

OurFutures: Evidence-based health and wellbeing courses for ...

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SPEAKERS

Emma Devine, Lauren Gardner, Voice over

E Emma Devine 00:45
Afternoon, everyone, we'll just give it a couple of minutes and let some more people join. Before we get started today.

E Emma Devine 01:07
Step up the numbers going up quite quickly. So just hold on a sec.

E Emma Devine 01:22
All right. So good afternoon, everybody. And welcome to our Positive Choices webinar for today. My name is Dr. Emma Devine, and I'm a researcher at the Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use at the University of Sydney. I'm also the project manager for Positive Choices. So big welcome. And thank you for joining us today. So we're all coming together from different parts of the country today. So I'd like to begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia, and their connection to land, water and community. I'm currently on the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation and pay my respects to elder's past and present. I further acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which you are and pay my respects to their elders past and present. I would also like to acknowledge any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joining us for the webinar today. So before we get into today's presentation, I'm just going to go and I'm just going to go through a couple of housekeeping points. So the first one is that as participants today you are in listen only mode. And what this means is that we're not going to be able to hear or to see you. We are recording this session, and the recording as well as the slides will be made available up on the Positive Choices website, after the webinar. And finally, we'll have a question and answer session at the end. So as we're going through the session, if any questions pop into your mind, feel free to pop them into the Q&A box that is up on your screen now. So for anyone who's new to Positive Choices, I want to start by giving a really quick introduction. So Positive Choices is a

website that provides access to trustworthy up to date and evidence based alcohol and other drug information and educational resources that are suitable for parents, teachers and students. Positive Choices is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and was developed by the Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use here at the University of Sydney. It was developed in consultation with teachers, parents, and students. And some of the example some example resources that we house on Positive Choices include learning resources, factsheets, videos, webinars, games, as well as classroom based drug prevention programs that are proven to reduce drug related harms. So I really encourage you to go pop onto the website, have a little look around and see what's there that might be really useful to you.

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Emma Devine 03:57

But now on to today's webinar, so today, we're focusing on OurFutures well being courses and we're very excited to have Dr. Lauren Gardner presenting for us today. So Lauren is a research fellow at the Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and substance use at the University of Sydney. She holds a Bachelor of psychology with first class honors and a PhD in Psychology from the University of Wollongong. Her current research focus is on developing, evaluating and taking to scale preventive eHealth interventions for secondary school students. She's leading the OurFutures project which aims to make the effective OurFutures formerly known as Climate Schools programs, to take them to scale and to support secondary schools to prevent mental ill health, alcohol and other drug use and related harms. Lauren is also coordinating the health for life initiative, which is a large multi site randomized control trial, evaluating the first eHealth program to simultaneously target the Big Six lifestyle risk behaviors, which are physical inactivity, poor diet, sedentary recreational screentime poor sleep, alcohol and smoking, all with the aim of reducing the risk of chronic disease. So big thank you to Lauren, and over to you.

L

Lauren Gardner 05:11

Thanks, Emma. I will share my screen okay, awesome. Thank you everyone for joining. It's It's really exciting to be able to be here and spread the news about OurFutures. So in this webinar, I'm going to provide an overview of substance use and mental health among Australian adolescents, the OurFutures or Climate Schools model, the evidence, the impact. I'll give you an overview of the new and improved our futures platform as well as some information about how to get involved.

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Lauren Gardner 05:52

And before I begin, I'd also like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land. So I'm on the lands of the Gadigal people, and I pay my respect to those who have cared and continue to care for country. And I'd also like to acknowledge the many wonderful people at the Matilda Centre and beyond who've contributed and continue to contribute to the development and the dissemination of our futures, particularly the founders Maree, Teesson, and Nickie Newton.

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Lauren Gardner 06:22

So, by way of background, substance use and mental health problems are prevalent in Australia and all across the world. And importantly, research shows that they often co occur and share common risk factors. They contribute to a substantial proportion of the burden of disease and significant social and economic costs, with estimated cost of over \$43 billion each year in Australia. Onset of these conditions typically occurs during adolescence with disability greatest among those aged 15 to 24 years. And they're the leading causes of disability among people and young people in high income countries.

L

Lauren Gardner 07:03

So to alleviate this burden and improve those long term trajectories of young people, it's critical that we intervene early before those patterns of substance use and mental health problems are established, and that we use programs with strong evidence of effectiveness.

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Lauren Gardner 07:20

So to give you an idea about how early this needs to be, data from the latest wave of the Australian National Drug strategy household survey, which is a big, nationally representative survey that's run every three years found that among those 14 to 17 years, 66% have tried alcohol 18% have tried cannabis, and 5% have tried MDMA. And then when we consider mental health, the latest the last national survey was a few years ago now, so in 2015, but it found that among those 12 to 17 years 7% have an anxiety disorder, 6% have ADHD 5% have major depressive disorder, and 20% have high or very high levels of psychological distress.

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Lauren Gardner 08:13

When we look at trends over time, so this includes some of more recent mental health data, we're finding that substance use is generally decreasing, however, mental health problems are increasing. So for example, here you can see trends in alcohol use and psychological distress in particular. And this research is by some members of our research team that's using data from a few of our prevention trials, which involve cohorts of young people around 13 years old at the time. So there was about 14,000 young Australians involved here. And so they have mapped this across four time points. So the time points you can see on that horizontal axis so that those who were 13 years old in 2007, those who were 13 years old in 2012, those who were 13 in 2014, and then those who were 13, in 2019. And you can see that the trends are showing reductions in alcohol use. So in 2007, there were higher rates of alcohol use among 13 year olds, and this has continued to reduce over time. But psychological distress has increased over time. And this has increased to about one in five females and one in 10 males by 2019. And I think it's important to note that we have some evidence that the recent downward trends in alcohol use are actually being driven by males. And we're not necessarily seeing those same trends in females. So we're seeing some evidence of a closing of that traditional gender gap in alcohol use.

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Lauren Gardner 09:54

And even though we are seeing some positive shifts in substance use overall, we're also still

seeing very high risk binge drinking among some young people. So we've got 3% of 14 to 17 year olds and 15% of 18 to 24 year olds consuming 11 or more drinks in a single occasion, at least monthly. And we also know that younger people remain more likely to be victims of alcohol related crime, in part because they tend to drink in riskier ways and in riskier situations than older people. And this risky drinking, of course, has flow on effects. So things such as poor academic performance, a higher likelihood of dropping out of school, neuro psychological deficits, and an increased risk of substance use and other mental disorders later in life.

L Lauren Gardner 10:43

However, there is some good news, as we know that for each year that we delay the onset of drinking, we reduce the odds of developing an alcohol use disorder by 9%. And this is really why preventive interventions are so important.

L Lauren Gardner 10:59

So we think that school is the ideal location for these preventive interventions. And this is for a range of reasons, such as it being practical, the students spend over 25% of their waking lives there. We can reach students at the time when they first start to experiment with alcohol and other drugs. It allows us to educate prior to that harmful exposure. We can tailor developmental, sorry, we can tailor messages for different about developmental levels. And substance use and well being education is mandatory under our health education curriculum.

L Lauren Gardner 11:39

So over the past few decades, there have been a number of reviews and meta analyses conducted to try and tease out what the critical components are that make one school based drug prevention program more effective than another. And this has resulted in a set of effective principles of school based drug prevention. So we firstly know that the most effective programs are those with a clear evidence base, and that are theory driven, those that are developmentally appropriate and immediately relevant to students. So typically, students are most interested in something that's going to affect them now, not so much what's going to affect them in 20 years time. We know that we have to implement programs early prior to harmful use, and that programs are most effective when they're part of a comprehensive health education curriculum. We also know that using peer leaders increases the effects of a program. But it's still important to keep teachers within a central role. And we know that the interactive teaching methods are more effective and engaging students than some of the traditional didactic or lecture style methods. And then finally, we also know that programs that adopt a social influence or comprehensive approach to prevention are the most effective. So this involves providing young people with information and facts on the harms, along with resistance skills training. And we also incorporate normative education. So we're challenging those views that everyone's doing it and flipping it on its head to show how few people their age are actually using alcohol or other drugs.

L Lauren Gardner 13:18

However, we saw that the dissemination of these programs into schools was relatively low. And

that that was mostly due to some of the barriers and obstacles that arise when trying to implement programs in the school environment. Some of these include insufficient resources in terms of materials, time and monies for school to implement the program's teachers adapting programs to the school environment, and therefore the program's losing some of those core components that make them effective. A lack of training for teachers to implement the programs, schools choosing to use programs that might look good or commercially packaged, but maybe don't have the evidence of effectiveness behind them. And also sustainability. So once they choose to use it, how do we ensure that schools keep using it and it's easy for them to fit into their curriculum. And the problem with this is that poor implementation or low implementation fidelity leads to poor outcomes.

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Lauren Gardner 14:20

So we could see that clearly, there was a need for a new prevention approach. We need one that adheres to the evidence base that overcomes those common barriers to implementation to increase fidelity and improve those outcomes. And one that also really engages students. And it was based on this and those effective principles that the Climate Schools model was developed. And so this model has been tried and tested over the past two decades. However, given a lot has changed in this time, and the word climate has very different connotations now than it did when it was first named. We recently decided that it was time for a big refresh and we've now relaunched as OurFutures. So although the programs were developed and evaluated, and if you look it up trying to find our research, you'll find it under the name Climate Schools. I'll be referring to OurFutures hearin as we have now officially rebranded and relaunched.

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Lauren Gardner 15:18

So the our futures program currently consists of these five curriculum aligned modules that have all been developed and rigorously evaluated over the years. They all went through an iterative co-development process with students and teachers, and we do continue to refine them and update them overtime. So these are the five modules and they're now publicly available. So we've got the alcohol module for year eight, the alcohol and cannabis module for years eight or nine, cannabis and psychostimulants, we say for years nine or 10, or it can also be delivered in year 11, as a wellbeing initiative once health education is no longer mandatory subject. And that's the same as for MDMA in emerging drugs as well. So we recommend for year 10 or can be in year 11, as a wellbeing initiative. And then the mental health module is for years eight, nine or 10. And that one, we recommend delivering in combination with the alcohol and cannabis module, for the best effects is that's how it was originally trialed. And ideally, they're all delivered sequentially, but they can be delivered individually.

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Lauren Gardner 16:28

So each module consists of four to six lessons with the main component of each lesson being these interactive cartoon storyboards, as these are grounded in the social influence theory. So we're using characters who are around the same age as the target students, which allows us to deliver those peer-led messages that we know are more effective at driving behavior change

than having the messages come from an authority figure alone like a teacher or a police officer. And we touch on lots of topics like love interests and teenage dramas to really engage the students.

L Lauren Gardner 17:03

Additionally, we've got short quizzes and activities embedded in the cartoons. And then after they finish them, they get a copy of a summary sheet that reinforces the content and the evidence covered in the lesson. So they can either print those out, or they can save them on their computer for easy reference. Then the second part of the lesson involves optional teacher facilitated activities. And we offer a range of activities to allow for different delivery formats and preparation time. So things like worksheets, class discussions and role plays. And I'll talk about those a little bit more in a moment. But otherwise, teachers can also access their own teacher summaries. We've got parent summaries available, which can be exported and emailed to parents as well as an online Implementation Guide, which means that no formal teacher training is required.

L Lauren Gardner 17:56

And each module is also linked to the syllabus content from the Australian Health and Physical Education Curriculum, as well as the New South Wales PDHPEs syllabus. And we are planning to have it mapped to the WA and the Victorian curriculums later this year.

L Lauren Gardner 18:12

So to date, we've conducted eight randomized controlled trials to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs. So six of those are complete and two are currently underway, which I'll talk about a little bit later. But overall, this is included 240 schools and over 21,000 students across Australia. And we've published in these on these trials in 47, peer reviewed papers in some of the leading journals in our field. And there was also a pilot trial that was conducted in London, which found Climate Schools to be feasible and acceptable in the UK context, and I'll talk to some of the international collaborations a little bit later as well.

L Lauren Gardner 18:59

But across our completed trials, some of our key findings included demonstrated effectiveness in increasing knowledge about mental health, alcohol and other drugs, reducing alcohol consumption and binge drinking, reducing cannabis and ecstasy use, slowing the progression of anxiety and reducing psychological distress, reducing harms from substance use reducing intentions to use substances as well as improving attitudes.

L Lauren Gardner 19:28

And we've continued to follow up some of our study participants in long term trials. So over about seven years, and incredibly, we're seeing lasting effects of the interventions into early adulthood. So those that received our interventions are being less likely to report binge

adulthood. So those that received our interventions are being less likely to report binge drinking and related harms for up to seven years.

L Lauren Gardner 19:50

Additionally, the vast majority of students have found that the cartoon stories an enjoyable and interesting way to learn, they felt they were easy to understand and to remember And teachers have highlighted the high educational quality of the programs rating them more favorably than other substance use and mental health programs. And in addition to our own publications, the our futures trials have been cited in a number of independent reviews examining the effectiveness of substance use prevention. And notably, one of the recent reviews which was by Roland and colleagues in 2019 found our futures was one of only two other school based alcohol and other drug education programs, with strong with a strong evidence base.

L Lauren Gardner 20:40

Our futures has also been endorsed in a range of national and state based resource directories like the student well being hub BeYou and the alcohol and drug Foundation.

L Lauren Gardner 20:51

And the research has also translated into policy informing both national and international prevention policies and practices. So for example, it informed the international standards for drug use prevention, which is CO produced by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Health Organization. Our research has been used as evidence in multiple global reports like the UK National Institute for Health and Care Excellence evidence review. In 2020, we produce an expert submission for the Queensland Mental Health Commission on best practice in alcohol and other drug prevention. And just last year, we participated in the review of the Australian Health and Physical Education Curriculum for ACARA.

L Lauren Gardner 21:38

So on to the exciting bit. As I mentioned, we made the decision to rebrand from Climate Schools to our futures that was in 2020. And over the past few years, we've been working hard to develop a completely new and improved website with a range of exciting new features. So thought I'd be nice to run through some of those with you today. But firstly, to provide you a bit of background behind the new name, so it was worked up with a branding agency and refined by young people and education experts. And the word 'our' represents the collective nature of the programs with those peer-led messages that are just so key to the cartoons. And then the word 'futures' represents the strengths based approach to improving those trajectories of young people. Additionally, the fingerprint logo represents the individuals that are part of the collective group. And you might notice that it's also shaped like a location pin which signifies that being the start of their journey.

L Lauren Gardner 22:43

So moving on to some of the main updates. Firstly, we reviewed the literature and we consulted with health and education experts to update all of the scripts, the summaries, the activities, and make sure that they're all reflecting the latest evidence and health guidelines. And all the stats are up to date. And this also included having the mental health module reviewed and updated by a clinical psychologist to ensure that all of the mental health concepts that are taught in the lessons the language that we're using the skill building activities, making sure that all of them are based on the best and most recent evidence in the field. And that review also allowed us to weave in some other important topics that have really come to the forefront in recent years like consent.

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Lauren Gardner 23:33

We also updated some of the cartoon imagery to incorporate more modern clothing and hairstyles for the characters as well as increasing diversity and reflecting new technology. So you can see there we were a little bit outdated with our landline phones. And we've now switched those to FaceTime or Snapchat conversations to make them relevant for young people today. And this is really essential to allow students to immerse themselves in the stories and to think about how those skills that they're learning can be applied in their own lives.

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Lauren Gardner 24:06

We also conducted a survey with the Matilda Centre's Youth Advisory Board and some young people in our networks around the colloquialisms that are used in the script. And we got some really useful feedback, like pills should be updated to CAPS, which was then verified by the national drug strategy household survey which showed changing trends in how MDMA is consumed. Other things were like ecstasy should be changed to MDMA, a dance party should be referred to as a rave. But apparently hooking up is still hooking up. And another interesting bit of feedback was that young people apparently really disliked Comic Sans font, so we got rid of that as well and updated at all.

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Lauren Gardner 24:51

We also added some additional backstories within the cartoons. So this is something that again, came from young people, we held some focus groups and they were so engaged with the cartoon stories that they wanted to know more about the characters and their lives. So we ended up creating these backstories for each of the characters and incorporated some character maps into the beginning of each of the cartoons to explain these and the relationships between the characters.

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Lauren Gardner 25:20

We also worked with young people to cast teenage voice actors to record voiceovers for the cartoons, which allows us to increase accessibility for lower literacy or vision impaired students. So I'll just play you one of the examples.

V Voice over 25:34

This party sound massive, you can hear the music all the way down the street. Yeah, Luke's DJ friend bought his decks and speakers.

L Lauren Gardner 25:46

And we've included some fact checks like the bottom of this cartoon. So this allows us to ensure that the cartoons are always reflecting the most up to date statistics. Despite having those voiceovers recorded. So we had to consider you know, what would be said in the voiceover given the statistics will change over time, and whether we'd need the RE recorded you don't know if you'd be able to find a similar sounding voice if that voice actor is no longer there. But also voices change over time. And we need to make sure that they always sound young to be realistic and believable to students. So we decided to make the statements that the actors say more general, such as here, we've got nearly all 14 to 19 year olds hadn't taken ecstasy. But then the fact check itself, which isn't read out by the voiceover, gives the specific statistic of less than one in 100. And this also allows us to meet syllabus guidelines around health literacy is we can give those original sources and exact statistics.

L Lauren Gardner 26:50

We've redesigned some of the old worksheet based activities to make them interactive. And so these can either be assigned as activities where students will receive immediate answers and feedback, or as assessments where teachers can then go in and mark the responses in the new marking center. So for example, we've got some activities where students can reflect on the cartoon and the skills that they've learned and input written responses to demonstrate their knowledge or to practice things like their effective communication and assertive responses. Others are more kind of quiz based to incorporate things like drag and drops or fill in the blanks.

L Lauren Gardner 27:33

So there are two interactive activities that accompany each lesson. And then you can also find some additional activities. And these are the more traditional PDF based activities if preferred. And these have some of worksheet based activities that can be distributed, either printed off or as a PDF. But we also include other options like prompts for class discussions, group activities, or role plays, some homework or assessment options and other sort of practical tasks that can be done offline.

L Lauren Gardner 28:11

And then, as I mentioned, if an activity is assigned in assessment mode, that students will not receive that immediate feedback. And instead, teachers will be able to mark it within the marking center in the OurFutures platform, where they'll be able to also view some example answers to assist them.

L Lauren Gardner 28:31

And we've also added a teacher discussion board. And this is where teachers from different schools who are also using OurFutures can share resources and discuss materials. So you could go in and make a post, you can attach files, you can search through other posts based on a particular topic. And you can go in and like and comment on other teachers posts.

L Lauren Gardner 28:57

And teachers can also assign students as student leaders. And this was an idea that was inspired from a school that was using Climate Schools at the time. And they use it as part of a leadership opportunity for their year 10 students so they had it so their students completed one of the modules themselves, they also received a bit of training to help them be confident in their ability to communicate with others. And then they formed some working groups to come up with a plan for how they'd assist teachers to engage the year 9 cohort and assist with delivery. So really working on that peer-led messaging. And they found it to be quite successful. So we thought it was really nice to be able to recognize those students within the new system. And that avatar you can see on the screen that's a character from the cartoons, and students can all choose those themselves based on which characters they like or most relate to.

L Lauren Gardner 29:59

We've also incorporated some gamification elements to encourage and reward students for completing the lessons so they can earn badges. And then they also get a completion certificate once they've done all of the lessons in the module.

L Lauren Gardner 30:16

And then finally, the new website also increases accessibility by allowing for a screen reader and a translation tool. And that currently translates into 22 different languages.

L Lauren Gardner 30:32

So how to register. If you were previously had a Climate Schools account as a teacher, you would have been emailed a link to activate your our futures account on the 18th of January. If you didn't see it, it might be worth checking your junk folder, or feel free to contact us at info@ourfutures.education. And we'll be very happy to help. Alternatively, you can register directly via the website, which is also what you would do if you have not held a Climate Schools account before. So you just head to the homepage, which is ourfutures.education. And then you just select Register up the top. And you can choose to either register as a school or organization if your school doesn't already have an account, or as a teacher, if, which is what you would do if your school did have an account. So you'd be able to enter your school's unique teacher code, and that would then connect you to that account. So the person who originally signed up your school would be able to find that teacher code by just heading to their profile, and their teacher code is the first in the list on there.

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Lauren Gardner 31:47

The students, so if they were previously registered with Climate Schools, then they can just log straight in with their Climate Schools credentials. So they just select the students previously registered with Climate Schools option within the login pop up on the OurFutures homepage. Or if they don't remember their login details, or were not a member of Climate Schools, then teachers can just head to the Manage Student section from their teacher dashboard. And from there, you can either do a bulk upload of students by entering their details into an Excel spreadsheet and uploading them. Or you can add individual names into the form. And then once they're all in the system, you'll be able to license them to the specific modules. So we've got step by step guides and instructions available on that page to really guide you through the process. Or you can always just email or call us for assistance.

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Lauren Gardner 32:44

So in terms of our current reach, since we first launched as Climate Schools, we've reached over 1200 schools or other organizations. So things like health services, government departments, local drug action teams, libraries. And overall, this equates to over 32,000 students. Just briefly, it's worth mentioning that we previously had a subscription fee for access, which enabled us to maintain the website. But we managed to secure some funding from the Paul Ramsey Foundation, which enabled us to offer the programs free of charge in response to COVID, which was great, we're able to support schools with all those sudden shifts between home and school based learning and just ensure that students had access to these high quality evidence based programs, wherever they were, we did have quite an influx of schools who took up the offer, I think there was over 630 schools who took it up. And we're really excited to be able to continue offering the program for free in terms one and two this year. But we will then likely need to revert back to a payment service thereafter. So now is a really great time to get in and try them out and see what you think. And if you do sign up and use the programs, we would really love to know what you think we're always looking to improve the program and find ways to make it easier for teachers to deliver evidence based health education. So please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any feedback or other ideas.

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Lauren Gardner 34:15

We have also had some international reach as I mentioned earlier, which I thought was worth just spending a little bit more time on. So we've had interest from a range of international organizations and institutions. And we've commenced collaborations with the likes of Hong Kong, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Ireland, Germany to localize and evaluate the materials in those contexts.

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Lauren Gardner 34:39

And these are the adapted versions of the program that are in the US and UK so they're freely available. And these just differ in terms of things like the definitions of standard drinks, the local laws, references to different alcohol brands and the colloquial language. So that's still

called Climate Schools, the US and UK versions of those sites. And we've got about 100 schools who are signed up across those.

L Lauren Gardner 35:07

Our reach in New Zealand was in 2020. So we collaborated with education perfect, which is the biggest provider of online learning for a range of subjects across Australia and New Zealand. And that was part of their COVID response. So we created this one lesson, knowledge and skills building unit on mental health, which was based on our mental health module. So it had snippets from the cartoons and exercises around thought challenging and realistic thinking and help seeking. And so we provided two versions of the program. So one localized for Australia and one for New Zealand. And they were disseminated to the 3000 education perfect member schools. And we found that out of all of the programs that were available for free as part of that response, we our program was actually rated highest rated highest quality in New Zealand, and second highest quality in Australia by students and teachers.

L Lauren Gardner 36:05

And I just wanted to show you this example that we really love from our partnership with KELLY support group, which is a youth organization in Hong Kong who've been working with some young people and local illustrators to adapt the alcohol module to make sure that it suits their local context. And they've translated all of the materials into Chinese. So the Australian cartoon has this scene where the young people are drunkenly playing in a shopping trolley, and they're rolling each other down the street, that this wasn't considered something that would happen in Hong Kong. So they then updated it to young people drunkenly dancing and singing on the MTR, which is their rail service. So some of the contexts might change. But those core messages remain the same. And the cartoons really become this sort of universal language.

L Lauren Gardner 36:56

And this is just another example. So this is a house party scene in the Australian cartoon, which was then updated to a karaoke bar for the Hong Kong version to make it more believable and realistic. So this Hong Kong version of the program will be trialed with 25 schools this year, before hopefully being rolled out more widely if found to be feasible and effective.

L Lauren Gardner 37:20

And then where to next in terms of our research. So as I mentioned, we've got a few new trials underway. So still building on that original our futures model with the interactive cartoon storyboards as the core component, but extending into new domains. So we've got the Climate Schools plus study, which combines a parent component with the alcohol and the alcohol and cannabis modules, we have Health4Life, which is the first eHealth program to simultaneously target what we call the Big Six health behaviors. So physical activity, diet, sleep, recreational screentime, alcohol use and smoking. And we also have Strong & Deadly Futures, which is a school based alcohol and other drug prevention program, specifically tailored for Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander secondary school students. And so the idea is that once we have established the effectiveness of these new programs, will then be able to offer them more broadly within our OurFutures suite of resources.

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Lauren Gardner 38:21

We are also always considering other new modules that can be developed. So adapted versions tailored for rural and remote communities or other international audiences, as well as completely new modules such as one addressing vaping. And we're also looking to do some implementation research to better understand any barriers to implementation and how we can take these programs to scale. And this fits into our overall vision, which is to see all young people receive high quality evidence based health and wellbeing education. Thank you. Have we got time for questions.

E

Emma Devine 39:01

Wonderful. Thanks so much, Lauren. Really great presentation. We're getting loads of really positive comments coming through already. So that's really great. And we do absolutely have time for some questions. So there have been some coming in already that we will get started with. But for anyone else who has a question, feel free to pop it into the Q&A box. That's available up on your screen as well. So Lauren, to start off with, there's a couple of questions more on sort of practicalities around using OurFutures. One of the questions was approximately how long each of the lessons would be?

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Lauren Gardner 39:37

Yep, so the cartoon component of the lesson is about 20 minutes 15 to 20 minutes long. Of course, individually, it depends on individual students reading speeds, but we do say it's around about that. And then the activities we like to say Allow about 20 minutes for those but we do have some activities that are quite short, some there are a little bit longer others recommended for homework, and we framed them as optional. So those, the cartoons are really the core part. And the activities are more of an optional extra to reinforce that content.

E

Emma Devine 40:11

Brilliant. And you mentioned as well in the webinar that OurFutures is currently free, which is really great. But it would eventually have to go back to sort of a payment scheme. And some people are wondering what costs would be associated?

L

Lauren Gardner 40:25

Yep, so the new payment scheme is \$10 per student per module. So it would obviously depend what what year groups you're wanting, and then that would be \$10 per student for each of those. So we had done a little bit of market research around that cost, and it was considered to

be reasonable or on par with other programs that are out there. But if any schools need to can't afford that, then you know, please get in touch. And we're happy to see if there's any workarounds for you.

E

Emma Devine 40:58

You brilliant. Thanks, Lauren. Some other questions were getting in We've got a couple around vaping. So are you going to be doing anything in this space? Are there any resources that you can recommend? Anything on? Vaping, it seems would be very appreciated.

L

Lauren Gardner 41:16

Yeah. Yes. It is certainly a hot topic at the moment. That's for sure. It's a question that comes up all of the time for us. And we are absolutely trying to get onto that now. So we, I guess that that tricky thing with our programs is that we really do value, having the evidence base behind it and making sure that our programs are effective. They're not, you know, causing any harm or not doing anything at all before we get them out there. So we're developing a program, but it will need to then go through trial before we can get it out there. So for the meantime, we're pointing it pointing people into the direction of Positive Choices, I don't know Emma, you might be able to speak more to the resources that are available on there.

E

Emma Devine 41:59

Yeah, so Positive Choices definitely has some some good initial resources to sort of get started in terms of factsheets and things, but we do also have a webinar, all about vaping, which we had a lot of attendance coming to and a lot of positive feedback on. So that can be found on the Positive Choices webinar section, which is also where this webinar will be housed in a couple of days as well. Thanks. In terms of other content that you might be working on in the future, there's a question on whether you're working on any sexual consent, healthy relationship type cartoons as well.

L

Lauren Gardner 42:37

Yeah, that's another one that's definitely come up. And we have it kind of earmarked there is something that we do want to develop, we haven't started as yet. But there are plans to do it. And I mentioned a little bit earlier, we've done our best to try and weave in bits and pieces around that within the cartoon. So there is in one of the I think it's the gosh testing now. It's either the alcohol, the alcohol and cannabis module. And it does come up in there. And we use that as an opportunity. We've got some activities embedded in the cartoons around consent, particularly understanding consent when someone might be under the influence of alcohol or another drug, and where people can seek help as well.

E

Emma Devine 43:23

That's great. So there is a bit in there. And hopefully more to come. Come soon as well. We've also got a couple of questions around other populations that you might be able to use those

also got a couple of questions around other populations that you might be able to use these modules with. So the first is whether you think they're they're suitable for use in a homeless refuge with 16 to 18 year olds.

L Lauren Gardner 43:46

Yeah, I do. I think so typically, for the most part, we have them schools and it's, I think, always useful to have an adult facilitator there, particularly if they're going to be doing any of the activities because there are discussion points. We do provide a lot of the we call it teacher information, but that could really be given to any facilitator. And we do have other organizations who have used these programs outside of the school environment. So having the cartoons as probably handed being that core component, you know, they don't, they don't need anything else other than that, really, that's where we've got all of the information, and that's already there. So being able to provide that and I guess without needing any sort of adaption, anyway, adaptation, I think they could be implemented in any other environment.

E Emma Devine 44:43

Yeah, brilliant. So the other population that was asked for it might be a similar response to is whether they're suitable to be delivered to children in out of home care as well. So with the Department of Communities justice,

L Lauren Gardner 44:56

yeah, I would think so. I think we've we've kind of got the target age groups there. So those we try to tell them to tailor them so that they're, you know, appropriate for that developmental level. And I don't think they necessarily need to be only within schools.

E Emma Devine 45:12

So just as long as you're sort of using the most age appropriate module for your population, that's sort of the best advice there.

L Lauren Gardner 45:19

Yeah, that's it.

E Emma Devine 45:21

Brilliant. We've got a question come through as well about how many schools do you currently see? And how many are active on the website and use all of the features? And I think this is coming from the perspective of struggling to find time for these sorts of additional things in in the school?

L Lauren Gardner 45:37

Yeah, yes. So it's a little bit trickier for us to pull those figures now, because we've only just recently done the switch from Climate Schools to OurFutures. But we have had an incredible response already, just in these first couple of weeks, with, you know, a couple of 100 schools already starting to use the website. So I think the figure I used earlier was over 1200 schools. But you're right, that that has been since Climate Schools was available. Not necessarily all of them are using them. But we do. We've certainly got schools that have love the resources and continue to use it over time.

E Emma Devine 46:18

And maybe if there's more questions about timing, they could maybe get in touch with you. And you could advise on how best to, to use that time that they do have.

L Lauren Gardner 46:26

Yes, absolutely. We're always happy to answer any questions anyone has.

E Emma Devine 46:30

Yeah, great. And then we've just got one other question from Peter, who's wondering if there's any activities that are specifically suited to assisting students with resisting promotion of alcohol, by sports clubs, specifically,

L Lauren Gardner 46:45

um, not by sports clubs, specifically, but we do have some activities that are around marketing. So trying to understand the different ways that marketing companies might be targeting young people, you know, with the particularly with alcohol pops. So the brightly colored drinks that I say, essentially marketed at younger people. So we've got some activities in there, where we get younger people to go and source some advertisements, and really kind of critically analyze who they're targeting what strategies they're using to get at them. So I think that could be applied to sports clubs as well.

E Emma Devine 47:25

Yeah, we still have a little bit of time, and we have a question come in, there's a lot of interest in the Big Six indicators as well. So just if you wanted to say a little bit more about that, and maybe link it to the program, and how it can be follow on benefits, perhaps?

L Lauren Gardner 47:42

Yeah, yeah, sure. So our big six risk behaviors, as I mentioned, so we've got physical activity

Yeah, yeah, sure. So our big six risk behaviors, as I mentioned, so we've got physical activity, diet, sleep, recreational screentime, alcohol use and smoking. And those are the ones that we target within health for life, which is being trialed. So the underlying feature of that program is just that we take on multiple health behavior change approaches, it's so clear that all of those behaviors interact and affect each other. So you know, if you're not getting the right amount of sleep, it might be due to be using using screens, you might not be getting as much physical activity. And we know that improvements in one often lead to improvements in another. So that's the main sort of premise underlying health for life. And we've got that program developed currently being trialed. So we're hoping to be able to make it available more broadly, from next year. And that one, we target at year seven students. So again, we're trying to keep these programs being developmentally appropriate and getting in there before these behaviors become entrenched, because we know that once they do, they are likely to then go lead on and stay there into adulthood. So we'll be really excited once we can get the results and get that one out there more broadly as well.

E

Emma Devine 49:01

Yeah, absolutely. It sounds like it could be really impactful and really positive. And for anyone who wants to know a little bit more about the big six and those health, healthy lifestyle factors, there is a Positive Choices factsheet as well. That's available if you wanted to have a little look at that as well. I think we've touched on all the questions that have come through. If there's anything else do feel free to pop it in to the Q&A. Yeah, we've got some more and are the components for parents associated with health for life and OurFutures.

L

Lauren Gardner 49:40

No, so at the moment because health for life isn't available by OurFutures. We don't have it. There are no it's definitely something that's also on the agenda. So my colleague Katrina Champion's, looking at doing an extension and how she can incorporate some extra parenting FactSheets and other components in there. At the moment, what we have available on OurFutures for parents is limited to the parent summaries. So we've created those. And they can be exported and sent to parents. And then also hopefully next year, we'll have the Climate Schools plus resources that I mentioned, available. So that's the parenting component to support the alcohol and the alcohol and cannabis modules. So hopefully, we'll have plenty of new resources for everyone for next year.

E

Emma Devine 50:32

Yeah, brilliant. It sounds like there's so much there available already. And still so much coming in the next year as well. So a very exciting space to keep your eye on it sounds like? Absolutely. So yeah, there's been a couple of questions about whether you need to be a school to register for OurFutures. I don't know if this is one that's easier for people to get in touch with you about their specific circumstance. But do you have any advice for those people wanting to access our futures?

L

Lauren Gardner 51:01

Yeah, yeah, no, we're absolutely very happy for other sorts of organizations to register. So you can just go on onto the website. And once you hit register, there's an option. I think we actually call the button schools slash organization. So we're trying not to limit it to schools. And if we're asking for school name, just put your organization name, and we'll be happy to approve that as well.

E

Emma Devine 51:25

Okay, brilliant. So there is a way to do it. And if there's any problems, I'm sure you can help out as well, when they're trying to navigate that.

L

Lauren Gardner 51:33

Yeah, absolutely. We have an awesome team who are always available and very, very happy to help or assist.

E

Emma Devine 51:39

Brilliant. I'm just having a quick scroll through the chat and if any, I've missed, but I think the most of them. One more, just some Thank you starting to come in now, which is great. So yeah, we agree with those. Thank you, Lauren. And what they're still coming in sorry. Every time I think we've reached them all. And we've got a question about whether OurFutures has any links with Planet youth? If you're familiar?

L

Lauren Gardner 52:10

Yeah. So we had originally nothing kind of formal, but we had originally a little bit of reach out from some researchers who were looking into planet youth, but yeah, no formal, no formal links there. Okay, great.

E

Emma Devine 52:26

Um, and there's some there's another question then sort of linking it back to Parent Resources. So have your resources been linked to a particular parent? factsheet? That's maybe available? And? And if not, is it possible to get more Parent Resources? Or is that your focus?

L

Lauren Gardner 52:44

Yeah, so I know, with the Climate Schools plus study, they had the resources as well as particular like webinars for parents to support. So when students were doing the modules, and parents were also engaged in knowing what they were learning. But at this point, the only resources we have on the publicly available via via OurFutures, are those parents summaries, which just basically very small variations from the student summaries and from the teacher summaries that really support what the students have learned in the lessons. But hopefully,

we'll have lots more parents some parent resources available once we can get Climate Schools plus out there. And then I think Positive Choices has an abundance of resources for parents as well. Yeah,

E

Emma Devine 53:32

I'd say there's quite a few complimentary fact sheets and resources on Positive Choices that might be worth having a little look at there too. Yeah, it seems to be a space that people are very interested in getting some resources in. So that's really great to hear. Now, I think they're just mostly thank yous coming through. So thanks so much, Lauren, we do really appreciate your time. And obviously been a really useful one for all of our audiences based on all the questions that have been coming through. So just to finish up, then we want to thank Lauren again, of course. And if you need any help or advice for substance use or mental health concerns, there are a number of services available, and we've listed some of them on the screen there for you. But yeah, thank you to our audience for coming today. Please feel free to send us any, you know, feedback that you have any questions that you maybe think of or we didn't get a chance to answer today to info@positivechoices.org.au. And we've got our Twitter handle and our Facebook page up there if anyone wants to follow along with the latest updates from Positive Choices. So thank you again to our audience and to Lauren. And that's it. Thank you goodbye.