

Drug education in schools:

Best practice and the role of LDATs

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Drug Education

Good Practice

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Whole school approach: Health promoting schools

Health Promoting schools seek to develop an inclusive, welcoming, comprehensive healthy learning environment and social climate with multiple opportunities for students to participate and contribute.

Principles for school drug education

- Embed practice in sound theory and evidence and evaluate
- Comprehensive whole school approach to promoting health
- Student-centred curriculum taught by regular teacher
- Recognise risk and protective factors
- Acknowledge cultural factors and local influences
- Promote collaboration b/w schools, family and community
- Promote safe inclusive school environment
- Set realistic goals depending on school context

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED536216.pdf>



Australian Government
Department of Education, Science and Training



Principles for school
drug education



What is effective drug education

Interactive education to develop
student agency

Age appropriate knowledge of AOD

- Understanding issues, situations, pressures & how to deal with them
- Social skills - communication – negotiation – decision making
- 10 sessions plus booster
 - DEVS
 - CLIMATE

Whole school approach

Health Promoting School

- promote safe & inclusive school environment

Who should deliver drug education?

Classroom teacher trained in health/drug education

Health Phys Ed teacher

Support from Welfare Coordinator

Limited use of 'external experts' who might complement the program

People with 'lived experience' are not suitable educators of young people

- flawed logic – ignores motives for drug use
- glamourises drug taking
- 'scared straight' messages wear off quickly
- can attract young people to drugs
- ignores the research record

Read more: <https://adf.org.au/insights/drug-education-risks/>

Dos and don't's

Accurate, non-sensational, age –
appropriate information

Development of critical thinking

Development of personal and social skills

- Problem solving
- Group work
- Role play

Avoid

- Information based approach
- Assuming students will use drugs
- Demonstrating drug use (inc. beer goggles)
- Joking about drug use
- Talking about own experience
- Allowing students to talk about their experience

Resource links

- Effective Drug Education Resources, including the *Principles for School Drug Education* - Australian Government <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED536216.pdf>
- Drug education resources developed for the Victorian Department of Education and Training, including *Drug Education in Victorian Schools* curriculum materials and videos and the Resilience education resources <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/drugedulearn.aspx>

Resource links

- Resources developed by School Drug Education and Road Aware (SDERA) – Western Australia, including *Challenges and Choices*.
- <http://www.sdera.wa.edu.au/resources/>
School Health and Alcohol Harm Reduction Project (SHAHRP) – NCETA, WA
<https://positivechoices.org.au/teachers/shahrp-school-health-and-alcohol-harm-reduction-project>
- Australian government - *Positive choices* <https://positivechoices.org.au/>
Climate Schools (NDARC, UNSW) - <https://www.climateschools.com.au/>
Crossroads - Year 11 and 12 Department of Ed
NSW <http://www.learning.schools.nsw.edu.au/crossroads/>



Peers

Education and mentoring

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Peers:

Education and mentoring

- Program must be age and culturally appropriate
- Involve young people in planning & debriefing
- Students need to be supported by school-based personnel
- Build parent support by providing information about the program
- Check your goals' alignment with school priorities
- Match peer educators and mentors carefully
- Ensure training covers the knowledge and skills for the role and the specific initiative.

‘Plan It’ youth mentoring

- Targets year 9 and 10 potential early school leavers
- Mentors are thoroughly trained volunteers from the community
- Recruitment and training managed by paid program coordinators

Independent evaluation:

<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/research/completedprojects/planityouthre07.pdf>

Read more:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/documents/school/teachers/health/scadecs.pdf> P. 14



Peers:
Education and mentoring

M power N girlz

- Exclusive focus on young girls
- Older teenage girls mentor girls in Year 6, about to make the leap to high school
- Designed to reduce girl-to-girl bullying

Read more:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/health/scadecs.pdf> - P. 26-27





Parents

Support and engagement

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- Strong network between schools, family, and the community helps protect young people
- Informing parents about drugs can increase confidence to discuss alcohol and other drug issues with their child
- Resources to assist with parent engagement were developed by Victorian Department of Education and Training

View the resource:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/drugeduengage.aspx>

Positive Choices: Free online resources

Webinar: How to talk with teenagers about alcohol use

Outlines ways to effectively engage teens when trying to talk to them about alcohol. <https://vimeo.com/234793484>

Webinar: Making the Link: How to approach conversations with teenagers

Discusses how parents can discuss contentious topics with their kids in a relevant way.

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3_dOyGjNahr2ugUXkMOH1doXkutWgpP1

The 'Other' Talk

- Builds parents knowledge about alcohol and other drugs
- Provides strategies for how to start having an ongoing conversation with their child
- Scenarios help plan responses and foster discussion and sharing of parenting strategies between participants

View the resource: <https://adf.org.au/programs/the-other-talk/>



Evaluation

Getting started

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Program evaluation – key questions

- What is the purpose of the evaluation?
- Who is the audience for the information?
- What kinds of information will help you make the decisions you need to make or to enlighten your audience? Think of creative ways to collect information, e.g. case studies, interviews, photographs, reflection pieces, observations, focus groups.
- How can the information be collected in a reasonable fashion?
- Surveys need to be well designed and executed – get expert help where possible.
- What resources are available to collect the information?

Thank you.

Next webinar:

Understanding primary prevention

11am December 6th, 2017

