Check-in is meant to gauge how Young People are feeling and what they know about the topic

### **Energizer (Approx 10-15 min):**

An energizer is a brief activity that is intended to increase energy in a group by engaging Young People in physical activity, laughter, or in ways that engage the members cognitively (problem-solving).

### **Setting the Stage (Approx 15 min):**

This part of the session usually builds off of the Reflection Activity. This section is where the Facilitator is presenting information to the group. The purpose of the Before is to:

- Set the purpose for the session (WHY we are doing this session).
- Present technical information with examples (WHAT we will be learning).
- Model how to do a skill or activity (HOW to do it)



### **Activity 1 (Approx 25 min)**

Generally consisting of new knowledge or skill acquisition. This section usually consists of:

- The Young People dividing into small groups and doing guided activities to practice the skill and knowledge gained from the ‘setting the stage’ section
- Deep participant-directed questions to check for Youth understanding of the concept.

### **Team Builder (30 Minutes)**

A longer version of an energizer. Generally involves youth working together effectively as a team to accomplish a specific task. The team builder should be connected to the learning outcomes.

### **Activity 2 (Approx 45 minutes)**

- Young People apply their new knowledge through independent practice to demonstrate their understanding of the new material.
- Ideally the Young People are performing a task with minimal intervention from the facilitator.
- The facilitator should walk around the room to support each of the pairs or small groups to increase clarity.
- The After can act as the daily assessment, so the facilitator can gauge whether Young People understood the material from the session.
- If the Young People do not seem to have understood the material, the facilitator may want to figure out a new way for Young People to learn the material.



### **Youth Reflection (10 minutes)**

This section is where the Young People can reflect on:

- What they have learned
- How they are feeling
- And how they will apply & practice the skills and knowledge from the session

### **Facilitator Reflection (Approx 5 -10 minutes)**

Usually the final 5 minutes of the day where the facilitator consolidates:

- Key knowledge and skills learned & questions answered
- Discusses how the skills & knowledge will be applied
- Goes back to any areas that will need further clarity
- Provides overview of for the next session
- Ends the session on a positive note.

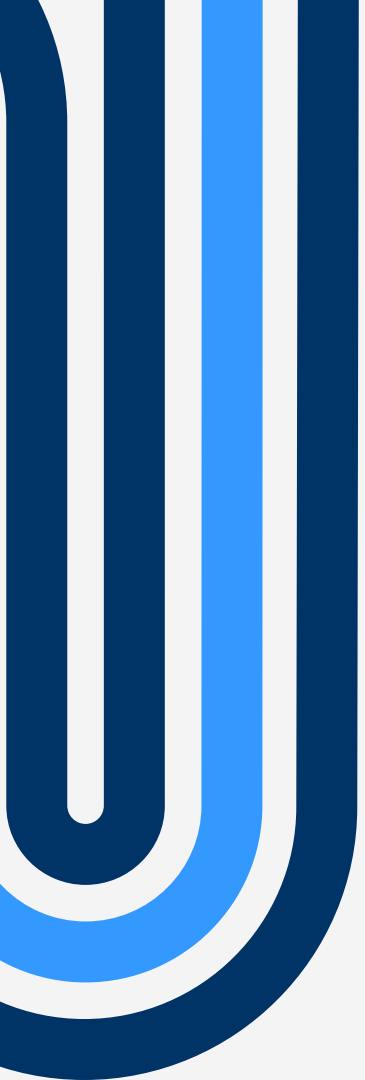


## How to Use The Curriculum

- *The Curriculum is approximately 39 total hours*
- *There are 5 modules. Each module has 2-3 lesson plans.*
- *Each lesson is approximately 3 hours long. ‘*
- *The lessons are stand alone and you do not have to do them in any particular order.*
- *Pay attention to setting the stage before doing an activity.*
- *Read through each activity a couple times and try your best to facilitate in your own style.*
- *You can bring in your own energizers or team builders.*
- *Feel free to modify based on your situation*

### **For the next two sections we have provided:**

1. *Module, lesson themes and an overview*
2. *Recommendations of different lesson plan combinations based on your time constraints.*



Module	Lesson Themes	Overview
Culture, Identity, Trust and Belonging (9 Hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Culture, Identity and Trust- Belonging- Courageous Conversations</li></ul>	This module aims to help participants reflect on their cultural backgrounds and identities, understanding how these intersect with the world around them. Youth will learn to build connections with others and understand belonging in personal and social contexts. Additionally, the lesson plans will equip participants with the skills and confidence to engage in difficult conversations about substance use, covering topics such as substance use disorder, addiction, harm reduction strategies, and motivational interviewing.
Understanding Substance Use and Its Impacts (6 Hours)	- Mixing Substances- Risks & Withdrawal Symptoms	This module aims to raise awareness about the risks and withdrawal symptoms associated with different substances. It educates participants on the impact of mixing substances, highlighting safe combinations, those with harmful consequences, and potentially fatal mixtures. By identifying specific substances and their associated risks, youth participants will gain valuable insights into the dangers of substance mixing.
Ecological Influences (9 Hours)	- Individual & Relationships- Family & Community- War on Drugs	This module examines how personal and social factors affect youth substance use. Participants will learn how their relationships and choices influence substance use and gain tools to make healthier decisions. Using the ecological model, participants will see how their environment, family, and community shape their behaviors, especially around substance use, through discussions, reflections, and group presentations. They will also explore the history of the War on Drugs in the U.S., learning how it was influenced by racism, fear, and money, and think about other ways to approach drug policy.
Harm Reduction Strategies (9 Hours)	- Harm Reduction- Creating a Safety Plan- Holistic Healing Strategies	This module introduces harm reduction, showing how it applies to both substance use and everyday habits. Youth will learn to analyze and apply harm reduction principles to manage risks in various contexts, promoting a healthier approach to safety. Participants will develop strategies to identify and minimize risks, creating personalized safety plans for their physical and emotional well-being. Additionally, the lesson covers holistic healing strategies, combining recovery techniques and Harm Reduction principles, and uses activities to explore methods like the Wellness Wheel to support overall wellness.
How Friends Can Support (6 Hours)	- Navigating Peer Influences- Decision Making Skills	This module aims to improve decision-making skills related to drug use and identify strategies for supporting healthy choices for themselves and their friends.



**If you have 9-14 hours**

<b>Module</b>	<b>Lesson Themes</b>
Culture, Identity, Trust and Belonging	Culture, Identity and Trust Belonging
Understanding Substance Use and Its Impacts	Mixing Substances
Ecological Influences (9 Hours)	Family & Community
Harm Reduction Strategies (9 Hours)	Harm Reduction





**If you have 13-18 hours**

<b>Module</b>	<b>Lesson Themes</b>
Culture, Identity, Trust and Belonging	Culture, Identity and Trust Belonging Courageous Conversations
Understanding Substance Use and Its Impacts	Risks & Withdrawal Symptoms Mixing Substance
Ecological Influences (9 Hours)	Family & Community
Harm Reduction Strategies	Harm Reduction



**If you have 19-24 hours**

<b>Module</b>	<b>Lesson Themes</b>
Culture, Identity, Trust and Belonging	Culture, Identity and Trust Belonging Courageous Conversations
Understanding Substance Use and Its Impacts	Risks & Withdrawal Symptoms Mixing Substance
Ecological Influences (9 Hours)	Family & Community
Harm Reduction Strategies	Harm Reduction Creating a Safety Plan



## If you have 25-29 hours

Module	Lesson Themes
Culture, Identity, Trust and Belonging	Culture, Identity and Trust Belonging Courageous Conversations
Understanding Substance Use and Its Impacts	Risks & Withdrawal Symptoms Mixing Substance
Ecological Influences (9 Hours)	Family & Community Individual & Relationships
Harm Reduction Strategies	Harm Reduction Creating a Safety Plan
How Friends Can Support	Navigating Peer Influences

## The Roles of a Facilitator

Capabilities	Primary Measure of Success	Additional Measure of Success
(Care) Show concern for youth mental, social-emotional and developmental needs	The Facilitator makes me feel that they care about me.	- The Facilitator makes me feel respected when I need help.- The Facilitator seems to know if something is bothering me
(Engage) Spark and maintain learning	The Facilitator makes the sessions engaging, interactive & interesting	- The Facilitator ensures that I like the things that we are learning in this session.- The Facilitator ensures that I like the ways that we learn things in this session.
(Group Management) Foster a respectful, collaborative and on-task learning environment	Participants in the session treat each other with respect	- The Facilitator ensures our session stays busy and session objectives are met- Participants follow session norms and values
(Ownership) Youth ideas & inputs are encouraged, valued and implemented.	Shared decisions about sessions with Young People.	-The Facilitator is a very good listener when I talk to them.-The Facilitator gives us time to explain our ideas
(Clarify) Help youth understand content and resolve confusion	The Facilitator is very good at explaining things.	- The feedback that I get on help me understand how to improve- The Facilitator knows when everyone understands a concept and when they do not.
(Summarize) Help youth integrate and synthesize key ideas	The Facilitator takes the time to summarize what we learn in each session and make connections between key concepts	-The Facilitator talks about things we already learned to help us remember
(Challenge) Insist that youth persevere and do their best work	The Facilitator makes sure that youth try hard and reach their full potential	-The Facilitator makes us explain our answers — why we think what we think-The Facilitator doesn't let participants give up when the work gets hard

## The Roles of an Adult Ally

Capabilities	Primary Measure of Success	Additional Measures of Success
Builds trust and rapport	Adult Ally cares about the young person	- Adult Ally remembers specific details from each conversation- Adult Ally patiently listens to what I have to say- I am able to openly share my successes and challenges with my Adult Ally- Adult Ally values my inputs
Understands the reality of young person	Adult Ally helps youth reflect on their actions, experiences and performance	- Adult Ally makes me reflect on my strengths and areas of growth- Adult Ally helps me define specific challenges I am facing
Clearly defines challenges	Adult Ally helps youth articulate challenges that they are facing during session and in life.	- When needed can refer young person to outside services
Supports youth in coming up with a solution	Adult Ally spends time in the conversation discussing root cause of challenges and practicing solutions	- Adult Ally gives some options to choose from- After conversation youth have clear next steps to work on
Customize support based on needs of young person	Adult Ally can articulate specific strengths and areas of development for all of the youth on their council	- Questions contain content/context specific to past conversations with the young person



## Things All Great Facilitators Should Do

### Care & Empathy:

- Show concern & empathy for Young People' well-being.
- Develop supportive, personalized relationships with Young People to cultivate an emotionally safe environment
- Respond consistently to Young People' social, emotional, and learning needs.

### Group Management

- Sessions are organized and time is used efficiently.
- Explain, model and implement routines and strategies
- Run activities smoothly due to materials being readily accessible and time being managed effectively, including during transitions and interruptions.

### Make Connections

- Guide Young People to integrate & synthesize key ideas.
- Summarize and make connections in ways that help Young People see relationships within and across sessions, remember ideas, and build understanding over time.
- Encourage Young People to make their own connections based on their own expertise and context.



## **Respect and Ownership**

- Create a climate that encourages and values Young People' ideas, thoughts and inputs as part of the learning process.
- Give Young People a voice in determining what they learn.
- Seek Young People' ideas and feedback about session activities and group norms.

## **Challenge & Motivate:**

- Set high standards for effort, thinking and quality of work.
- During sessions ask probing questions that require Young People to think deeply
- Push Young People to explain their thinking in order to generate original & creative ideas.
- Differentiate instruction to provide appropriate levels of challenge for Young People at different skill levels and a range of modalities for learning and for demonstrating their learning.

## **Active Engagement:**

- Spark & maintain youth interest in learning.
- Cultivate curiosity and inquiry by making sessions interesting, relevant, and enjoyable.
- Use music, art, videos, and a mix of other tools to keep the group engaged.



### **Reflection:**

- Regularly engage Young People in a process of reflecting on what they have done (e.g., writing in journals; reviewing minutes; sharing progress, accomplishments or feelings about the experience).
- Use different strategies to encourage Young People to share what they have created and reflect on their experiences (e.g., writing, role playing, using media or technology, drawing, using props).
- Use reflection as a way to make meaning of their experiences. Ask probing questions to help guide their reflection.

### **Collaboration & Leadership:**

- Provide opportunities for Young People to give feedback or coach others in the group.
- Provide Young People opportunities to lead a small group or activity.
- Provide opportunities to participate in activities with interdependent roles (e.g. note-taker, spokesperson, facilitator, time keeper, etc).





## Different Learning Styles

It has been said that “**we retain approximately 10 percent of what we see; 30 to 40 percent of what we see and hear; and 90 percent of what we see, hear, and do.**” We all have the capability to learn through all three styles. As a facilitator, we must keep in mind that the Young People will all have different learning styles. It is important that we are catering to these different styles in how we both design & facilitate the sessions.

**Visual learners** tend to learn by looking, seeing, viewing, and watching. Visual learners need to see an instructor’s facial expressions and body language to fully understand the content of a lesson. They tend to sit at the front of the classroom to avoid visual distractions. They tend to think in pictures and learn best from visual displays. During a lecture or discussion, they tend to take detailed notes to absorb information.

**Auditory learners** tend to learn by listening, hearing, and speaking. Auditory learners learn best through lectures, discussions, and brainstorming. They interpret the underlying meaning of speech by listening to voice tone, pitch, and speed and other speech nuances. Written information has little meaning to them until they hear it. They benefit best by reading text out loud and hearing audio files.

**Kinesthetic/Tactile learners** tend to learn by experiencing, moving, and doing. Kinesthetic learners learn best through a hands-on approach and actively exploring the physical world around them. They have difficulty sitting still for long periods of time, and easily become distracted by their need for activity and exploration.



## **Learn by Doing**

Traditional learning involves listening to a presentation and then acting upon it. However, it is not the most effective way of learning. Most humans learn best by doing. You don't learn to ride a bike by watching someone else do it; you have to get on and ride! Please don't lecture. You should use a ratio of approximately 25% vs. 75%. This means 25% of the time the facilitator speaks, the other 75% should be the Young People engaging in an activity, practicing what they have learned, creating solutions, sharing thoughts and reflections.

## **Youth Experience and Knowledge**

The Young People will be entering the workshops with a great deal of valuable knowledge, experiences and skills. In many cases they will know more than the facilitator. As a facilitator, there is a lot you can learn from the group. Make sure you are creating many opportunities for the Young People to share these experiences and knowledge so the group can learn from one another.



## Reflection and Sharing

The facilitator's most important role is to manage reflection and sharing time. This occurs in three areas:

- Individual reflection
- Small-group and pair sharing
- Large-group sharing

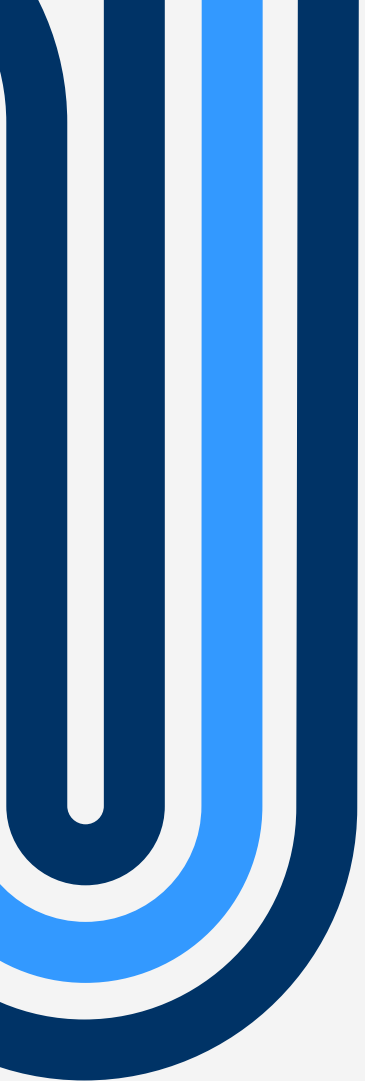
### **Independent Reflection**

Wonderful & underused technique is silent & individual reflection. It is most effective when you:

- Keep it short - Many Young People need only a few minutes to capture their thoughts on a particular topic.
- Provide materials for writing - A notebook or journal, chits, creatively designed handouts, or a formal reflection template can all be effective tools to make the written reflection stick.

### **Small Group & Pair Work**

Never underestimate the value of pair sharing or small groups. Large-group sharing is most often dominated by the most outgoing enthusiastic personalities (the loudest voice). Young People who are less comfortable in such settings will be reluctant to speak. Having people answer a question in pairs is the most effective way to make sure that all Young People do the cognitive work asked by a particular reflection question. It can also build confidence that empowers more people to participate in the large-group discussion.



**It is best to stick to pairs or groups of three unless you have a specific reason why a larger group is necessary.** When doing small group work, remember to keep it short (just as with written reflections). Two people can share their thoughts with each other quickly. Small groups are especially effective for generating ideas to share with the large group, or in a role play or simulation that requires more than just two roles. Effective techniques include:

- Having explicit instructions: The main error with small-group work is a lack of complete information that prevents the group from working independently.
- Making sure each member has a concrete role: Defining roles for group members (recorder, facilitator, observer, and so on) keeps meetings productive and keeps everyone engaged.
- Move around the room: Keep a finger on the pulse of group progress to extend or reduce the allotted time as needed. If groups are falling behind the rest, encourage them to move forward so as to catch up. If a few groups are about to finish, give a time warning to the other groups to start to wrap up as well.
- Form intentional groups as often as possible: Youth will often enter a workshop sitting with the people they are closest to socially, but not necessarily the people that would add most value to their workshop experience.



## Large-Group Sharing—Using Effective Questioning Techniques

One of the most challenging aspects of facilitation can be managing large-group sharing and participation. This skill is crucial because it is where one guides participant reflections toward the key principles of that activity. The most effective tools for this process are thoughtful, purposeful questioning from the presenter. The following guidelines should drive questioning for the facilitator:

- Start from the end goal—identify what you want the Young People to say during the sharing: Before asking questions, have a clear idea of the big ideas that Young People should be able to articulate, and then design questions that take the Young People to each of those ideas.
- Give Young People the questions before beginning the activity: If precise questions help Young People to focus, then offering the questions in advance focuses their observation as well as their participation.
- Not everyone has to speak: You want to encourage people to share in a large group but at the same time keep your eye on time, maintain high energy & engagement & make sure people are giving thoughtful responses. Not everyone has to speak.
- Think volleyball, not ping-pong: A ping-pong presenter feels the need to respond to and summarize every participant's response before calling on another participant. Thus the dialogue is always presenter-participant-presenter-participant. A volleyball presenter allows multiple Young People to share before responding.



## **Acknowledgements**

This lesson plan is part of the Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago's Substance Use Prevention and Resource Kit (SPARK) developed in partnership with Praxis Institute and designed by Rudd Resources.