

# Webinar: Parties, gatherings and sleepovers- How can parents keep their teens safe

## Speaker Key:

LG Lucy Grummitt

PD Paul Dillon

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00:00:00	LG	<p>Okay, good afternoon everyone and thanks for joining us for the Positive Choices Webinar Series. In today's Webinar, we'll be focusing on teenage parties, gatherings and sleepovers and what parents can do to help make these events as safe as possible for their children.</p> <p>My name's Lucy Grummitt, I'm a Research Assistant on the Positive Choices project and I'll be chairing the session today. You're currently in listen-only mode, which means all your microphones are muted, and we can't hear you or see you.</p>
00:00:33		<p>You will be able to ask questions by using the questions box in your control panel. Please type your questions at any time and we'll have a Q&amp;A session with Paul at the end of the Webinar. The presentation is being recorded and it will be available on demand via our website.</p> <p>So for those of you who aren't familiar with the Positive Choices project, our aim is to assist parents, teachers and students across Australia to access up-to-date and accurate information about alcohol and other drugs.</p>
00:01:03		<p>We also aim to help teachers access drug prevention programmes that are proven to increase student well-being and can be implemented in their schools. As part of the Positive Choices project, we provide a series of Webinars providing information of interest to parents, teachers, school leaders and anyone working with young people.</p> <p>Coming up later this year, we're excited to present a Webinar about solutions to drug use among rural youth. So that's coming up on 13 November.</p>
00:01:32		<p>Over the series so far, we've covered a number of topics, such as how to talk with teenagers about alcohol use. And if you've missed any of our past Webinars, you can catch up by watching the video or accessing the slides from our website</p>

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		positivechoices.org.au. If you haven't already visited the Positive Choices website, I would encourage you to visit and take a look at the range of evidence-based drug resources that are available.
00:02:00		<p>Positive Choices was developed in consultation with young people, teachers and parents and we'd appreciate your feedback on anything additional you'd like to see on the site.</p> <p>For example, if you'd like to suggest a future Webinar topic, please e-mail us on <a href="mailto:info@positivechoices.org.au">info@positivechoices.org.au</a>. So now I'd like to introduce our speaker for today. Paul Dillon has been working in the area of drug education for the past 25 years.</p>
00:02:28		<p>Through his own business, Drug and Alcohol Research and Training Australia, he's been contracted by many organisations to give regular updates on current drug trends. He continues to work with many school communities to ensure they have access to good quality information and best practice drug education.</p> <p>In 2009, his best-selling book for parents was released titled, Teenagers, Alcohol and Drugs. With a broad knowledge of a range of content areas, Paul regularly appears in the media and is regarded as a key social commentator with interviews on television programmes such as Sunrise, Today and The Project.</p>
00:03:05		Paul also writes a blog where he discusses topical issues of the day as well as addressing some of the questions and queries he's regularly asked by those attending his presentations. So thanks very much for joining us Paul, and now over to you.
	PD	Thanks very much Lucinda. And thank you to the attendees of the Webinar. I don't do these very often and we have had little bit of a problem with lag in terms of the slides coming up.
00:03:35		<p>So you'll see that all the images have been removed from the slides which makes me feel a bit uncomfortable, but hopefully it will mean that everyone can follow exactly what I am saying. If it does get a little bit behind, Lucinda will kind of interrupt.</p> <p>So I'm going to be talking about a whole range of different things, but before I do I have been asked to provide a question so that you can complete a poll.</p>
00:04:02		That question is now up hopefully. 300 students that I surveyed from Year Ten to 12 were asked whether they would have a

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		<p>problem with their parent asking anything parent hosting a party a series of questions.</p> <p>You could see those four questions hopefully on the screen now and three of those questions were not an issue for most of those surveyed. However, every young person, every one of the 300, hated the other one.</p>
00:04:32		<p>I'm wondering if you can read through those four quite quickly and see if you can work out, A, B, C, D, which one was the one they had a problem with. And we'll address that a little bit later.</p> <p>So in terms of what I'm going to present today, I'm going to look at some data around drug use and alcohol use amongst young people. Then particularly looking at alcohol, because I suppose that kind of lends into the whole parties and gatherings theme.</p>
00:05:01		<p>Why shouldn't young people be drinking? I'm going to look at a couple of pieces of research that have been conducted at least in the last 12 months, so really provide great evidence support. The delaying of drinking, what influence do parents have in this area?</p> <p>Then we'll look specifically at the issue of sleepovers, parties and gatherings and some simple strategies on how to or what parents can do to keep their children a little bit more safe.</p>
00:05:28		<p>And I'll finish off as I always do in almost all of my talks, around three parenting tips that we know can at the very least, delay early drinking and illicit drug use, but quite possibly even prevent it.</p> <p>So before we actually move through that just very quickly, and I'll have to do these very fast, because I have a limited amount of time, looking at some data that we have around Secondary School students and drugs use. This is the data from the 2014 Asset Survey which is a Secondary School survey which is conducted across the country every few years.</p>
00:06:01		<p>We don't have the 2017 data yet, hasn't been collected. But we wouldn't expect it to look too much different to this. What you could see there is the most widely used group of drugs by young people are analgesics and you have tranquilisers, sleeping pills, cannabis, inhalants and a range of other illicit which are at very low levels.</p>

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		<p>Now the way I present these when I speak to young people across the country is, I present them like this. So I flip them over. This is called the promotion of positive norms.</p>
00:06:30		<p>It basically says to young people that if you don't use illicit drugs, you're actually in the big group. And certainly in my experience of talking to almost 120,000 young people across the country every year, this is an incredibly positive empowering experience for them.</p> <p>We always talk about those young people who do use illicit drugs, but we never really talk about those that don't. This kind of shows you how trends have changed over time amongst school-based young people.</p>
00:07:01		<p>It's really important to remember this is school-based young people. When a young person becomes disengaged from school or they leave school then you get to see drug use jump quite dramatically. But what you can see here hopefully, is cannabis use has dropped dramatically since the 90s.</p> <p>Opiates have dropped. Amphetamine, although we continue to talk about the ice epidemic amongst school-based young people, that really has never been a significant issue across the general school community.</p>
00:07:29		<p>And then you got the two drugs at the end very much linked to nightlife, cocaine and ecstasy here, which certainly are more likely to come into young people's lives once they leave school. Or if they get engaged in terms of nightlife, going to nightclubs, dance festivals, things like that at an earlier age. So what about alcohol? Certainly, the rest of this talk is going to be primarily about alcohol.</p>
00:07:59		<p>There's some good news and there's some bad news. And I just hope when I tell you the good news you kind of hold onto it. So when we get to the bad news, you keep remembering the good stuff, because there is some really good things happening around alcohol in this country and very similar around the world, which I'll talk about in a moment.</p> <p>What you can see here is those number of young people who had never consumed alcohol from the Secondary School survey again. And what you can see, at 12 and 13, females are more likely to have never consumed than their male counterparts.</p>
00:08:33		<p>That kind of changes around 14, that quite difficult age group. 14 particularly for young women when things are starting to</p>

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		<p>change. Often people say, why are 14-year-old girls starting to drink at the same levels that boys will? Who are 14-year-old girls hanging out with? Well, usually 16-year-old boys.</p> <p>Many times people say, why does that happen? Well, have you seen a 14-year-old boy? Realistically it's not a surprise that 14-year-old girls are certainly attracted to older young men and certainly hang out with older young men.</p>
00:09:03		<p>So have things changed? Are we seeing more or less non-drinking, those young people who had never consumed alcohol? And what you can see across the surveys from 2011 to 2014, across every single age group we have a greater number of young people who are reporting that they have never consumed alcohol.</p> <p>And that certainly reflects my experience across the country where we are seeing growing numbers of young people who are choosing not to drink.</p>
00:09:33		<p>Has this changed over time, a longer period of time, not just the last couple of surveys? Yes, it has. This shows you the 12 to 17-year-olds who had never consumed alcohol from 1999 through to 2014.</p> <p>And this next statement that I'm going to make, I really want parents to hold on to, because I think it's really important. In 1999, we had about one in ten young people who said that they had never consumed alcohol.</p>
00:10:02		<p>It's now one in three. That's quite remarkable. Once again as I said, it certainly reflects what I see across the country speaking to young people. So that's the good news.</p> <p>What about the bad news? When do they drink if they're going to drink, when do they drink? This is a study from the Hunter Ridge of New South Wales. You could pretty well use any data that looks at alcohol use amongst young people.</p>
00:10:29		<p>And you can see this very similar trend. There's one age group where drinking starts to happen in quite a major way. What you could see here in this survey, researchers went into schools in the Hunter Region and classified their drinking.</p> <p>You can see blue is non-drinking, green moderate and yellow risky. And I hope you can see quite clearly the year where it kind of all goes nuts. It's Year Ten.</p>

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00:10:58		<p>That age around that that 15-year-old age group where things start to change and start to change quite dramatically. Why does this happen? Well it happens for a really simple reason. I believe it's basically because of what parents stop doing around Year Nine.</p> <p>Year Nine is the year when we start to see parental monitoring slip and change. That change in monitoring results in all of a sudden quite a significant jump in drinking occurring.</p>
00:11:30		<p>And Year Nine is the year when we see that starting to happen. So if they are starting to drink in Year Ten, which we certainly know, and of course there would be some parents out there who would say, we have far younger kids who are drinking.</p> <p>Certainly, there are young people who do drink in Year Eight and certainly in Year Nine there's often a core group of kids who are doing it. But it's Year Ten where it hits a critical mass. So if kids are drinking, where are they getting the alcohol from?</p>
00:12:01		<p>Well, this is the, back to the Asset Survey again, the Secondary School Survey, where young people were asked, where was the last alcoholic drink, where did they source it from?</p> <p>And what you could see here is quite clearly that the most common source of alcohol is parents. Now that's quite a significant difference from what many parents would say was their first experience, where they got their alcohol from.</p>
00:12:31		<p>If they got alcohol, usually it was from friends, older siblings, things like that. It seems we have done quite a dramatic twist where we are now seeing increasing numbers of parents who are choosing to provide alcohol to their child.</p> <p>Now why is this happening? I certainly meet parents across the country who do approach me after my talks and say, look I must admit, I'm one of those parents who does provide alcohol.</p>
00:12:58		<p>And I've yet to meet a parent who provides alcohol for any other reason than they believe it to be protective. They believe that if their child's going to drink, they would much prefer to be the person who provides it to them, thinking that that's protective. That that is going to keep their child safe.</p> <p>So what does the research say in this area? Does it say that providing alcohol is protective? Well as I said, there's a couple of pieces of research that are being collected that have been released this year, Australian research.</p>

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00:13:32		That kind of shattered that whole belief of provision of alcohol being protective. This is a study that came out in January of this year. About 1,900 parents, adolescents were followed over a six-year period. So they started, the adolescents were collected at 12 and then followed through until they were 17.
00:13:58		<p>And it looked at parental supply of alcohol and was it protective? Did it have a positive impact? Its findings received a reasonable amount of media attention when they came out.</p> <p>But what you can see here, and this is a direct quote from the research paper, the final paper, there's no evidence that parental supply protects from adverse drinking outcomes. In fact, the practice is associated with risk. What kind of risks? Well, you could see here, hopefully.</p>
00:14:30		<p>We found that parental provision of alcohol to their children is associated with subsequent binge drinking, so they drank more, alcohol-related harms, and symptoms of alcohol use disorder. So at 17, some of these young people were experiencing cravings, withdrawals.</p> <p>They're the kind of things that you'd expect from alcohol use disorder. There was no evidence of any benefit or protective effect, so this belief that if I give it to them, they're going to be safer as a result of that.</p>
00:15:00		<p>And most importantly, and certainly I've been saying this for most probably the last at least 15 years, possibly even longer, parental supply is associated with increased risk of other supply. So if you give them two, they're going to go and actually find two more.</p> <p>Now this kind of goes against what most parents who provide alcohol actually do. They really do believe, well I'm giving them two bottles, I'm giving them two cans, that's what they'll drink.</p>
00:15:29		<p>And what we can see by this piece of research was that that's just not the case. And certainly, once again, when this came out I spoke about it with a group of young people and certainly young people didn't like this research.</p> <p>And I've had, not quite stand-up fights, but certainly discussions, debates with young people about this. They believe that their intent was to drink what their parents gave them. But in actual fact, when they're around their peers,</p>

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		reward increases around their peers. They're more likely to actually make poor decisions.
00:16:01		<p>They're likely to drink more. The other piece of research which I think is really interesting that came out later in the year was this one. Quite often with young men, fathers of young men, we hear that my son doesn't binge drink, he just has a beer every weekend when he goes out to a party.</p> <p>I hear this from parents of young people as young as 15. So is that true? If they're just having one beer, but they're just doing it every week, is that okay?</p>
00:16:30		Well this is, as I said, a study that was released a little bit later. This is an Australasian study looking at a number of different kind of samples. 9,000 adolescents, 13 to 30. And what this found was, which I think is a really important statement, most robust evidence to date, that there is a causal relationship between adolescent drinking, you drink when you're in your adolescence, greater risk of alcohol problems in adulthood.
00:16:59		<p>You know there are many parents who, when they hear this they go, well you know I was drinking when I was 15, 16. There's nothing wrong with me. What I often say to that is, well is there? Are you drinking at safe levels? And I think often people find it very hard to look at their own drinking and see that possibly, you might be drinking a little bit more.</p> <p>And do you want your child to drink at that level? Most probably not. So what this study found was that absolutely, binge drinking was a significant problem and it causes greater problems in the future.</p>
00:17:32		<p>But what this found was that frequency of drinking, so if you are going to go out and just have a couple of beers every weekend, that is just as an important predictor of future drinking problems.</p> <p>So my message to young people, particularly Year 11s, my message very strongly is to young people of that age, you know going out every weekend and drinking every weekend is a risk. If you can just have one weekend off a month that's most probably a real positive outcome.</p>
00:18:00		If you can just get them not to drink every weekend when they go out to parties. That could be really difficult, but of course, driving comes into play when you're a little bit older. And so

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		<p>you've got the whole designated driver out which is really helpful.</p> <p>So with all that in mind, what can parents do to make sure that their child has healthy attitudes and values around alcohol? Because the reality is, if your child wants to drink, they're going to. There is absolutely nothing anybody can do to stop their child from drinking if that's what they want to do.</p>
00:18:35		<p>So most probably the best parents can hope for is that they can instil some really healthy attitudes and values around alcohol. I think one of the things that is of great frustration to me is that parents believe that as soon as a child hits adolescence, that's it, there's nothing they can do. Their peers become such a major influence that they have no influence at all.</p>
00:19:00		<p>And what the evidence shows quite clearly is that you were your child's first and you're going to be their most important teacher. You will always have an influence. Now that influence will change.</p> <p>There's some great work done where parenting experts have talked about when you're a parent of a child, you have a managing role. But when you move into adolescence, you transition into a consulting role.</p>
00:19:30		<p>And it's how you change, how you make that transition from a manager to a consultant that makes all the difference. So those years particularly around that Year Eight and Nine time where your child's going to start pushing your buttons, trying to navigate through that and trying to make that transition as gently as possible is really important. And as I always say, I think one of the keys here is looking for every opportunity to say yes to your child.</p>
00:20:00		<p>You're going to say no a lot, because your child's going to want to do things that are not safe. Your child's going to want to go to parties and sleepovers, gatherings and things you might not think is safe. So there are going to be times when you have to say no.</p> <p>But if you could say yes, really, really important. And I'll come back to that in a minute. So a couple of things I think you could certainly do in this area that are really helpful, and this is a big one, make your views about underage drinking clear.</p>
00:20:30		<p>I give talks across the country to parents and my parent talks are me speaking, parents listening. I made the fatal mistake</p>

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		<p>earlier this year of doing an interactive parent night. I'm never doing that again.</p> <p>I asked parents to just turn to the person next to them and tell them their view about underage drinking and within a very short period of time it became kind of like a frat house. There was a whole pile of arguing and disagreements.</p>
00:21:00		<p>It wasn't pleasant at all. I think this is an area where parents may think that they know what their views are, but they haven't really thought them through. And they certainly haven't spoken about them with their partners.</p> <p>And one of the most important things here is that parents have to be on the same page in this area. If you're not, your child's going to see a weakness in one, they're going to see the weakest link and they're going to attack it. So you've got to actually work out what your views are.</p>
00:21:29		<p>So for example, if you think that your child should not drink until they're 18, what does that mean? Does that mean on the day they turn 18? Does it mean at midnight when they turn 18? Are you going to give them the alcohol at 18, are they going to go somewhere else?</p> <p>It's really complex. It's a really tough one, but really important to communicate to your child as early as possible what your views are. I think the next one is very, very important. Create rules and consequences around alcohol and parties and do it early.</p>
00:22:00		<p>If you can create rules before they go to parties, make your rules around parties, it's going to be really important. And the most important thing about any rules in this area, is that they have got to be fair and they've got to be age-appropriate.</p> <p>What I mean by fair is that certainly kids have an innate sense of fairness. And if your child turns around and says, that's not fair, it usually isn't.</p>
00:22:29		<p>And so you've got to make clear what your rule is, tell your expectations and make sure that it's made very, very clear to them what the consequence will be. When I say age-appropriate, the most important thing is here, things have to keep changing.</p> <p>You can't create rules around parties for a 15-year-old and maintain those rules until they're 17. My recommendation is that</p>

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		you just keep adjusting, getting them back, reward them for good behaviour.
00:23:01		<p>And I would say really around age of 15, 16 every three or four months, bring them back, talk them through. The next three positive norms I think flip the figures I showed you right at the very beginning. We're constantly talking about the kids that do things. Flip it.</p> <p>So if you hear in the media that one in ten kids are binge drinking, flip it around and say, nine out of ten aren't. And then this last one is incredibly important, because I guarantee almost every parent who is listening has heard that wonderful line, you're the only one who does that.</p>
00:23:32		<p>Kids aren't used to being challenged on those kinds of statements. Their teachers will challenge them, but parents don't usually. So if your child ever says, you're the only one, then turn around and say two simple words back to them. And those two words are, prove it.</p> <p>They have to prove that you're the only one. The way I always say to parents is give them a piece of paper, give them a pen and say, write the names and phone numbers of five parents who will.</p>
00:24:00		<p>Then say, I'm going to call each one of them and check. If you want to see your child melt behind you as you say that, that's the way to do it. They're not used to being challenged, but they need to be.</p> <p>If they want you to accept a certain idea, then they have to provide proof that that is actually what is happening. So what can you do to ensure they are safe when they go to a party? Well the most important thing is that they need, that you need to be a parent.</p>
00:24:32		<p>This is not easy. I've never met a parent who turns around and says this area of parties, gatherings and sleepovers is an easy one. It's tough. But certainly here's a couple of guidelines that I think could help parents.</p> <p>So firstly, what do you do when they're invited and they want to attend? The absolutely biggest one here is that you're not bullied into a decision. You can't give an answer straight away.</p>
00:24:59		This has to be an informed decision and that means you need certain information. The most important thing though here

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		<p>without a doubt, is that there has to be a united front. Look, I have a few mantras that I say to parents that are really important.</p> <p>This is most probably one of the most important ones. If your child comes to you by yourself and says, I want to go to such-and-such's place, the line should be, don't come to me, don't go to them, come to us.</p>
00:25:28		<p>What you want to do is make sure that they approach both of you at the same time, so they can't set you up against one another. And I've made a suggestion to parents right across the country, make a night, usually a Thursday night, your child knows what parties they want to go to by Monday morning.</p> <p>Designate a night where both of you are sitting on one side of the table, they're sitting on the other and you go, okay, what do you want to do on the weekend? Then you can address that at that time together.</p>
00:25:58		<p>That will give you the option to make all the decisions you need to. So if you then have to make an informed decision, as I said, there are four questions that I tested. And I think Lucinda's there to actually respond to that, are you Lucinda?</p>
	LG	<p>Yes, that's right. I'm here. So the poll from earlier, we've got the results in. And well, we had 90% of parents saying the question that their children most probably hate is, will the parents be there and actively supervising the party?</p>
00:26:33	PD	<p>And they got it absolutely right. It's kind of interesting. I've tested these with, as I said, 300 Year Ten to Year Twelves. And even with the 17 and 18-year-olds that I tested these questions with, three of them, of course 18-year-olds don't want you to call someone's house, but they don't have a problem with one, two and four. It's the third one.</p>
00:26:58		<p>And the reason they don't like the fourth one is really simple, because it's not a one-word answer. It actually involves you talking to the host parents, talking to anybody else. And as any parent would know the one thing your child doesn't want you to do is communicate with anybody else.</p> <p>So the other three are simple and I think if you tell your child that those are the questions you're going to ask, they're the only questions you're going to ask, you're not going to have as much difficulty getting them to agree to it.</p>

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00:27:29		<p>Of course they're not going to like it, but they're important questions. You can then make an informed decision. So where do you get the information from? Well basically, if you're an idiot, you'll ask your child.</p> <p>And that unfortunately is what most parents do. They rely simply on their child. Now is your child going to lie? Not necessarily, but are they going to tell you the whole truth? Most probably not. If there's something, there's a part of the truth that could prevent them from going, they're not going to tell you. So you need to go to other places.</p>
00:27:59		<p>And certainly, the best option of course is to contact the parents hosting the party. The trouble is, this can be difficult. It can be incredibly hard. Certainly, some parents have nightmares of experiences calling a house and being told they're over-parenting, don't they trust their child?</p> <p>And on the other hand, you also get the experience where parents will say, thank you for calling, you're the only one who called. This is hard, this is challenging and certainly having a bad experience, parents do not like doing it again.</p>
00:28:30		<p>But I think the most important one, and this is something I feel very strongly about no matter what school I go to across the country, the key is talk to other parents. If it's not the host parents, talk to other parents you know. Your child's friends' parents. Anybody.</p> <p>The whole thing here is you want to create a network. You want to keep talking to one another. That's what keeps kids safer. I have worked in schools for a very long time.</p>
00:29:00		<p>I've worked in schools, been to many schools where unfortunately young people have died. And young people have experienced sexual assault, violence, horrible stories.</p> <p>So many of them could have been prevented if parents just talked to one another, they were more aware of what was going on. Every single one realistically, totally preventable. I've put social media here, this one we have to be very careful about, because I don't advocate spying on your child.</p>
00:29:35		<p>But certainly if you do follow your child and of course any cyber safety person would say you should be. Of course they create fake accounts, but looking at social media is a useful tool.</p>

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		<p>There's only one non-negotiable as far as I'm concerned in this area and that is this, how are they going to get there and how are they going to get home?</p>
00:29:59		<p>I think if you speak to any police officer, any paramedic, emergency worker, they will tell you this is where it usually goes wrong. Realistically you make this decision, they don't.</p> <p>Kids are not going to like this, but realistically I think right up until Year 11 at 16, 17, they're not really able to make this decision well. And having your child wander around, wandering the street, that's where things really go wrong.</p>
00:30:27		<p>The safest option of course is you take them and you pick them up. That is not always possible. If you're not, if you can't, speak to the parent who will be. And when I say speak, I always say, use words out of your mouth. Don't text. Speak to people.</p> <p>Once again, that's going to create the network. If you are, number one, you can drop them off, you get to see where they're going. You can meet the host, which would be fantastic. Once again, creating that network, that parenting network. And you can of course assess the event. See what it looks like.</p>
00:30:59		<p>And when it comes to picking them up, you know what they've been doing and you know what went down. As I always say, winding the windows up as they get in the car and having a good sniff could tell you an awful lot about what went down at that event.</p> <p>I think the next two things are things that I've seen change over the last couple of years which have got quite frightening. And certainly, once again linked to some significant issues and risks. This idea of using Uber as a parenting tool is a great concern.</p>
00:31:30		<p>Many young people are using Uber to get and to go to and get back from events. And parents absolutely supporting that. As young as 13 or 14 is just beyond me. Picking up via text. Standing at, sitting outside a house and picking up your Year Eight, Year Nine, your son or daughter from a party. If a parent is actually being kind enough to look after your child for four hours on a Saturday night, go up and say thank you.</p>
00:32:00		<p>Now I get it, in Year Ten, I think at that age you've got to start pulling away, but don't sit in your car. Get out of your car, shine a torch on yourself, show the host parents that it's another human being picking up a child.</p>

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		<p>I think it's really basically only good manners and once again, it's about keeping your kids safe. If you take them, you pick them up. You can go to bed knowing that your child is alive, safe and well and there's not one parent I've ever met who doesn't want that.</p>
00:32:30		<p>The last couple of slides, if you do say yes, if you decide that they can go, my strong suggestion is, if you can possibly allow your child to go to any event, these are important. Parties, sleepovers, gatherings, they are important socialising events for young people. Certainly you should let them if you can.</p> <p>Now of course if it's incredibly unsafe, it's a no. What I mean by that, if your 14-year-old daughter wants to go to a party where there are 18-year-old young men drinking, there's no way in the world you can make that safe.</p>
00:33:01		<p>But if you don't feel confident about a party, your 15-year-old's invited, it's important for them to go for their socialising, it's where they stand in their peer group, then you could say, look I don't feel comfortable. But you want to go, you need to go, I'll take you, I'll pick you up and you're there for two hours. You put caveats around to make sure that they are safe.</p> <p>So my last mantra is this, I think most parents understand this I think. Particularly parents who are tuning in to a Webinar like this.</p>
00:33:33		<p>Every time your child leaves the house, you can call me anytime, anywhere. If something goes wrong and you need me, I'll be there. And you keep saying it, you keep saying it every single time. They're going to get sick and tired of it, but they need to hear it. And if you say it, you've got to be available.</p> <p>This basically means your social life is pretty well ruined for the next ten years, but you've got to be available. That means one of you is going to have to be sober enough to hop in your car if, god forbid, something goes wrong.</p>
00:34:04		<p>Certainly taxis and Ubers are an option, but I don't think they're always reliable. And do you really want to do that in terms of keeping your child safe? There's a couple of other things just to talk about before they leave and I think this is a key one.</p> <p>It's staggering how many young people do not call 000 simply because they're frightened their parents will find out. You need to tell them you support them in that. Ensure they have the</p>

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		Emergency+ app on their phone which I'll show you in one second.
00:34:33		<p>And then, this is a real key, a great one for your Sevens, Eights and Nines, to have the name and number of their buddy for the night. So you ask your child, who's going to be your buddy, the person who you'll be with for the night that'll be around you?</p> <p>So if you need to call them, you need to get in touch with them, for some reason they don't pick up their phone, you can call their buddy. It's all about getting your child to plan ahead. Incredibly important. The one thing we know gets young people into trouble, and adults, is that you don't plan.</p>
00:35:03		<p>Get your kids if they're going to these events, to plan. Here's the Emergency+ app. Now this is a free app, downloadable developed by 000. It's a fantastic app. You put it onto your phone and my suggestion is as a family you put it on all together. You click this button here on your phone and this screen will come up.</p>
00:35:31		<p>Now this screen basically has the numbers which you push, you don't dial. And then down here, it activates their GPS. It tells them where they are. Most young people on a Saturday night have absolutely no idea where they are if they're being dropped off.</p> <p>And if they do have to call an ambulance, they don't know. They don't know where they are. This tells them. It even works when they're not in Wi-Fi. If they're not in Wi-Fi, this doesn't come up, the street address. What happens instead is that they get the latitude and longitude.</p>
00:36:00		<p>But once again, putting this onto their phone as a parent tonight, what that will do is it gives you the opportunity to actually once again talk about 000 and the importance of that you trust them, you believe that if they're going to do it, you support them completely in their decision to do that. So to finish off, just a couple of things that I think are important. Tell your children they're great all the time.</p>
00:36:31		<p>As I said, I work with thousands of young people every year. I've worked with young people for a very long time and it constantly amazes me how amazing they are. We live in a world where the media kind of pulls them down a lot.</p> <p>If you believe the media, we have the worst young people we've ever had, where in actual fact our kids are doing great things all</p>

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		the time. It's so important to parents to keep finding positive things to say about their child as often as possible.
00:37:01		<p>Listen to your child and connect. Try to find a way of keeping connected. It can be very, very difficult for parents, particularly from that transition from that managing to a consulting role to find a way of connecting.</p> <p>Many parents have no problems with connecting with a Primary School child, but in that transition period you can lose it. It can be a matter of walking a dog together, watching a TV programme together, going to the movies, going to a coffee shop, something.</p>
00:37:29		<p>It's not about quantity of time, it's about quality. If you can only spend two minutes with your child, but it's quality time, then my goodness me, incredibly powerful and we know, keeps them safer in the future.</p> <p>And then there are three simple golden rules. So if you look at all the evidence in terms of preventing and delaying or preventing alcohol and other drug use, it boils down to three things which is really around monitoring.</p>
00:37:59		<p>And that is, know where your child is, know who they're with and know when they'll be home. Sometimes parents find this kind of confronting, because they say, if I have to follow that up and do that, then my child would think I didn't trust them.</p> <p>As I always say, if you trust your 15 or 16-year-old, you're an idiot. You have to trust your child, of course you do, but can you? Most probably not. They're going to push boundaries, they're going to not always tell the truth.</p>
00:38:29		<p>Or they're just going to kind of leave bits out. You have to follow them up. And sometimes they're going to disappoint you. That doesn't mean they're a bad kid and it certainly doesn't mean you're a bad parent.</p> <p>It just means they're an adolescent. I think we'll have a proper, I've got a proper version of this presentation on my website so you can see what it should look like and the references. I'm on e-mail, on Facebook.</p>
00:39:00		Drug and Alcohol Research Training Australia where I put all my blogs, all my commentary and everything. You can, if you try to find Paul Dillon on Facebook, you'll see a picture of me with a cannabis leaf on the top of my head.

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		Some wonderful 16-year-old created a fake Facebook page for me and I could've complained, but I thought I'll leave it up there. I thought he was creative. And you can follow me on Twitter and Instagram. Instagram shows all the kind of messages I give to kids across the country.
00:39:29		I have about 16,600 young people who follow me on Instagram now which I am very, very proud of. And that is it.
	LG	Thank you very much Paul. That was a very informative and interesting presentation. And now I'd just like to open up the question time for everyone. So if you'd like to just submit the questions in the question box on your control panel and I will get Paul to answer them for you.
00:40:06		So, we'll start with one that came through a bit earlier. So this person's asked, what should you do if you make a call to parents who are hosting the party and you suspect they are lying about some of the details, perhaps you think they might tolerate alcohol?
00:40:30	PD	Look, I think the reality is that many parents have certainly experienced other parents lying to them. I think that's where the whole thing about trusting your child comes into play. You certainly do have to trust your child at some point or another. I think if you believe your child is at risk at a certain party, then I think you have to say, you can't go.
00:40:57		But as I always say, you say no too many times, you don't put a little bit of trust in there, then what you're going to experience is your child pulling away from you. And the one thing you don't want, particularly around that age of 13, 14, 15, is your child pulling away. You want to keep connected.  That doesn't mean you have to say yes to everything. But you certainly have to say as soon as you believe that your child is at any risk, you have to say no.
00:41:30	LG	Right, yes that makes sense. Thanks Paul. And someone's asked, should you deal with your boys differently to your girls?
	PD	I often get asked this. I think certainly, I mean there's a great new book by Madonna King called, Fathers and Daughters, that I'd strongly recommend. But it talks about how fathers relate to their daughters in a different way. And we do know that parents relate to different kids in different ways.

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00:42:02		And genders have that effect. My personal thing around parties, it just comes down to basic safety all of the time. Do you know where they are, do you know who they're with and do you know where they're going? It doesn't matter what gender they are. Certainly, I think you've got girls, we know girls hang out with older guys. So there's an element of risk associated with that.
00:42:31		But I think that's about the best you can do. You can't turn around and say there has to be, if you've got some sons and you've got a couple of daughters, if you start actually parenting them in a different way, there's going to be a lot of grief. The ones who get parented more, or have more restrictions, they're going to rebel pretty quickly.
00:42:59	LG	Yes, that's a great point, thanks Paul. And someone's asked, hi Paul, in respect of knowing where your child is, what is your opinion on having location or tracking apps on your child's phone?
	PD	Look, I think certainly as long as you tell your child that's what you're doing, I think that's absolutely appropriate. And most young people who I know who have those on, have no issues with them.
00:43:31		I think if they found out that their parents were doing it undercover, there'd be a great problem. I think as long as you're honest, it's the same following them on any social media. You tell your child and as I said earlier, there are going to be some kids who are going to create fake accounts and all that kind of stuff. There are apps apparently that kids can manipulate to say, well I'm over here when they're really over there.
00:44:01		So even tracking apps can be manipulated. But once again, it comes it comes down to being honest, communicating with your child saying, I want you to be safe. If you're going to go, if you're going to start wandering the streets, you're going to places, I need to know where you are. And if I'm going to let you go, these are the things I need from you.
	LG	Yes, okay.
00:44:30		And we've had a question about sleepovers. So is there any different advice when it comes to sleepovers, are they allowed... We've had another one on the same topic about

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		sleepovers with mixed genders, whether that's a complete no-no?
	PD	Look, mixed sleepovers have become a very big thing in the last couple of years. It's the only topic that I've ever really had hate mail about from parents.
00:45:00		Most parents who read my blogs and do that kind of thing tend to kind of share similar kind of beliefs to me. But the mixed sleepovers when I first heard about it, kind of terrified me. I was a Primary School teacher way back in the early 80s. And going on a school camp with a group of Primary School kids and trying to keep the boys and girls separate at night involved dogs, searchlights and barbed wire.
00:45:28		How parents actually manage mixed sleepovers for 20 14, or 15-year-olds, I find very difficult to imagine. But absolutely, those parents who believe in mixed sleepovers, believe in them very, very strongly. And as I always say, if that's your belief and you want to run one, as long as you tell every parent of the people you invite that that's what you're going to do so they can make an informed decision, that's their choice.
00:46:02		But that's the key. That's the absolute key. If you're going to hold a mixed sleepover then you have to tell every parent of the child that that's what you're going to do. So they can actually go yes or no to it.
	LG	Okay, great. We've had another question. This time about the Mediterranean Model. So I think they're referring to when parents give their children a little bit of wine or alcohol at dinner and sort of introduce them to alcohol in that way.
00:46:35		What are your views or what does the evidence say about that one?
	PD	When I started giving parent nights many, many years ago, and I say this in schools now to young people, my final slide used to say, if you have a 15 or 16-year-old and they have not drank alcohol yet, go home tonight and make sure you pour them a drink before someone else does.
00:46:56		That was what the evidence used to be. It came from the Mediterranean Model which appeared in countries like Italy and Greece and to a lesser extent France, that introducing alcohol

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		<p>with a meal in a family context taught them responsible drinking and there were lower levels of drinking.</p> <p>The evidence is pretty clear now. There's been quite a bit of research done looking at the Australian experience in Mediterranean Model. It doesn't work here. Certainly, quite a bit of research has been conducted now.</p>
00:47:30		<p>And of course we have all this other wealth of information about the brain and that delay, delay, delay. Try to delay drinking for as long as possible. It's also important to acknowledge that in countries like Italy and Greece, realistically the Mediterranean Model is not working as effectively as it once did.</p> <p>There are cultural changes that are occurring across the world. That kind of model is most probably not as, I suppose, supported as it once was.</p>
00:48:03		<p>That said, and it is very important to acknowledge this, no one and certainly not me, I certainly can't tell parents what to do in this area, that you have to make your own decision. And if you believe that providing alcohol to your child with a meal is the thing that you want to do, because that's what happened when you were younger and you believe you can set your family rules and teach your child responsible drinking, then that's what you need to do.</p>
00:48:34		<p>I believe there are two things that every parent has to do in this area and that's number one, get the best quality information you can. Number one. And my aim across the country when I speak to parents is to try to give them the best that I possibly can. And then most importantly, follow your heart. If it doesn't feel right, don't do it.</p>
00:48:57		<p>And as I said, I have been involved with a number of deaths over the years of young people, typically Year Tens. So 15-year-olds who went to parties, drank alcohol and they didn't make it home.</p> <p>And I can tell you that of the parents who didn't follow their heart, they actually were pushed into doing something that they didn't feel comfortable with and they lost a child. To lose a child is tragic and of course you're never going to recover.</p>
00:49:29		<p>But if you don't follow your heart, and something terrible happens, yes, it's a disaster. And I think that's the key. It doesn't matter what I say, it doesn't matter what your best friend</p>

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		says or what your sister-in-law says. If it doesn't feel right, don't do it.
	LG	Thanks, that's great advice Paul. I'm sure you possibly get this question a lot, but we've had a few asking, what age you think you should allow some alcohol consumption?
00:50:00		Because obviously teenagers probably will drink and yes, what you think about that?
	PD	Well I think very importantly, whenever anyone says that to me, you have to acknowledge that there are growing numbers of young people who are not going to drink. And that's really important.  So this inevitability that everyone talks about, I think is a problem. I think we have to keep saying that we are seeing growing numbers, and it's not just in Australia, it's around the world, of young people who are choosing not to drink.
00:50:34		So it's not inevitable. So that's really important. Once again, it has to be, you have to follow your heart. You've got to look at the role alcohol plays in your life and your family life and if you believe that, I mean the evidence is very clear, that if they do drink, the best place for them to drink is with you. It should be, their first drink should be with a parent.
00:50:59		Quite a lot of information that supports that that is the best. Now parents then have to kind of... When you look at all of this information that we have through research, it's quite complex. It's like juggling balls, because information says delay, delay, delay, try to stop their first drink from occurring for as long as possible.  At the same time it's saying, but their first drink has to be with you. So you kind of think, okay well, when do I do that? So I think you've got to look at your own experience.
00:51:30		Talk through, as I already said, what your views around underage drinking are. Talk it through with your partner and then come to a decision about what your view is. Express it to your child. And say to them, look if alcohol, if you start to go to parties and you want to have a drink, then you've got to come back to us and we've got to talk that through.
00:51:58		There will be some young people, I meet young people who say, I can think of one young lady not very long ago who said,

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		<p>because I often say to young people, I don't drink and I didn't drink during my teens. And I quite often get young people coming up and saying, well how did you get through it?</p> <p>And I tell them and they go, but it's my mom and dad, they keep saying, well do you want a drink, do you want a drink? I even had one girl who came for two years in a row. The first year she said, my parents are saying this. And then got through that.</p>
00:52:30		<p>Last year she came back she said, I got over my parents, it's now my grandparents who won't stop saying. So I think, don't force it on them. They'll be okay if they choose not to. This inevitability is a real problem that we have.</p>
	LG	<p>Okay, fantastic. Thanks Paul. That's probably all we've got time for in terms of questions. But I'd just like to say thank you so much Paul for presenting on this topic.</p>
00:53:00		<p>There was a lot of fantastic discussion and practical information for those listening. And luckily we do have the recording that will be available on our website to watch back. Or you are all welcome to share it with other parents in your networks.</p> <p>So thanks very much Paul and thanks everyone in the audience for being part of the Positive Choices Webinar Series. As I mentioned earlier, we'd love to hear what topics you'd like to see in our upcoming Webinars. So get in touch at <a href="mailto:info@positivechoices.org.au">info@positivechoices.org.au</a>.</p>
00:53:30		<p>And also don't forget our next Webinar coming up on 13th November, Looking at Solutions to Drug Use Among Rural Youth. And that's with Dr Alice Munro from Western New South Wales Local Health District.</p> <p>So you can subscribe for updates at <a href="http://positivechoices.org.au">positivechoices.org.au</a> and we'll notify you when we're ready to take registrations for that one. So thanks Paul and thanks everybody and goodnight.</p>