

# Youth Lesson Plan

## *Synthetic Marijuana: The Truth About K2 Spice*

### Lesson At A Glance

Total Time: 60 minutes

#### **Section 1:**

Activity: What Do You Know?

#### **Section 2:**

Discussion: Intro to K2 Spice

#### **Section 3:**

Activity: Intro to Peer Pressure

#### **Section 4:**

Discussion: Refuse to Use

#### **Section 5:**

Activity: Practice Makes Perfect

**By the end of this session, participants will be able to:**

- Define K2 Spice and explain some of its history
- Identify some of the risks associated with the use of K2 Spice
- Identify different forms of peer pressure
- Identify ways to resist peer pressure or peer influence

**Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Writing utensils for each participant
- ✓ K2 Spice true/false challenge worksheet
- ✓ 2 scarves, 2 pairs of gloves, 2 large t-shirts, 2 balloons
- ✓ Tough Situations worksheets
- ✓ K2 post-lesson youth participant questionnaire (optional)

**Additional Notes for the Facilitator:**

- You can choose to do the entire lesson plan, or you can break it into two separate lesson plans . one on K2 Spice and one on peer pressure.
- This lesson plan will likely work best with youth ages 10-14. You may need to modify the lesson plan to fit the age and specific needs of your group.
- Depending on your group, you may want to set up group standards that everyone agrees to follow throughout the session . such as, %respect everyone's opinions+or %what's said in this room, stays in this room.+
- Depending on your group, you may want to plan an %ice breaker+activity that helps people to get to know one another or gets them ready for a group discussion.
- A post-lesson questionnaire is provided for you on the Task Force CD toolkit. If you choose to use this tool you may need some extra time to administer the survey at the end of the lesson plan.

## Section 1 Activity: What Do You Know?

**Estimated Time** 5 minutes



- ✓ K2 Spice true/false challenge worksheet
- ✓ Writing utensils



**Today we will be talking about a drug called K2 Spice, but before we get started into our discussion we want to see what you already know.**



1. Give each person a K2 Spice true/false challenge worksheet and ask them to work alone.
2. Remind them this is not an actual quiz that will be graded . it's just for us to see what you already know.
3. Give them a few minutes to work on the quiz and then go over the answers as a group.
4. Let them know that you'll be giving them more information about the correct answers in your discussion.

**Worksheet Answer Key:**

1. True
2. True
3. False
4. False
5. True
6. False



**Facilitator's Note:** It is important to gauge what youth already know about K2 Spice as well as identify some of the myths they believe to be true, so you can address this during the lesson. As you go over the information throughout the lesson, be sure to refer back to the worksheet.

## Section 2 Discussion: Intro to Synthetic Marijuana

**Estimated Time** 15 minutes



**QUESTIONS:**

**Have any of you heard of “K2,” or “Spice”? If so, can you tell us what it is or what you’ve heard about it?**

**SUGGESTED ANSWERS/INFORMATION:**

K2 Spice, sometimes called just K2 or just Spice, is a dried herbal blend (could look like dried spices people used for cooking) that is sprayed with a chemical. There are different forms of the chemical, but what's important to know is that the chemicals were created in a lab and have names such as JHW-018 or JWH-073.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Iowa Department of Public Health, Synthetic Marijuana Fact Sheet, <<http://www.drugfreeinfo.org/PDFs/Synthetic%20Marijuana%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>>, Retrieved April 8, 2011.

The package labeling warns that it should not be used for human consumption . it is meant to be burned as incense. Incense is a substance, such as wood, that people burn for the sweet smell. Unfortunately people have used K2 inappropriately . smoking it as a drug - in order to produce a high.+

**Has anyone heard any other names for K2 or Spice?**

You may also hear it referred to as:

- Synthetic marijuana
- Genie
- Zohai
- Demon
- Fake weed
- K-2 Summit
- There may be others too<sup>2</sup>

**Where might you see K2 Spice and similar products sold?**

- Gas stations
- Convenience stores
- Online websites

**Like we just mentioned some people call K2 “fake weed” and that it’s sold online or in a gas stations. In what way could these facts be deceiving about K2 Spice?**

This is deceiving because it could make people think that it’s safer than marijuana or a good substitute because you won’t get in trouble for using it.

**What do you think about this? Do you think that’s true?**

There are risks that come along with any decision we make and today we want to talk about some of the risks associated with K2 so you can make informed decisions.

Like any drug, if a person chooses to use K2 Spice there are short and long term health risks, risks associated with your relationships and your goals, and risks associated with the legal system.

**What are some of the short term effects, or symptoms, of using K2?**

- Hallucinations (can be intense)
- Severe agitation
- Vomiting

---

<sup>2</sup> Iowa Department of Public Health, Synthetic Marijuana Fact Sheet, <<http://www.drugfreeinfo.org/PDFs/Synthetic%20Marijuana%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>>, Retrieved April 8, 2011.

- Elevated heart rate
- Elevated blood pressure
- Tremors and seizures
- Anxiety
- Numbness and tingling
- Agitation
- Pale skin and dilated pupils

Even trying K2 or products like it one time could cause serious side effects. From February 2010 to October 2010 (that's 9 months) there were **352** cases reported to poison centers throughout the United States. That's almost 39 cases per month!<sup>3</sup>

**What about the long term effects?**

At this time there is not a lot of information available about how using K2 or Spice can affect users' health in the long run.

However, some resources state that the chemicals sprayed on products such as K2 Spice are addictive and could lead to cancer.<sup>4</sup>

**What do you think about the fact that researchers aren't certain about all the ways that using K2 will impact users' health in the future?**

It's scary and alarming because users have no idea of what kind of serious damage they could be causing to their bodies. No tests have been done on humans to know the long term effects; tests have only been done on mice.

**What are some of the legal consequences of using K2 or Spice? Can you get in trouble for using?**

In October of 2010, Michigan banned the sale, purchase, possession and use of K2 Spice. It is illegal, which means users could face legal consequences. In fact, penalties for violation of the law could mean a criminal record, fines and/or jail.<sup>5</sup>

It's a recent development in the United States that people started using these products as drugs and the laws are being developed and sometimes they are changing. Less than a year

<sup>3</sup> Michigan Safety Network, October 2010, The dangers of K2 Spice, now an illegal substance in Michigan, <[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/msp/SNN\\_Oct\\_2010\\_04\\_web\\_337221\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/msp/SNN_Oct_2010_04_web_337221_7.pdf)>, Retrieved April 8, 2011.

<sup>4</sup> Iowa Department of Public Health, Synthetic Marijuana Fact Sheet, <<http://www.drugfreeinfo.org/PDFs/Synthetic%20Marijuana%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>>, Retrieved April 8, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Michigan Department of Community Health, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Administration, Bureau of Substance Abuse and Addiction Services, K2 Spice Fact Sheet, <[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/Fact\\_Sheet-\\_K2\\_Spice\\_340835\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/Fact_Sheet-_K2_Spice_340835_7.pdf)>, Retrieved April 8, 2011.

ago it was legal for stores to sell K2 Spice and for people to buy it but not anymore.

**Let's think about this for a minute.....not that long ago this stuff was legal and you could buy it at the gas station. Now it is illegal, you could get in major trouble for buying or using it and it's really unsafe to use. So you might be wondering....What's going on here? What's really true?**

What might help us understand all this is to know some of the history and some more of the story about K2 Spice. We're still learning a lot of new things about it, but here's what we know so far.

1. Some of the chemicals that are now sprayed on K2 Spice were created a long time ago in a lab by this guy who wanted to learn more about how marijuana affected the human body and brain. So, the chemicals were meant for a science experiment in a way; he never intended for people to use them.
2. Other people then decided that if the chemical was smoked or consumed it would create a high that is similar to marijuana, and they knew people would pay money for that, so they copied what the guy in the lab did; only now they sprayed it on herbs and started selling it in stores. They also sold the product in small packages that would attract youth and young kids and wrote things like 100% organic herbs on the package, which was a really sneaky thing to do because it tricked people into thinking that it was safe.
3. They tried to say that they were selling it as incense, so they were allowed to sell it in stores and that no one would get in trouble for using it.
4. People started using it as a drug and as a result were getting really sick, calling the poison control centers and going to the emergency room because they were experiencing such horrible side effects and symptoms.
5. This started getting people's attention, so the government and scientists started doing more research into K2 Spice. What they discovered is that this product is really dangerous and should become illegal in order to protect people's health.<sup>6</sup>

**Is there anything about the history of**

<sup>6</sup> Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Register, Vol. 76, No. 40, March 1, 2011, Rules and Regulations, pg. 11075-11078.

## K2 Spice that stands out to you or surprises you?

**We now know that K2 Spice is illegal is use, but let's think about something else – Do you think that if something is legal to use that means it's safe or smart for you to use? Can you think of other things that are legal, but not safe or smart to use?**

- No, legal does NOT equal safe or smart.
- Cigarettes are legal at the age of 18, but we know that cigarettes can cause cancer and do other damaging things to the body.
- Over the counter medicines are legal, but it is very unsafe to take too much.
- Also, did you know that there is nothing that regulates the companies that make products like K2 Spice?<sup>7</sup> This means they could put whatever they want in their product . there could be lawn clippings in there for all we know!

## ●● Section 3 Activity: Intro to Peer Pressure

**Estimated Time** 15 minutes

 **Facilitator's Note:** This activity works best with not more than 10 participants (5 on each team). If your group is larger, feel free to have more than 2 teams, which means you would need more of each item on the materials list.

- 
- ✓ 2 large shirts
  - ✓ 2 pairs of gloves
  - ✓ 2 scarves
  - ✓ 2 balloons (blown up)

 **We're going to play a game to introduce our next topic – peer pressure. This is a team relay race with two rounds.**

- 
1. Divide the group into two teams (you can have them count off by twos).
  2. Have each team form a single file line.
  3. Place the items on a chair or table on the other side of the room. Each team should have 1 shirt, 1 pair of gloves, and 1 scarf on the table/chair that's set up on the other side of the room.
  4. This is a relay race.

<sup>7</sup> Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Register, Vol. 76, No. 40, March 1, 2011, Rules and Regulations, pg. 11075-11078.

5. For the first round, the person in front of the line for each team should race to the items, and put on the shirt, gloves, and scarf as fast as possible.
6. After they put everything on, they must take it all off, set it down, race back to their team and tag the next person in line, and then sit at the end of the line.
7. The team that goes through their line the fastest (and everyone is sitting down) is the winner of round one.
  
8. For the second round, each team does the same thing with an added challenge . they have to keep a blown up balloon in the air
9. When each person is putting on the clothes they have to also keep the balloon in the air at all times.
10. If the balloon hits the ground, they have to take off the clothes and start over again.
11. The balloon does not have to stay in the air while passing the clothes to the next person.
12. Team members are not allowed to help other team members keep the balloon in the air, or help them get dressed.
13. Announce the winner of the second round, and then have everyone take their seats for the follow up discussion



**Which round was harder, the first or the second round? How come?**

**In the second round, what did you have to focus on the most?**

Keeping the balloon in the air.

**Did keeping the balloon in the air distract you from what you were trying to accomplish?**

Yes.

**Who can tell us how this activity is related to peer pressure?**

The first round symbolized a person's life: doing your day-to-day stuff, your future goals, what you want to accomplish.

The second round represented how peer pressure can become a huge distraction and change your focus. Trying to deal with peer pressure took away from what you were trying to accomplish.

## Section 4 Discussion: Refuse to Use

Estimated Time 10 minutes



As we all know, peer pressure, or peer influence, can play a huge role when it comes to people deciding to get involved in different situations. The way our peers influence us can be a good thing or a bad thing.

### QUESTIONS:

What are some examples of good things that can come out of positive peer pressure?

So now what are some examples of “bad” things that can come out of negative peer pressure?

Here’s the thing...peer pressure doesn’t always mean that your friend is in your face trying to get you to do something; it can take on many different forms.

Today we’re going to talk briefly about three different forms of peer pressure you might encounter – internal, indirect and direct.

Does anyone know any examples of the first one - internal peer pressure?

### SUGGESTED ANSWERS/INFORMATION:

- ✓ Encouraging a peer to study or do homework
- ✓ Encouraging a peer to try a new food or try a new hobby
- ✓ Encouraging a peer to try out for a sport
- ✓ Encouraging a peer to face a fear

Notice a theme here? Usually positive peer pressure has an element of encouragement, not making someone feel bad about themselves or like they might lose their friendship if they don’t do something.

- Pressuring peers to use alcohol, tobacco or any other drugs
- Pressuring peers to lie
- Pressuring peers to skip school
- Pressuring peers to break the law or do something that would get them in trouble with their family

Internal peer pressure is the pressure you put on yourself because of what you THINK your friends or people your age SHOULD be doing. For

example, if you start smoking because you think most kids your age are smoking, that's internal peer pressure. You feel pressured to do so you think you'll be fitting in or won't be left out.

The truth is, teens typically OVER-estimate what their friends are actually doing. For example, teens might think that everyone is drinking alcohol, when in reality there are more teens not drinking alcohol than there are actually drinking. And don't be deceived - people might even lie about what they're actually doing because they feel the same kind of internal pressure!

**Can someone give an example of indirect peer pressure?**

This is when no one actually asks you to do something, but because they are doing it around you, you feel pressured to do the same.

For example, if you're at a party and everyone is drinking. Maybe no one asks you if you want a drink, but you feel like you should drink because everyone around you is drinking.

**And finally, who can give an example of direct peer pressure?**

This is when someone directly asks you to do something. If you were at a party and someone asked you if you wanted to drink, it is considered direct peer pressure. You could feel pressured if the person asks you a lot of times or just once; either way, it's still peer pressure.

**Every person experiences peer pressure at some time in their life (adults do too!). What can make it hard to beat peer pressure?**

- Want to fit in or be popular
- Want to save face
- Don't want to be left out
- Don't want to disappoint your friends
- Don't want your friends to make fun of you
- Don't want to be viewed as a punk or scared
- Don't know how to say no when you're put on the spot
- Don't have the confidence

**While it can be hard to beat peer pressure, and it's different for everyone, there are ways that you can refuse or avoid negative pressure. Can you think of some ways?**

- Simply say no in an assertive (not aggressive) and believable way
- Give a reason why you don't want to do it (example . I play sports, I don't want to get in trouble, I'm not interested, I'm trying to go to

- college/get a job and that could mess it up)
- Give an alternative or suggest something else to do (example . no, let's go play video games instead, let rather shop)
- Leave the scene . just get out of there
- Avoid the scene . if you know that there's a situation (like a party) where you will feel pressured, just don't go there
- Have a plan . some teens have a code+text message or phone call with their parents or siblings that means "come pick me up+or I need to get out of a bad situation.+ You could set something up like this with someone you trust.

## ● Section 5 Activity: Practice Makes Perfect

**Estimated Time** 15 minutes



- ✓ Tough Situations+worksheets
- ✓ Writing utensil for each participant



**Another idea is to think through your decision before you're ever in that situation. For example, ask yourself, "What would be my plan if I was ever around a drug like K2?" And then act out in your mind what you would do, so if you ever find yourself in that situation, you are prepared.**

**We're going to do an activity now that gives you an opportunity to do just that. You'll each get a worksheet that describes a possible risky situation. There are lots of options on how you can respond in these situations, so your job will be to think of possible options and their possible outcomes/consequences.**



1. Pass out the Tough Situations+worksheet . one for each person. There are three different versions; you can give each person a different version or pick the one that best works with your group.
2. Give them some time to work on the worksheet on their own.
3. Have each person (or some volunteers) share their answers, as well as the final decision they would make and why.
4. You may need to help them think through possible results of each decision.



**Facilitator's Note:** Remember to give positive feedback. If youth have the chance to practice what they would do in tough situations, it will help to increase their confidence, and they will be more likely to do the same thing in a real life situation.