

# How can teachers and parents respond to the challenge of 'legal highs'

## Evidence-based prevention for new and emerging drugs

### Speaker Key:

LS Dr. Lexine Stapinski  
KC Dr. Katrina Champion

Time code	Speaker	Text
00:00:00	UF	In listen-only mode.
	LS	Good afternoon everyone and thanks for joining us for the Positive Choices webinar series. And in today's webinar, we're going to be providing some information about new and emerging drugs that young people may encounter. So you might have been hearing about this quite a bit recently in the media. So a really timely topic.
00:00:26		And also what we can do as teachers and as parents to educate young people about these drugs and prevent harms from these substances as well. So my name is Lexine Stapinski and I'll be chairing the session today. And we're very pleased to have Dr Katrina Champion with us, so I'll be introducing her just in a moment. And just to mention that if at any time during the session you do have any questions or comments that you'd like to share, you can write those into the questions panel.
00:01:01		So on your control panel. So just shoot any questions through and then we will have a Q&A session at the end where Katrina will be answering questions. And so the aim of Positive Choices is to assist teachers, parents and students across Australia with accurate information about alcohol and other drugs. So this webinar series is part of that aim. So over the year, we've been really lucky to have had speakers to cover a number of interesting and important topics.
00:01:33		And all of those webinars, if you did miss them over the year are available on demand. So you can watch the video or you can have a look at the handout for those sessions that were held earlier in the year. So covering topics such as mental health, substance use and adolescent brain development. Also looking at how you can use Positive Choices for your lesson planning and really taking a look at how parents and schools can prevent drug-related harms.

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00:02:04		So those are some of the topics that we do have available. We'll also have a whole new schedule for next year coming soon. So the best way to keep up to date is to subscribe at Positive Choices dot org dot au to hear about those upcoming webinars. And so...
00:02:29		Sorry, just waiting for the next slide to pop up. So for those of you that are joining us for the first time, I'll just let you know a little bit about positive choices. So it's a central access point for evidence-based drug information and resources. And it was developed by the researchers at the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre and also the National Drug Research Institute and also in consultation with teachers, parents and students. And the project was funded by the Department of Health.
00:03:01		And so what Positive Choices is all about is providing easy-to-locate, trustworthy and reliable information and educational resources, guidelines for teachers and parents about what they can do to prevent harms and access to classroom-based drug prevention programmes that are proven to reduce drug-related harms. So if you haven't already, I'd encourage you to have a look at the resources that are available on Positive Choices.
00:03:31		And if you do notice that there's something on Positive Choices that you'd like to see or that isn't there, we'd love your feedback. So any suggestions you have... We have a survey which is an opportunity to give us feedback about positive choices and about what you'd like to see there. But you can also just email us through at info at Positive Choices dot org dot au with any comments or suggestions that you have.
00:03:58		So without more delay, I'd like to now introduce Dr Katrina Champion to you. So I'm very pleased to have such a good person to be talking to us on the topic of legal highs or new and emerging drugs today and what we can do in terms of evidence-based prevention. And so Dr Katrina Champion is a postdoctoral researcher at the Centre for Research Excellence in Mental Health and Substance Use at the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre.
00:04:30		Wow, that's quite a mouthful. And she currently manages a Department of Health project to develop online community resources for crystal methamphetamine. But her PhD work really focussed on the development of Climate Schools, the ecstasy and emerging drugs module which she'll be telling you about today. And it was the first online, school-based prevention programme designed to prevent use of ecstasy and new

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		psychoactive substances.
00:05:03		So thanks so much, Katrina, for joining us today.
	KC	Thank you, Lexine. So as Lexine mentioned, this afternoon I'll be presenting on new and emerging drugs or they're also commonly called new psychoactive substances or NPS. And as Lexine mentioned, this is quite a timely talk. As some of you may have noticed, a great deal of media attention about NPS in the last couple of weeks in particular.
00:05:34		So we saw that there were a number of hospitalisations and fatalities related to NPS in the Gold Coast. And these media reports highlight a couple of the key issues surrounding NPS. So firstly, the fact that they can be fatal and are incredibly risky. But also the issue of the uncertainty about what these drugs actually are and what they contain.
00:05:58		So originally there were reports that this substance was flakka but then it later came out that it was in fact a different type of NPS. So again, these just reiterate the importance of delivering prevention and education for young people about these drugs. So just as a little outline for the talk this afternoon, I'll first start off providing a definition about what NPS are.
00:06:28		I'll then talk about some of the laws and some of the issues around legislation. I will summarise some of the common types of NPS, talk about the rates of use and especially the rates of use among young people in Australia. I'll then talk about the possible effects and the risks associated with some NPS and really getting across the importance of education and prevention for these substances. The second half of the talk will then introduce the Climate Schools ecstasy and emerging drug module that Lexine mentioned was the focus of my PhD research.
00:07:04		So I'll give a bit of an overview of the programme content and what the programme's about. And then walk through how the programme can be implemented in a real-world school setting. And then finally I'll finish by presenting some outcomes from a recent trial of the programme.  So what are new psychoactive substances or NPS? So these are also commonly known as legal highs, party pills.
00:07:31		You might have heard them being called synthetic drugs, plant food, research chemicals or even bath salts. And what we mean by this term are any substance that are not under international control but that do pose a significant public health threat. So

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		they're specifically designed to mimic the effects of existing illicit drugs, so drugs such as MDMA or ecstasy, cannabis, LSD.
00:07:58		They're commonly sold online or in adult stores as legal alternatives to traditional drugs. But the laws are complex and they're frequently changing. So essentially, the manufacturers of NPS make small tweaks to the chemical composition or the molecular structure of existing drugs. So these small tweaks are still designed to produce the same psychoactive effects of the existing drug.
00:08:28		So for example, the same effect as ecstasy but making a small enough tweak that it's not subject to existing drug law. So this then led to governments around the world introducing legislation to ban specific NPS. However, this in turn then led to the drug manufacturers just making additional tweaks to the chemical composition to produce another drug. So it led to this cat and mouse game between the drug manufacturers and the legislators.
00:09:00		However, more recently in Australia, many states including Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and also WA now have introduced a blanket ban that makes it illegal to possess or sell any substance that has a psychoactive effect while in other states, they've just continued to ban specific types of NPS with the list of those banned substances constantly changing as new NPS emerge.
00:09:30		And at a Commonwealth level, the government has banned the importation of all NPS. So they key take home point in terms of NPS and the law is that despite the fact that they're often marketed as legal highs, in many countries including Australia, we now know that many NPS are in fact illegal.
00:09:58		We also know that there are a huge number of NPS available. So there were 643 at the end of 2015 and that they're emerging at an unprecedented rate. So there were almost 100 new NPS identified in 2015 alone. And if we look at this graph here, we can see the three most common types of NPS here. And those are cannabinoids, cathinones and phenethylamines.
00:10:30		So I'll now just give a little bit of a summary about each of those three broad categories of NPS. So synthetic Cannabinoids, or they're also known as synthetic cannabis, are one of the largest groups of NPS, one of the most commonly used. And as the name suggests, they're designed to specifically mimic the effects of traditional cannabis. They're sold as a smoking mixture and under brand names such as Spice and Kronic, which some of you

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		may have heard.
00:11:02		Another large group of synthetic Cathinones and these are also known as bath salts or synthetic stimulants. And so these are stimulant-like substances that are designed to imitate the psychoactive effects of ecstasy and amphetamine. They're normally sold as pills, powders or capsules and are most often snorted or swallowed.
00:11:27		And one of the most common examples of a cathinone is Mephedrone or M-CAT. This emerged in about 2007 and was quite commonly used in the UK as a legal alternative to ecstasy or MDMA. However, this has now since been banned and is under international control. And then there's a range of other NPS as well. So there's Phenethylamines, another stimulant-type substance.
00:11:57		The N-BOMe series or N-Bomb as it's commonly known are drugs that are modelled after hallucinogens such as LSD and these NPS are constantly changing and there's always new types emerging. So what are the effects of NPS? Very little is known about the effects and risks, especially in the long term. So this is really one of the main concerns.
00:12:27		One of the main factors that make these drugs just so risky is that we just don't know enough about them. As we've heard, there's a huge array of NPS available and each of these have different effects and different risk profiles. So this further compounds the issue. And further again, there's constant changes to NPS, so those constant tweaks to the molecular structure and constant emergence of new types of NPS that make it even harder for us to know what they contain and what their effects are.
00:13:01		So one of the main messages that are important to get across especially to young people is that like many illegal drugs, taking NPS is like the roll of a dice. The effects are just completely unpredictable and we don't know what you're going to get. Having said that, we do have a little bit of information about some of the shorter term effects of synthetic cannabis.
00:13:29		So side-effects that have been reported in the literature range from nausea and drowsiness up to extreme agitation, anxiety, paranoia and even psychosis. A range of serious physical side-effects have also been reported including seizures, cardiac arrest and even deaths. And there's also some early preliminary evidence to suggest that synthetic cannabis may actually be more harmful than traditional forms of cannabis.

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00:14:00		Now if we look at other types of NPS including those synthetic Cathinones or synthetic stimulants, short-term effects that have been reported include agitation, aggression, heart palpitations, insomnia, hallucinations and nausea. We've also seen a number of hospitalisations and fatalities being documented.
00:14:26		So for example, if you look at data from the UK, there were nine NPS-related deaths in 2007. But by 2013, this had risen to 60 NPS-related deaths. And unfortunately there have also been fatal cases associated with NPS use documented in Australia.  So now we're just going to take a little poll. Time for a little quiz question. So we're asking the audience which of these drugs are legal in New South Wales?
00:15:02		And so the possible options are one, N-Bomb or B-Bome. Two, flakka. Three, synthetic cannabis. Four, none of the above. Or five, all of the above.
00:15:30	LS	Okay, Katrina. So I think everyone's finished the poll now. So 76% of people, so a high proportion there said none of the above. 16% said all of the above and about 8% said synthetic cannabis.
	KC	Thanks, Lexine.
00:15:59		So it looks like the majority of you got that one right. So the correct answer was none of the above. And so this is one of the key things that we really want to get across to young people is that even though they are marketed as legal highs, these drugs in New South Wales specifically are illegal. So all substances that have a psychoactive effect are now banned under legislation introduced in New South Wales.
00:16:30		So now looking at rates of NPS use. So how many young Australians use NPS? Among young Australians aged 14 to 19 years... And this data comes from the latest National Drug Household Survey 2013. So we find that just under 3% say that they've used synthetic cannabis in their lifetime. And a very low proportion have used a stimulant type NPS.
00:17:01		And this compares to the general population with about 1% having ever used synthetic cannabis aged 14 and above and a similar proportion, so 0.4% had used a stimulant type NPS. So those Cathinones and other stimulants NPS. If we compare the rates of use in Australia to international rates of NPS use, we see a fairly similar pattern.
00:17:31		So in this graph on the slide at the moment, we've got Australia

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		<p>on the left with the rates that I've just presented. In the middle, we've got the USA. So we can see a similar number, slightly higher, 4% had ever used synthetic cannabis and a similar prevalence of synthetic stimulant use. And the final column in green is in the UK. And that's representing any type of NPS use, 3%.</p>
00:18:00		<p>So pretty similar across countries. Another important point to make here is that although these rates are low, there is a huge potential for harm. And also to point out that these are only one source of data and that's the best data that we've got at the moment. So NPS isn't commonly captured in Australia at the moment. So at the moment, these are the best data that we do have.</p>
00:18:31		<p>So why is NPS use particularly risky for young people? So as we can see on this slide, the image there shows that they're typically sold in colourful and attractive packaging, so this might catch young people's eye and make them more attracted to trying these types of drugs. There's issues in terms of dosage.</p>
00:18:58		<p>So NPS don't typically come with any recommended dosage. So even though they're sold in packaging, there's no dosage information or any information on the actual packaging. We also know that they can be very strong at low doses and, on the other hand, certain types of NPS might take longer to take effect or longer to kick in, which can lead to overdosing. As we've touched on already, there are often marketed as legal highs despite constant legislative changes regarding NPS.</p>
00:19:33		<p>And this has the potential to influence people's perceptions. So young people may incorrectly believe that NPS are legal, low-risk and safe to use, despite there being very little evidence or no evidence to support this. In fact, data from our recent study of Australian 14-year-olds found that 41% said they'd be more likely to try a drug if they thought it was legal.</p>
00:19:57		<p>Over half agreed that if a drug is sold legally, then they are more likely to think that it is safe. And nearly three quarters incorrectly thought that most Australian teenagers use emerging drugs. So all of this says that there is potential for young people to misperceive or get the wrong idea about these drugs, which may lead to them getting in trouble with NPS.</p>
00:20:29		<p>As I've touched on already, the fact that they're emerging at such a rapid rate, the complete lack of knowledge about their risks and effects, especially in the long term and the misperceptions of young people about the safety and legal status of NPS really</p>

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		underscore the importance of delivering early and effective prevention. So how can we prevent NPS use and related harms?
00:20:57		So over the past three or so years, there's been several major reports released outlining recommendations about where, when and how prevention should NPS occur. And so on the basis of these recommendations, it appears that prevention should occur at school. And specifically during health and education classes. It should be embedded into existing drug education programmes, so alongside education for other illegal drugs.
00:21:29		It should aim to increase knowledge about the harms of NPS, be innovative, make use of new technologies and, importantly, be scientifically evaluated to determine their efficacy. So as part of my PhD research a couple of years ago, my supervisors and I tried to take on board some of these recommendations to develop the first online prevention programme specifically for new psychoactive substances.
00:22:00		So that's where the Climate Schools ecstasy and emerging drugs module comes in. So it was developed in 2014 with input from students, teachers and health professionals. It was based on the effective Climate Schools prevention method which has been shown to improve outcomes in a number of areas including reducing their alcohol and cannabis use, increasing their knowledge, reducing their intentions to use drugs in the future.
00:22:28		And importantly, the programmes were well-liked by teachers and students. So we thought that it made sense to use this existing model or framework to develop a new programme specifically targeting ecstasy and emerging drugs or new psychoactive substances. So the programme consists of four lessons, each consisting of a 20-minute online cartoon component followed by 20 minutes of activities. And it's curriculum consistent.
00:22:59		So it's designed for Year 10 students to be delivered in health and physical education classes with clear links to how their programme content links to the Stage 5 syllabus. The programme adopts a harm minimisation goal and a social influence approach. It imparts evidence-based information about NPS.
00:23:28		Corrects overestimates of ecstasy and NPS use among peers. Improves refusal. Helps seeking and decision-making and addresses misconceptions particularly about the legal status and risks of NPS use. So just to go into that in a little bit more detail, on the left we've got the four main messages and then the aim in the second column. So the first message that we wanted to try to



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		get across to students was that legal does not mean safe.
00:24:01		So by this, we wanted to correct the misperception that just because NPS is sometimes marketed at being legal, they're not safe to use. Secondly, we wanted to teach students that NPS are not necessarily legal, as I've spoken about already this afternoon. So the aim of this was to inform students that even though NPS is sometimes marketed as legal highs, they're often quickly banned and their legal status can change rapidly.
00:24:31		Thirdly, we wanted to get across that most young people in Australia do not use NPS. So to do this, we used national prevalence data on NPS use and feed that back to students to correct their overestimates of NPS use among their peers. And finally, the fourth message is that taking NPS is a gamble. So we wanted to educate students that there's not enough research out there to know what these substance contain and what effects they might have, especially in the long term.
00:25:05		So this slide just shows the programme outline. As I mentioned, there's four lessons. And the first one gives a bit of an introduction about NPS and the consequences of use. The second one goes into some risk-taking strategies and how to keep safe. And the third and final lessons include further information about the risks and health issues.
00:25:33		As well as some of the social consequences of drug use. How it can affect your relationships, financial status, employment and also how to say no. Some refusal skills and harm minimisation strategies.  So this programme is an internet-based intervention. So students access it via logging on to a website. And teachers also access it online as well.
00:26:03		And so as I mentioned, the first part of each lesson is a 20-minute cartoon component. So students log on to their student centre, click the blue button at the bottom of the screen and then they click through a series of about 100 or 150 slides that look a little bit like this. So the aim of these cartoon storylines are to of course impart information about NPS and ecstasy.
00:26:31		And get across some of these key messages that I had up on the screen just before but at the same time to maintain their interest and importantly, to engage them.
00:26:57		And one of the components that we included in the programme for the first time was this little stop and think task. So as the name

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		<p>suggests, the idea is to get students to stop and think and importantly to think critically about the situation that the characters are in and to weigh up the pros and cons and to think about how they could have reacted or handled it better. So for example on this one, the question is what could they have done to have avoided this situation, referring to the girl vomiting and becoming ill after taking a pill.</p>
00:27:32		<p>And so after the students have completed the cartoons, they then regroup as a class and complete 20 minutes of activities. So these consist of group-based activities such as role-plays and class discussions as well as worksheets. And there's also a range of online activities as well.</p>
00:27:57		<p>And for each of the four lessons, both teachers and students get a PDF summary which just reinforces the content and provides a nice overview of the content that was covered in the cartoon lesson.</p> <p>So after we developed the programme, the next important step was to see if the programme worked. So to do this, we ran a cluster randomised control trial in 11 Sydney in 2014 and 2016.</p>
00:28:31		<p>Half of those schools were randomised to receive the Climate Schools intervention. So they were asked to complete that four-lesson programme. And the other half were randomised to a control group. And they were asked to complete their health education as usual. All students in both groups completed all online, confidential, self-report surveys over two years. And we were really interested in assessing their intentions to use.</p>
00:18:58		<p>So intentions to use any NPS, synthetic cannabis specifically and their intentions to use ecstasy. Also their knowledge about NPS and ecstasy and of course their actual lifetime use of NPS and ecstasy. This table just gives an overview of the study time frame. So we can see it started back in 2014 when students were in Year 10. Both groups completed that baseline survey.</p>
00:29:30		<p>Their intervention group then went on to complete a four-lesson Climate Schools programme and the control group completing their health education as usual. And then both groups completed a survey immediately post test, six months, 12 months and 24 months later. So that final 24-month survey was conducted earlier this year when the students were in Year 12.</p>
00:29:57		<p>And this was the first trial of an online, school-based prevention programme specifically for ecstasy and NPS. So what did we find? Looking at the sample at baseline, we had just over 1,100</p>

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		students. They were aged about 15 years on average and a pretty equal gender split. And we found that few students said they had ever used ecstasy and NPS. So if we look at this graph here, we can see that 2% said that they'd used ecstasy.
00:30:32		3% reported any NPS use. 2.4% had used synthetic cannabis and a very small percentage had used those synthetic stimulant type NPS. And when we compare this to the National Drug Strategy Household Survey data that I presented earlier, we can see that our findings are consistent with those estimates.
00:30:58		So to determine whether the programme was effective, we ran a series of analyses that compared students that received the intervention. So comparing the intervention group to students in the control group. And just to pull out a couple of the key findings, what we found was compared to those in the intervention group, students in the control group were ten times as likely to intend on using any NPS. And that was at the 12-month follow-up. We also found that the control group were more than three and a half times as likely to intend on using synthetic cannabis.
00:31:32		And we were really pleased to see that this effect persisted right up until that two-year follow-up. And so this table just provides a summary of the programme effects with a green tick indicating a significant difference or a significant programme effect. So we also had some short-term effects for knowledge and ecstasy. So students that did receive the four-lesson intervention had greater knowledge at those early follow-ups compared to the control group.
00:32:04		But there were no differences between the groups in terms of actual use of NPS and actual use of ecstasy. And we think this is probably because as we saw earlier, that rates of use were just so low in both groups. We also collected feedback from participating teachers and students in the trial and on the whole it was very positive.
00:32:30		All teachers indicated that the cartoon stories held their student's attention well. They rated the educational quality as good or very good and found that mostly the activities were easy to prepare and overall, all teachers said that they'd be likely to recommend the programme to others and to use the resources again in the future. In terms of what the students had to say about the programme, the majority said it was an enjoyable way of learning.
00:33:02		Most said that the information about ecstasy and NPS was easy to understand, easy to learn and easy to remember. And 85% said that they planned to use the information that they had

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		learned in the programme in their own lives. So just to sum up, as I mentioned at the beginning, we know that there's been a rapid growth in the availability and misuse of NPS. And great uncertainty remains about their effects, especially in the long term.
00:33:32		A school-based drug education is one important part of tackling the challenge of NPS. Certainly not the only part but it does play a critical role and it's especially important to provide evidence-based and harm minimisation information and specifically I think there's a need to correct those misperceptions of peer NPS use and dispel common misconceptions that these drugs are A, legal and B, safe when we know that this is not the case.
00:34:01		In terms of the Climate Schools programme, we found that it was effective in increasing knowledge about NPS in the short term. And in the longer term, it was effective in reducing their intentions to use these substances in the future. And an area for future exploration is that it may be useful to implement this programme in international contexts or overseas where NPS use may be a little higher.
00:34:30		So the Climate Schools ecstasy and emerging drugs module will be available on the Climate Schools and Positive Choices websites very soon. And if anyone would like any more information about when it will be available or just any questions in general, my email address is up on the side there. And finally just to acknowledge all the students and teachers at the participating schools who helped us out in the development and the evaluation of the programme.
00:35:01		So thank you.
	LS	Thank you so much for that, Katrina. And so much food for thought as well. You've covered a lot of complex issues in a short amount of time, so that's really great. And we do have quite a number of questions that have come through just following up on the things that you've spoken about. So I'll start the questions firing, if that's okay.
00:35:29	KC	Okay.
	LS	So first of all, people are interested to understand a little bit more about young people's NPS use. So can you comment on why you think young people are using NPS?
	KC	I think like any substances, there's probably a whole range of

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		reasons why young people might choose to use these drugs.
00:36:00		So things such as... An obvious one is that it makes them feel good or to get a high. It may also be to escape reality or to cope. But in terms of the specific characteristics of NPS that might lead someone to use these drugs, it could have been the fact that they were once legal or perceived as being legal. They might be more easily available.
00:36:29		The fact that they can be bought online and possibly price. So I think those are probably the main factors but of course we can't be certain for sure.
	LS	And you talked quite a bit about the legal issues and the changes over time. Do you have the perception that young people understand that these substances are legal? Or do you think there's still a common perception... Sorry, that they're illegal or do you think there's still a common perception that they're legal?
00:37:00	KC	Yes, that's certainly something interesting to explore. So in the study that we conducted, we do ask about beliefs and attitudes and perceptions about the legal status of NPS. And I haven't looked at it just yet, but I think that would be really interested to see whether our four-lesson intervention does actually do what we wanted it to do and change those perceptions to try and teach students that these drugs are in actual fact illegal.
00:37:33	LS	And another question that's come through here was related specifically to DXM but it could be more broadly applicable to other psychoactive new substances. Someone's asked what do you think about how accessible these drugs are for young people?
	KC	That's an interesting question. I'm not completely sure about how accessible they are and how available they are but I guess the legislation possibly has made it less available but I can't really comment on that too much.
	LS	And I guess some of the online markets might mean that people can access them from overseas.
00:38:29		So Australia's legislation may not completely solve that issue.
	KC	Exactly, yes. It's just so complex, the law around these drugs.
	LS	And you talked quite a bit about the harms associated with these drugs and that was really interesting how in some cases, in the example of synthetic cannabis, there was evidence that it may

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		actually be more harmful than cannabis. And so one of the questions that's come through is about is whether we should be worried...
00:39:00		Should we be more worried that young people are accidentally getting NPS when they're trying to buy standard illegal drugs? Is that something we should be concerned about?
	KC	The evidence that these NPS are more dangerous or harmful than traditional illicit drugs is still very preliminary and that is one of the key things that we just don't know how risky or dangerous NPS are, especially in the long term.
00:39:32		So the messages just need to apply across all substances, whether it be NPS or the traditional drugs that it's better not to use. And then if they are using, to teach them some of those harm minimisation skills to prevent the harms.
	LS	So to clarify, that this category of drugs are not a safe alternative. They're just as risky as the other drugs. That's it.
	KC	Yes.
00:40:00	LS	So coming now to... Sorry, one more question about the use and then I've got some questions about the programme as well. So someone's just asking about the numbers that you talked about in terms of use of NPS and just wanting to clarify whether that was in Australia. So you did show some data from Australia, didn't you?
	KC	Yes, the Australian data... So the first column in that graph, that was Australian data among 14 to 19-year-olds.
00:40:33		Taken from the National Household Survey in 2013. And then I also presented some data from the U.S. and that was from the Monitoring the Future survey and then also some data from the UK Home Office.
	LS	Fantastic. Just for everyone to know, we will be sending out a link to be able to access the handouts from the talk today and also the video from the talk today.
00:41:01		So you will have that information in front of you to be able to have a look at as well. Interestingly, so you had data from the UK and the U.S. as you mentioned. I wonder if there's been much coming out of other countries yet to be able to talk to that issue of international use. Or is that something that's still emerging, it's such a new field I guess.

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	KC	I think so, yes.
00:41:30	LS	So now some questions about the prevention programme that you talked about. So what year level would this Climate Module that you talked about, the NPS and ecstasy module be most suitable for?
	KC	So we developed and implemented it among Year 10 students. So about 15 to 16-year-olds just because we thought it aligned well with the curriculum or syllabus.
00:42:01		And also just because we thought if we did it any earlier, they really wouldn't be having any exposure to NPS and ecstasy and even any situations where they might be exposed to these drugs. So we thought that was the most appropriate age developmentally to implement it.
	LS	And can organisations other than schools use the programme? So for example youth workers?
00:42:31		So it has of course been designed to be implemented in a school setting. But once it is available online on the Climate Schools website, it certainly could be used by youth workers or school counsellors or mental health nurses. Some of our other modules, so some of the other Climate Schools courses for say alcohol and cannabis are being used by those types of people.
00:42:59		But predominantly, it is designed for schools.
	LS	So the other thing that's come through is asking about whether the programme reflects a strengths-based approach to drug education?
	KC	And approach that really underpins the program was the social influence or social norms approach.
00:43:28		So if we think back to the slide that had those key aims or key messages, the approach really aimed to provide evidence-based information, to provide normative education to correct those overestimates of peer use. But importantly, it did provide some of those generic life skills or strength training. So improving their self-efficacy, improving their decision-making skills, coping skills. Some of those more generic skills as well.
00:44:01		And from knowing a bit about these programmes, I guess you've also got the characters that are positive role models in some ways. Is that the case with this module as well?

Time code	Speaker	Text
	KC	Yes, exactly. We tried to embed that positive role modelling throughout those cartoon storylines. So that might have been an older brother or a cousin or a relative, a sports coach.
00:44:31		A trusted adult to model those positive relationships.
	LS	You've taken us through a tour of a really complex field in terms of the constantly changing nature of the drugs and the legal status and we had the poll about New South Wales which congratulations everyone or most people for getting right.
00:44:58		But as you said, that's New South Wales and things may vary from state to state. So how does a prevention programme like this keep up to date with the field of NPS when things are constantly changing around you?
	KC	That's a good question. And I think one of the great things about the programme is that we did decide to keep those key messages quite basic or generic. So they weren't necessarily substance specific.
00:45:29		So they weren't about specific types of NPS, although they did touch on those two broad categories of synthetic cannabis and cathinones we didn't want to get too specific because of the issue that we mentioned. But one of the good things about the programme being internet-based is that the content can be updated relatively easily. So for example if there were major changes in the laws, we could fairly easily and cheaply go in and update the content in the cartoon and the activities and summaries to reflect those changes in the landscape.
00:46:07	LS	And you said that the programme will be available soon?
	KC	Yes. I think it should be available certainly in the next month or so but as I mentioned, if anyone wants some more information about that, they can email me and I can let them know.
00:46:27	LS	From Positive Choices HQ, we will email people out a notification when the programme does become available as well because that will be quite exciting to have that. And as we've talked about, it's something that's so important, particularly at the moment when we're hearing about these stories or news reports of harms. So really wanting to be able to educate young people. So I'm sure a lot of teachers around the country will be keen to get their hands on that. You and I could probably chat about this all day, Katrina, but we'll let everyone get back to their afternoon.



Time code	Speaker	Text
00:47:01		And so just if you can flick through to the next slide for me and I'll just let people know again... Thank you very much for being part of our webinar series, but also that if you liked this, there's so many opportunities to get involved in or participate in more webinars. So we have the on-demand webinars, so these are the webinars we've had across the year. So covering topics such as mental health, substance use and the adolescent brain development.
00:47:31		So really important there. Also, we have a webinar on how you can use Positive Choices to facilitate lesson planning when it comes to lesson planning. We have a webinar on what parents and schools can do to prevent drug-related harms. And we also have a webinar looking at mental health and substance use among young people and how they affect young people.
00:47:57		All of those are available on Positive Choices, the video and the handouts to watch right now. In addition, we have an exciting new series planned for next year with more topics. I can't announce what they are yet, but just believe me that they're good. And we'd love if you want to see a topic, if there's something you'd really like to see and you think would be useful, please email us at info at Positive Choices dot org dot au and we can try and make that happen for you.
00:47:29		So thanks again everyone for being part of this this afternoon. And we hope that we'll see you again at one of our next webinars and thank you, Katrina.
	KC	Thank you.
	LS	Thank you and goodbye, everyone.
00:48:47		