

Challenge to break myth 5 “Information on the dangers of drugs prevents drug use “!

The fifth fact sheet tackles the myth that spreading information on the danger of drugs prevents drug use, and thus is a good way of supporting the health and wellbeing of youth. It aims to discuss the complex ways in which the information we receive, and all the other messages we encounter e.g. via different forms of media, influence our attitudes, values and behavior – also with regard to substance use. It also aims to show how much more than just spreading information is needed. In fact spreading messages on dangers of drugs can even lead to opposite outcomes as it can increase curiosity and experimentation with drug use, or in the other hand increase stigmatization of those already using drugs.

To break this myth and to spread awareness on the influence of media, **we challenge you to analyse media that you use on a daily basis!**

Media influences our perceptions and opinions. Often we are just not aware of this. We would like to challenge you to choose three days of your upcoming week in which you examine the media you use carefully. Open up your eyes to see how many messages on substance use you actually encounter, and then try and deconstruct those messages that are conveyed through the various media channels such as television, journals, radio, blogs, YouTube, or whatever form of media it is that you consume.

Document your experiences in a way you can share it with others – list all the messages that you find related to substance use and add your thoughts on the underlying “sub-text”. Through analysing the underlying meanings and persuasion techniques used in the messages we can better see how they might shape our opinions and perceptions on drugs. Please fill in your findings in this chart:

Media channel	Message	Underlying “sub-text”

If you wish, you can pick one interesting example and create a poster on it for illustrating your findings in a visual way! When possible, include a link to the original media product! **Please share your thoughts with us by sending your chart or poster via Facebook or email at youthinitiative@unodc.org by 16 March.**

The best contributions will be published on our Youth Initiative Facebook page as well as the UNODC website. We are looking forward to your contribution and to active discussion on our Facebook-page! Good luck and have fun with this challenge!