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| Activity ideas related to the 2020 cannabis law reform referendum *NZHEA member-only resource*  |  |

Heightened interest in cannabis law reform, leading up to the New Zealand Government’s cannabis referendum at the 2020 General Election[[1]](#footnote-1), will provide teachers and students with some rich teaching and learning opportunities about the way politics and law making is intended to contribute to health and wellbeing of the New Zealand population. With many views and a diversity of research evidence for and against the legalisation of cannabis, teaching and learning requires a critical thinking process and to frame the proposed legalisation and regulation of cannabis as an ethical dilemma.

**The four activities in this resource focus specifically on the cannabis referendum and make use of excerpts from the Justice Minister’s Proactive Release – 2020 Cannabis Referendum.** They are provided in addition to the activities in:

* The NZHEA resource - Robertson, J. and Dixon, R., (2020), *Alcohol and other drugs: A resource of teaching and learning activities for teachers of students in Years 9-13[[2]](#footnote-2),* New Zealand: NZHEA.
* Tūturu resources (*Thinking critically about cannabis[[3]](#footnote-3)* – in development, early 2020 – this will provide a broader framework of ideas about cannabis use).

Obviously this resource will have a short ‘shelf life’ and the outcome of the referendum will be one of many factors informing our revision of the NZHEA AoD resource noted above.

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| **Activity 1.** **Cannabis law reform - setting the scene** | This activity introduces students to some of the language and terminology they will encounter in the following activities, as well as provide them with an overview about the purpose of the referendum, and what voting-age New Zealanders will be voting for in 2020.  |
| **Activity 2. Cannabis, health and wellbeing**  | To establish the wellbeing focus for cannabis law reform, students revisit learning about the impacts of cannabis on wellbeing with the added consideration of the harm reduction goals of a harm minimisation approach.  |
| **Activity 3.** **Values continuum** | A values continuum is a popular way to explore a diversity of values and beliefs that a group of students may have about a situation or an issue. To provide some ‘distance’ from their own views, this version of the activity requires pairs of students to create a ‘character profile’ and respond to the continuum statements from the perspective of their character. The statements all relate to aspects of the proposed law reform and referendum.  |
| **Activity 4.** **‘In role’ debate** | Continuing the use of ‘in role’ responses to cannabis related situations, this activity requires students to develop a ‘profile’ of a lobby group who are either for or against cannabis law reform and consolidate their learning through a debate. ‘In role’ the groups debate the reasons for and against the referendum using ideas from a range of the previous activities. The perspectives of the debate maintain a focus on the wellbeing considerations of the issue. |

**For teacher information**

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| In May 2019, the Justice Minister Andrew Little announced that:*“There will be a clear choice for New Zealanders in a referendum at the 2020 General Election. Cabinet has agreed there will be a simple Yes/No question on the basis of a draft piece of legislation.**That draft legislation will include:** *A minimum age of 20 to use and purchase recreational cannabis,*
* *Regulations and commercial supply controls,*
* *Limited home-growing options,*
* *A public education programme,*
* *Stakeholder engagement.*

*The voters’ choice will be binding because all of the parties that make up the current Government have committed to abide by the outcome.”* |

The New Zealand Drug Foundation ***Matters of Substance****[[4]](#footnote-4)* journal contains a selection of informative articles about the proposed law reform (see the March 2019 issue for example).

The ‘**Health not Handcuffs’**[[5]](#footnote-5) campaign website places a strong focus on the intended health and wellbeing aspects of the proposed law reform.

It is recommend that teachers download the 7 May 2019[[6]](#footnote-6) **Proactive Release – 2020 Cannabis Referendum** from the Beehive as this contains a range of information that provides additional background information about the referendum. A range of excerpts from this document are used in this resource.

Teachers of health education may also be interested in ***Regulation - The Responsible Control of Drugs*** (2018)[[7]](#footnote-7) from the Global Commission on Drug Policy. Helen Clark, the previous Prime Minister of New Zealand was part of this commission. It provides a useful global perspective aimed at bringing *‘to the international level an informed, science based discussion about humane and effective ways to reduce the harm caused by drugs and drug control policies to people and societies.’*

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| Activity 1. Cannabis law reform - setting the scene  |
| **Purpose and background:** This activity introduces students to some of the language and terminology they will encounter in the following activities, as well as provide them with an overview about the purpose of the referendum, and what voting-age New Zealanders will be voting for in 2020.  |
| **Learning intention and NZC HPE link:** Students will develop understanding of the intentions of the proposed cannabis law reform referendum. *(Required in preparation for all of the following activities.)* **Key competencies:** Participating and contributing,Using language, symbols, and (visual) texts. **Suggested time:** 30 minutes.  |
| **Resources:** Extracts from *Proactive Release for the 2020 Cannabis Referendum* <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-zealanders-make-decision-cannabis-referendum> - see copysheets. |
| **Teaching and learning process:****The proposed referendum on cannabis law reform**Ask students what knowledge they have of the referendum on cannabis law reform timed to coincide with the government general election in 2020. Acknowledge all responses whether well informed or not. Explain that the class is going to engage in a series of learning activities to better understand the referendum and how and why it has a lot to do with wellbeing. **Terminology** * [Preparation] Based on evidence from prior learning, add other words to the list on the copysheet that the students still need to learn to use (or would benefit from revising) for these activities.
* Explain to the students that the activities on cannabis law reform that follow require knowledge of terminology that they may or may not know.
* Provide students with the copysheet list of words. Where possible, use the school’s digital learning platform for this so that all students can access a completed copysheet at the end of the activity. If paper based, make a wall chart of these terms.
* Assign pairs or small groups of students a pair of words. Their task is to look up the meanings of these terms and in 1-2 sentences explain what the words and show the difference between them.
* Students share the final sentence(s) with another group and make further adjustments if the reviewing group decides greater clarification is needed. Add all of these sentences to the table in the copysheet.
* Discuss and clarify any terminology that was more challenging or confusing. *If required extracts from the cabinet paper explaining decriminalisation is provided as a copysheet.*

**The referendum*** Provide students with the overview of the proposed legislation and regulation of cannabis (see copysheet).
* In groups students discuss and reach common agreement on these questions:
1. What are voting New Zealanders being asked to do in this referendum?
2. What is meant by ‘law reform’ – what would actually change as a matter of law (and what wouldn’t)?
* After discussion students individually (or in pairs) turn the 13 elements on the list describing full regulation into a visual mindmap.

Instructions for the visual mind map: After putting a suitable title in the middle of an A3 sheet, students group all of the items into 3-4 main groups of related ideas as the first layer of the mindmap (they can decide how to group them), then grow the mind map branched out from these 3-4 main ideas to cover all 13 points. Encourage students to construct their map using only illustrations and symbols, and with as few words as possible.* Share maps with others in the group, seeking clarification where the images require explanation.
 |
| **Student learning journal entry / artefacts that provide evidence of learning:*** For ongoing use, students file the list of terms prepared by the class, along with their visual mind map (photograph this if storing it digitally), and a copy of the elements of full legalisation.
 |
| **Teacher knowledge and support resources:*** Teacher knowledge of students’ health education vocabulary from previous learning is required to identify other health education and/or other drug education related terms that will be needed for these learning activities.
* The *Proactive Release for the 2020 Cannabis Referendum* cabinet paper contains far more information than is used in this resource. For senior courses there are a range of other aspects of the proposed referendum that could be added to these activities.

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| **Teacher reflection on and evaluation of the activity:*** How well do students appear to understand the overall intent of the proposed cannabis law reforms? Are there any misunderstandings that may need to be addressed before other activities are introduced, or will need to be clarified through the learning activities that follow? If so, what are these specific misunderstandings and how will you respond to these?
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COPYSHEET

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|  | Words | Differences in meaning  |
|  | Referendum | Election  |  |
|  | Decriminalisation | Legalisation  |  |
|  | Medicinal use | Recreational use  |  |
|  | Pro | Anti |  |
|  | Moral panic | Common good  |  |
|  | Regulation  | Control  |  |
|  | Law reform  | Policy  |  |
|  | Harm  | Risk  |  |
|  | Values and beliefs  | Morals  |  |
|  | Facts  | Opinions  |  |
|  | Rights  | Responsibilities  |  |
|  | Harm reduction | Prevention  |  |
|  | Harm minimisation approach | ‘Say no to drugs’ approach  |  |
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COPYSHEET

**The referendum**

At the 2020 Government election, voting-age New Zealanders will be asked to vote on a referendum about cannabis law reform. A referendum is when all the people in a country are asked to a vote on a particular political or social issue. The actual question(s) for the referendum are not yet known although it will require New Zealanders to choose whether or not to legalise and regulate cannab**is.**

“*The Coalition Government is committed to a health-based approach to drugs, to minimise harm and take control away from criminals*.”[[8]](#footnote-8) This will include:

* A minimum age of 20 to use and purchase recreational cannabis,
* Regulations and commercial supply controls,
* Limited home-growing options,
* A public education programme,

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| **Legalisation** for a full legal and regulated market for recreational cannabis Full regulation would address the following elements:1. Establish a minimum age to use and purchase recreational cannabis.
2. Limit the potency of cannabis and cannabis products available.
3. Limit the consumption of cannabis to private homes and specifically licensed premises.
4. Permit the sale of cannabis through physical stores only (not online or by remote sale).
5. Require the inclusion of health and harm minimisation messaging in the marketing and retailing of cannabis.
6. Establish the parameters whereby small amounts of cannabis maybe legally shared socially with those over the legal purchase age while reinforcing penalties for individuals who share with those under the designated purchase age.
7. Establish the regulated market controls over seed and/or plant purchase to permit private cultivation of cannabis at home, including the requirement to keep children and underage individuals safe.
8. Establish the regulated market controls that would permit cannabis-infused products to be made at home but prohibit extraction of resins and other concentrates at home.
9. Ensure thorough a state licensing regime that all stages of the supply chain are licenced and controlled.
10. Control through state licensing all manufacture of cannabis products including resins and other concentrates.
11. Control through state licensing all commercial manufacture of cannabis infused products, such as edibles.
12. Restrict marketing activities, including a ban on advertising of cannabis products.
13. Criminalise the importation of cannabis unless by a Government licensed wholesaler for the current market to minimise the consequence of illegal trade.

*Proactive Release for the 2020 Cannabis Referendum (p11-12)* |

COPYSHEET

**Decriminalisation or legalisation?**

The *Proactive Release for the 2020 Cannabis Referendum* notes the following about decriminalisation, as distinct from the previous explanation about the intentions of legalisation[[9]](#footnote-9).

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| **Decriminalisation**“Generally, decriminalisation is where personal recreational use of cannabis would remain illegal. Instead of prosecution, alternative penalties (such as a fine) would be given for cannabis use and possession offences. Decriminalising use, possession and private cultivation of recreational cannabis would end the criminalisation for people of minor instances of use, possession and private cultivation…. Decriminalisation would not address the issue of supply. People who want to use cannabis but cannot or do not wish to grown their own supply would be forced to turn to the illicit market.Decriminalisation offers the possibility of non-criminal use, and possibly legal use if there were no infringement regime of cannabis. It would almost certainly need to be accompanied by regulation of age and place of use. It would create the opportunity for suitable public health messages in places of use. The problem with decriminalisation models is that they leave supply unregulated. This impedes the ability to control quality of products (principally the THC content) and, to the extent most supply in New Zealand is controlled by criminal elements, impedes any harm minimisation associated with removing criminal elements.” Extracts only from the *Proactive Release for the 2020 Cannabis Referendum*, see pages 10-11 for the full statement. |

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| **Activity 2.** Cannabis, health and wellbeing  |
| **Purpose and background:** To establish the wellbeing focus for cannabis law reform, students revisit learning about the impacts of cannabis on wellbeing with the added consideration of the harm reduction goals of a harm minimisation approach. *Note that three activity ideas linking cannabis and wellbeing are provided.*  |
| **Learning intention and NZC HPE link:** Students will demonstrate understanding of the harms to personal health that may be caused by cannabis use and reduce health-related harm from cannabis use. *(Depending on year level and activities selected, HPE Levels 5-6, Achievement Objectives A1&3.)* **Key competencies:** Critical thinking, Participating and contributing.**Suggested time:** 60 minutes.  |
| **Resources:** * Extracts from the *Proactive Release for the 2020 Cannabis Referendum* <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-zealanders-make-decision-cannabis-referendum> – see copysheets.
* Mental Health Foundation and World Health Organisation definitions of wellbeing – see copysheet.
* Graphic from *Regulation: The Responsible Control of Drugs*, Global Commission on Drug Policy (2018). <http://www.globalcommissionondrugs.org/reports/regulation-the-responsible-control-of-drugs/> see copysheet.
* Templates for activities – see copysheets.
 |
| **Activity A. Protecting youth from harm** A key feature of the proposed legislation is that it aims to protect youth from cannabis-related harm**.** Extracts from the*Proactive Release for the 2020 Cannabis Referendum* related to youth are provided in the copysheet for this activity. * Provide a copysheet of the age-related extracts for each student and allow a few minutes for students to read the text (use an established literacy strategy for reading text if required).
* Head up 6 ‘graffiti sheets’ with the following headings. Each of the three headings below requires two separate sheets - one clearly marked ‘FOR’ and the other ‘AGAINST’
1. Legal use and purchase age should be 18 (the same as tobacco and alcohol)
2. Legal use and purchase age should be 20 (the same as the zero tolerance drink driving limit and access to casinos)
3. Legal use and purchase age should be older than 20
* Using ideas from the extracts on the copysheet, as well as their own views on the matter, students contribute ideas to each of the graffiti sheets. (This could be done in an orderly way by passing each paper around the groups in a time-bound way).
* Once students have exhausted their ideas, allocate one sheet to each of six groups. The group is responsible for summarising all of the comments on that sheet and to write a short 2-3 sentence statement in response to being for/against the age restriction noted on the sheet.
* Share these final summaries with the class.

 **Debrief:** * As appropriate, ask students for any further comments about the proposed age restrictions and whether or not they think this approach to legalisation of cannabis will reduce cannabis-related harms for youth.
* *See activity 10 for an activity about the type of education that needs to be provided for youth.*

**Activity B. Cannabis use and mental health** * Explain to students that there are many more definitions and models of health and wellbeing than te whare tapa whā. Provide students with the NZ Mental Health Foundation and World Health Organisation definitions of ‘mental health’ along with extracts from the cannabis law reform cabinet paper that focus on the wellbeing purposes of the proposed change to the legislation (copysheet provided).
* Instruct students, working in pairs, to imagine they are representing a group viewing the proposed law changes from a mental health perspective and their task is to prepare a one page promotional flier to promote how cannabis law reform aims to have a positive impact on mental health. They need to base their ideas on either the MHF or WHO definition of mental health and make link with the law reform objectives, as well as data about the current cannabis-related harms. Students can also use other materials from previous activities. The flier will be mainly words – illustrations are optional.
* Once completed, students share their flier and their rationale for their selection of ideas.

**Debrief:** What will legalising cannabis aim to achieve in relation to promoting wellbeing? What evidence is being used to justify this?**Activity C: Regulation as a way to respond to drug harms *(seniors)***This activity makes use of the 2018 report*Regulation: The Responsible Control of Drugs*, from the Global Commission on Drug Policy. Students make like to access this document for ideas. Although this activity is specifically focused on the context of cannabis, it could also be applied to other drug-related topics at senior secondary school, such as methamphetamine use. * Ask students why they think that in a growing number of countries, laws and policies are saying that legalising and responsible regulation of drugs is the only way to reduce drug-related, social and health harms. *Prompts: consider the differences between an illegal drug market and a heavily regulated one in relation to criminal activity (especially around the economic factors that sustain drug-related crimes when drugs are illegal substances), the role of law enforcement, opportunities for health promotion and health care, and protecting the interests of children and young people through prevention approaches and education.* Accept all ideas, asking for further reasoning where this is not clear.
* Provide students with the copysheet for this activity. Explain the diagram using the text provided. Check that students know how to ‘read’ the diagram, paying attention to the axes labels and how to interpret the “U” line showing ‘high’ and ‘low’ levels of social and health harm.
* Check that students understand what is meant by social harms and health harms – refer back to Activities A-D if required.
* Either as a class, or in groups, students work through the questions on the copysheet.
* **Debrief:** Ask students to reflect on the idea that legalising drugs will reduce social and health harms and whether or not they think this seemingly counter-intuitive way of approaching the problem will work. Why or why not?
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COPYSHEET Activity A

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| **Resource: Setting a minimum age for the personal use and purchase of recreational cannabis** “Consumption of cannabis is particularly harmful for those under 25 as the brain continues to develop until the mid-20s. Studies show that the likelihood of developing dependence on cannabis increases for those who use when they are young. Cannabis use is also associated with educational underachievement and school dropout, which can have enduring life consequences Use and experimentation is currently prevalent among young people in New Zealand, with a 2011 report from the Office of the Prime Minister’s Chief Science Advisor suggesting that by age 21, around 80% of young New Zealanders have tried cannabis.In setting the appropriate minimum age for cannabis use it is important to ensure access to cannabis would be restricted, thus minimising harm to youth. At the same time however, we need to find a balance between regulating to protect people and inadvertently driving supply underground. … the minimum age for cannabis use, including the purchase age should be set at 20 … a minimum age of 20 is workable in New Zealand and adequately addresses the objective of improving wellbeing of young people who are at greater risk of harm from cannabis use. It would also contribute to establishing social and cultural norms against use by young people, especially those in secondary school. Although a minimum age of 20 would not align with the current age limit of 18 for tobacco and alcohol, it does align with entry to casinos and the zero tolerance/drink driving age, both of which are 20. The main issue with setting a minimum age of 18 is that it would provide an opportunity for 18-year olds to supply cannabis to younger school-aged peers. Setting the minimum age higher than 20 would recognise the greater risk of harm cannabis use has on people under 25. However, it would likely push a significant number of people to the black market, which would be inconsistent with the primary objective of minimising harm. …. Setting the minimum age at 20 strikes the appropriate balance between deterring use by young people, especially those in secondary school, while ensuring safe and legal access to cannabis is available for most of the people who choose to use it.” |

Extracts from *Proactive Release for the 2020 Cannabis Referendum* <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-zealanders-make-decision-cannabis-referendum> (p. 14-15).

COPYSHEET Activity B

**(Mental) health and cannabis law reform**

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| **Resource 1. Definitions of mental health and cannabis use** **The Mental Health Foundation defines mental health as** *the capacity to feel, think and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It is a positive sense of emotional and spiritual wellbeing that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice and personal dignity.* <https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/glossary/>**The World Health Organisation defines mental health as** *being a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.* <https://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/> |

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| **Resource 2. Primary objectives for cannabis reform** * Address the wellbeing of all New Zealanders and harm reduction – the model should minimise harms associated with cannabis, such as health related harm, social harms, and harm to youth.
* Lower the overall use of cannabis over time through education and addiction services - with a particular focus on lowering the use amongst youths by increasing the age of first use. Revenue raised through the regulation of cannabis should contribute to relevant health-related measures.

*Proactive Release for the 2020 Cannabis Referendum* <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-zealanders-make-decision-cannabis-referendum> (p. 13).  |

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| **Resource 3. Cannabis causes harm** Regular use of cannabis increases the risk of developing depression, psychosis and schizophrenia. Use can be particularly harmful for under 25 olds as the brain is still developing. Additionally, consuming cannabis by smoking can increase the risk of developing breathing issues, lung damage and some cancers, and second hand smoke could have detrimental impacts on others. There is also a high risk of dependence among those who regularly use, including a one in six chance of young people developing a dependence. Cannabis use also contributes to social issues. For example, cannabis use can be a factor in offending by some people, and family and friends can be affected by the user’s behaviour and addiction issues. Cannabis impairment can be a factor on motor vehicle accidents (after alcohol, cannabis is the most common substance found in impaired drivers’ systems) and health and safety incidents at work.”*Proactive Release for the 2020 Cannabis Referendum* <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-zealanders-make-decision-cannabis-referendum> (p. 12).  |

COPYSHEET Activity C

**Regulation as a way to respond to drug harms**

Read the statement below. Once you have worked out how to ‘read’ the diagram, discuss the following questions with your group.

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| The figure below ‘*captures the essence of the case for regulation. The spectrum of policy options runs from:* * *one effectively unregulated market – the criminal market under prohibition* (left hand side),
* *to the legal, commercialised free market* (right hand side).

*For both,* ***profit is the primary motivation****, and neither has to cope with the consequences in terms of potential health and social harms.* ***Between these extremes, an optimal level of government regulation can minimise overall harm and maximise benefits.*** *Strict government regulation can, therefore, reasonably lay claim to the pragmatic, centre-ground position.’*Source: Global Commission on Drug Policy (2018). *Regulation: The Responsible Control of Drugs* <http://www.globalcommissionondrugs.org/reports/regulation-the-responsible-control-of-drugs/>  |



For Q1-3, keep your initial answers about cannabis. You may then consider other drugs that are the focus for your learning (e.g. methamphetamine).

1. Explain why you think an unregulated criminal market results in high levels of social and health harms from drug use – that is, where drugs are illegal/prohibited and are manufactured and sold through criminal activity. *(Left hand side of the diagram.)*
2. Explain why you think unrestricted access to drugs also results in high levels of social and health harms from drug use – that is, where drugs are ‘legal’ and the manufacture and sale is not regulated or controlled in any way. *(Right hand side of the diagram.)*
3. So how is it that responsible legal regulation (between the left and right hand extremes) claims to offer the most hope for minimising overall harm and maximising benefits. *(Middle section of the diagram.)*
4. Consider the current regulation of alcohol and tobacco in New Zealand. Where on the “U” would you say alcohol lies? What about tobacco? Do you think regulation has worked to reduce social and health harms from alcohol and tobacco use in NZ? Why or why not? Explain your thinking and the evidence you would point to that backs up your claim.

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| **Activity 3.** Values continuum |
| **Purpose and background:** A values continuum is a popular way to explore a diversity of values and beliefs that a group of students may have about a situation or an issue. To provide some ‘distance’ from their own views, this version of the activity requires pairs of students to create a ‘character profile’ and respond to the continuum statements from the perspective of their character. The statements all relate to aspects of the proposed law reform and referendum.  |
| **Learning intention and NZC HPE link:** Students will demonstrate understanding of the values and beliefs people have about cannabis use. *(HPE Achievement Objective 6A1).***Key competencies:** Critical thinking, Participating and contributing, Relating to others. **Suggested time:** 60 minutes.  |
| **Resources:** * Character profile sheets – one for each pair of students
* A set of continuum statement cards
* AGREE - NOT SURE – DISAGREE cards.
 |
| **Teaching and learning process:****Preparation:** * In preparation for responding to the values continuum statements, students working in pairs will develop a character profile (see the following copysheet).
* Explain to the students that this is to ‘distance’ them from their own views because they will be responding to the continuum statements based on what their character believes, which may be similar of different to their own views – but no one will know that. They need to be able to imagine what it would be like to think like their character so they need to develop a character profile they have some familiarity with.
* Consider a range of safety considerations as students develop their character profile such as not being overly stereotypical, or selecting obvious characteristics of people in the school community.
* Provide sufficient supervision and direction for students to ensure a wide range of ‘characters’ across the class.

**Facilitating the values continuum** There are many ways to facilitate a values continuum. This version provides pairs of students with a statement prior to placing it on the continuum in order to give them time to think about how they will respond to the statement. *Select another method if greater class engagement is achieved through other ways of facilitating a continuum.* * Seat students in a circle with their partner.
* At opposite sides of the circle place the ‘agree’ and ‘disagree’ cards, and place ‘unsure’ in the middle.
* Distribute the statements one to each pair.
* Explain to the students that after they have had time to discuss their statement and decide a reason why their character would agree/disagree with the statement (or if they are not sure), they will one at a time put their statement at a place the continuum reflecting their level of (dis)agreement and state their reasons for the placement.
* As each statement is placed (with reasons) the teacher asks further questions about why their character that led them to place their card in a particular place if the reasons are unclear or could be explored further.
* The teacher then invites 2-3 other ‘characters’ (pairs) if they have similar of different views about the statement and why this is so.
* Continue until all statements have been considered.
* Leave the ‘legalisation’ statement until last so that it can be used as a summary for the activity. At this time, ask each ‘character’ for their response is to the legalisation question and to give a reason why.

**Debrief and reflection:*** What does an activity like this tell us about the (likely) range of values and beliefs about cannabis in a community?
* Why do you think things can get quite emotional or ‘heated’ when communities are asked to vote on social issues like cannabis reform?
* Did answering the statements from the perspective of a character make this activity easier or more difficult? Did you feel more confident to express a view that was, or wasn’t necessarily your own? Why was this?
 |
| **Student learning journal entry / artefacts that provide evidence of learning:*** Students file their character profile.
* Ask students to each select two continuum statements. As far as possible, try to select one statement where their personal views are similar to their character, and one where their views differ.
* In their learning journal students record the statement, their personal view about the statement, and how or why this was similar or different to their character.
* (For seniors) What is the basis for their value judgement – what is it they believe or value in these situations, and for them, where do they think have these beliefs or values have come from?
 |
| **Teacher knowledge and support resources:*** Teachers may need knowledge of different methods for facilitating a values continuum activity if the suggested process is not the most effective process for a particular group of students – see the year 9-11 AoD resource from NZHEA.
* Other clauses from the *Proactive Release for the 2010 Cannabis Referendum* can be used as a source of further ideas for continuum statements, especially around the production and supply of cannabis.
 |
| **Teacher reflection on and evaluation of the activity:*** How responsive where students to this approach to a continuum activity? Would you do again in future – and in what context? What would you change and why?
* What did this activity reveal about students’ understanding of the values and beliefs that underpin their cannabis-related attitudes and behaviours (whether that’s use or non-use)? Which comments and ideas will be useful to pick up on and use in later activities?
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COPYSHEET

**Character profile**

Complete the following profile in pairs.

You will respond to the continuum statements based on the perspective of your character. You do not need to use your own views to respond to the continuum statements.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Age group | Under 18 | 18-25 | 26-40 | 41-65 | 65+ |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Gender  | Female | Male  | Gender diverse  |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Has your character ever used cannabis? | YES | NO  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| If your character has ever used cannabis do they ….  | No longer use it | Use it very occasionally  | Use it often (at least weekly)  | Heavy user (use it most days)  |

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| Has your character ever used alcohol? | YES | NO  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| If your character has ever used alcohol do they ….  | No longer use it | Use it very occasionally  | Use it often (at least weekly)  | Heavy drinker (use it most days and drink a lot)  |

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| Is your character a parent?  | YES | NO  |

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| What sort of work does your character do (if any) or are they a school, polytechnic or university student, or unemployed? |  |

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| In general, what does your character think or believe about cannabis use?  |  |

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| Provide any other information about your character that may influence the decision they make about cannabis law reform (e.g. their state of health, the nature of their work, how much money they have, their other interests and hobbies, etc) |  |

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| --- | --- |
| If your character is old enough to vote, will they vote for law reform (to legalise cannabis in a regulated way), or vote against legalising cannabis? What is the main reason for their decision?  | FOR / AGAINST Reason:  |

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**Continuum statements**

1. Legalising cannabis will help promote wellbeing about cannabis use.
2. Legalising cannabis will mean far more people will suffer from cannabis-related harms.
3. It makes sense to regulate the type of cannabis products that can be legalised, especially as it relates to the level of THC in the products.
4. If legalised, cannabis should only be allowed to be used in own homes or specifically designated places (e.g. some cafes) *– that is, it cannot be used in public places or workplaces.*
5. Cannabis should be ‘decriminalised’ and not ‘legalised’.
6. Legalising cannabis for personal use will not reduce harms to personal health.
7. Legalising cannabis for personal use will reduce personal social harms.
8. Legalising personal use of cannabis to reduce criminal convictions is a good idea.
9. Policing or controlling the type of cannabis products that can be used (as the law reform suggests) will be difficult.
10. Having a purchase age of 18 for alcohol and tobacco, and a purchase age of 20 for cannabis is contradictory (or doesn’t make sense)
11. Setting the purchase age at 20 will instead of 18 will avoid the problem of the supply cannabis to younger school-aged peers.
12. Under 20’s should not be allowed to vote in the referendum if the legal age for personal use is to be set at 20 years old.
13. Legalising cannabis is telling children and young people (under 20’s) that it’s OK to use cannabis.
14. The age of use should be even higher than 20 (like 25) given the information about the potential harm cannabis causes younger people.
15. Cannabis should be legalised.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| AGREE | NOT SURE | DISAGREE  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Activity 4.** ‘In role’ debate |
| **Purpose and background:** Using ‘in role’ responses to cannabis related situations, this activity requires students to develop a ‘profile’ of a lobby group who are either for or against cannabis law reform and consolidate their learning through a debate. ‘In role’, the groups debate the reasons for and against the referendum using ideas from a range of the previous activities. The perspectives of the debate maintain a focus on the wellbeing considerations of the issue. |
| **Learning intention and NZC HPE link:** Students will demonstrate understanding of perspectives for and against cannabis law reform. *(HPE Level 7/8, Achievement Objective D1).* **Key competencies:** Critical thinking, Relating to others, Participating and contributing.**Suggested time:** 60 minutes.  |
| **Resources:** Copysheet for developing the organisation profile.  |
| **Teaching and learning process:*** Explain to students that they will use ideas developed in previous activities to summarise the issues for and against cannabis law reform in the form of a debate. Like a formal debate with a moot that different teams argue for or against, they may be arguing a case that differs from their own opinion and beliefs.
* Divide the class into 4 and either by allocation or negotiation, assign each group a position ‘extremely for’ or ‘slightly for’ and ‘extremely against’ or ‘slightly ‘against’ (see profile sheet). *If the size of the class means more groups are needed, double up on one or more of the extreme ‘positons’ or assign one group to be the adjudicators who will judge the performance of each group and decide a winner for the debate.*
* First, each group needs to complete their ‘lobby group profile’ using ideas from Activity 7 and other relevant activities. All members of the group are expected to contribute to the profile and the ideas for the arguments in both the first and second rounds of the debate, but it may not be practical for everyone to speak – groups can decide who does the speaking.
* Explain the ‘debate’ process: in the first round each lobby group will present their case with no interruptions - and then in a second round someone can speak as a rebuttal to other cases.
* Seat the groups in four separate areas of the class.
* One group at a time will be asked to put their case (teacher to decide the order). It may be useful to allow time between the first and second rounds to give the groups the opportunity to decide their rebuttal arguments, in response to the other group’s comments.
* Explain any further ‘rules’ and any safety guidelines e.g. one speaker/group at a time, no put downs, etc and to remind students that in the nature of debating, the people speaking are not necessarily giving their personal the beliefs on the matter – and not to judge the person for anything they say.
* Allow the debate to proceed.
* Either the teacher and/or a designated group can judge the debate, giving most points to groups who make a strong case around the wellbeing considerations of the proposed law reform. The judge(s) justify their decision.
 |
| **Student learning journal entry / artefacts that provide evidence of learning:*** If useful, any notes that were made developing the profile (and the lobby group profile) could be filed in the learning journal for use with other activities.
* Students reflect on the process of the debate and answer this question in their learning journal: “How do (or how can) activities like debates help you to understand wellbeing issues?”
 |
| **Teacher knowledge and support resources:*** Experience or knowledge of different ways to conduct a debate will be useful to accommodate different class dynamics, skills and willingness to engage in debate-type activities.
 |
| **Teacher reflection on and evaluation of the activity:*** How responsive were students to debating like this where they may have needed to take a positon contradictory to their own beliefs or opinion. What are the implications of this for other learning where students will need to be able to see situations from different perspectives? What other types of activity help students in this class to view issues from different perspectives?
 |

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**Lobby group profile**

Prior to the debate your lobby group needs to develop its ‘profile’.

In consideration of the proposed New Zealand referendum on cannabis, is your group (circle one):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Extremely in favour of the legalisation of cannabis  | Somewhat in favour of the legalisation of cannabis | Somewhat against the legalisation of cannabis | Extremely against the legalisation of cannabis |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Give your group a name for promotion and identification purposes. |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ROUND 1. Arguments you will make to support YOUR group’s position on the referendum. Include the points you will make with reasons WHY your group supports these ideas. *Make sure you focus on the wellbeing considerations*.  |  |
| ROUND 2. Arguments you could make to counter the position of the opposing groups (since these will likely be the opposite of your group). *Be prepared to challenge them if their arguments do not relate to wellbeing in some way. You will get time to add to this between each round of the debate.* |  |

Appendix

Cannabis[[10]](#footnote-10)

**Marijuana, weed, pot**

Cannabis (also called pot, marijuana, weed, dope, grass, mull, dak, hash, smoke, buds, skunk, cabbage, ganja, reefer) is the most commonly used illegal drug in New Zealand. Cannabis comes from the Cannabis Sativa plant and is used both for recreational and medicinal purposes. As a recreational drug, it can be used in a dried plant, resin, or oil form. The potency of cannabis depends on its concentration of THC, which is higher in resin and oil than in the dried plant. The psychoactive potency of cannabis depends on its concentration of THC, which is higher in resin and hash oil. Cannabis is widely available in New Zealand.

* 12% of New Zealanders got high on weed in the past 12 months (Health Survey)
* By the age of 21, 80% of New Zealanders have tried cannabis at least once. And 10% developed a pattern of heavy use (Dunedin and Christchurch Longitudinal Studies).

**What it feels like**

Smoking cannabis can have an immediate effect. It can take an hour or more to feel the effects when eaten. Cannabis can make you feel relaxed, giggly, and hungry, or hallucinate or have a dry mouth. Using more cannabis can result in negative effects including blurred vision, bloodshot eyes, feeling sluggish, difficulty concentrating, slower reflexes, increased heart rate and lower blood pressure, and feelings of paranoia and anxiety.

Withdrawal from regular cannabis use can last a week, and symptoms include anxiety, irritability, craving, aggression and difficulty sleeping.

**How to be safer**

All drug use brings a risk of harm. The best way to stay safe is to plan. People using cannabis products need to know their limits and how cannabis affects them.

Eating cannabis in food or drink form is the least harmful way of using it. People using cannabis products this ways should make sure they wait at least two hours before eating more so that they do not use more than they intended to.

Smoking anything is harmful for your lungs and heart. Vaporisers are safer because they heat rather than burn cannabis so you can achieve the same effect as smoking, without or the strain from deep inhaling or the harm of inhaling smoke. Vaporisers are also less harmful than smoking bongs or filtered joints.

Mixing any drugs together increases the risk of harm. Using cannabis with alcohol increases the likelihood of experiencing negative effects.

**When to get help**

People cannot have a fatal overdose from cannabis use. However, if a person has too much in one session it can lead to a very unpleasant experience. Anxiety and panic attacks, disorientation, and inability to focus are all signs that a person has had too much. Other negative effects from taking too much include loss of coordination, shortness of breath, increased heart rate and shaking, chills and sweats.

Symptoms will usually pass if the person doesn't take anymore and try to keep calm.

**Cutting down**

A person may be experiencing substance use disorder if they are:

* using more than they want to
* finding it hard to stop using cannabis
* missing school, work or family commitments
* always thinking about cannabis
* feel that their use is changing them in a negative way

Other things to keep an eye out for are changes in concentration, memory, motivation, and mood. People can take the Pot Help [[11]](#footnote-11)test to see if their use of cannabis is a problem.

If a person decides to cut back or stop after using cannabis regularly, they may experience psychological and physical withdrawal symptoms such as irritability, sleep difficulty, vivid dreams, and decreased appetite. It is recommended that people talk to a trusted friend or family member about a plan to change, and ask them to look out for and support them. Alternatively, call Alcohol and Drug Helpline 0800 787 797 for confidential, non-judgmental advice and referral to a local service provider.

**Things to look out for**

Synthetic cannabis is illegal in New Zealand. It is designed to imitate the effects of cannabis and is usually dried plant material sprayed with chemicals known as synthetic cannabinoids. It is also available in liquid form. Little is known about the chemicals used in synthetic cannabis and the effects can be unpredictable, especially when mixed with other substances.

Users have reported toxic symptoms, extreme reactions and serious psychological problems from using synthetic cannabis. These include: high blood, pressure, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting, chest pain, heart palpitations, severe anxiety and paranoia, fear of dying, hallucinations, tremors and seizures, violent behaviour, and suicidal thoughts. These toxic symptoms have lasting several days and others have experienced long term mental health issues. Tolerance can develop quickly which means you will need more to get the same effect.

**Synnies, synthetic cannabis, Spice, Kronic[[12]](#footnote-12)**

Synthetic cannabinoids are substances most often applied to smokable plant material. The finished product is sometimes called synthetic cannabis or synnies. It's safest not to use synthetic cannabinoids at all or if a person does use them do, they should treat them with extreme caution to avoid an unpleasant experience, injury or death.

Synthetic cannabinoids are illegal, addictive and dangerous. Countless synthetic cannabinoids have been invented in the past 20 years. Examples in New Zealand include 5F-ADB, AB-FUBINACA, AMB-FUBINACA and JWH-122. They target the cannabinoid receptors in the brain like cannabis, but can be more toxic. More than fifty New Zealanders are suspected of having died after using synthetic cannabinoids since mid-2017.

*See also the video “Did you know: Synthetic Psychoactive substances[[13]](#footnote-13)” on the New Zealand Drug Foundation website.*

1. New Zealanders to make the decision in cannabis referendum (May 2019) <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-zealanders-make-decision-cannabis-referendum> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. NZHEA resources <https://healtheducation.org.nz/resources/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Tūturu resources <https://www.tuturu.org.nz/resource-hub/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Matters of Substance <https://www.drugfoundation.org.nz/matters-of-substance/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Health not Handcuffs <https://www.healthnothandcuffs.nz/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Proactive Release for the 2020 Cannabis Referendum - cabinet paper <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-zealanders-make-decision-cannabis-referendum> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Global Commission on Drug Policy (2018). Regulation: The Responsible Control of Drugs <http://www.globalcommissionondrugs.org/reports/regulation-the-responsible-control-of-drugs/> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Statement from the Justice Minister Andrew Little (May, 2019) <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-zealanders-make-decision-cannabis-referendum> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Proactive Release for the 2010 Cannabis Referendum Page 10-11 <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-zealanders-make-decision-cannabis-referendum> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. NZ Drug Foundation information on cannabis <https://www.drugfoundation.org.nz/info/drug-index/cannabis/> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Pot Help Test <https://www.pothelp.org.nz/my-pothelp/take-the-test> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Synthetic cannabinoids information <https://www.drugfoundation.org.nz/info/drug-index/synthetic-cannabinoids/> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. “Did you know: Synthetic Psychoactive substance” (video) NZ Drug Foundation <https://www.drugfoundation.org.nz/info/did-you-know/synthetics/> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)