Positive Choices
Drug and Alcohol Information
Get informed, stay smart, stay safe

Recommended program

Aussie Optimism Program

Evidence ratings:

This resource is supported by one published study. See our Help/Q&A section for more details.

Year: Foundation Year, Year 1–2, Year 3–4, Year 5–6, Year 7–8

Targeted Drugs: Alcohol, Drugs (General), Tobacco

Tags:

Time Allocated: 7 lessons or more

Links to National Curriculum:
ACPPS053 (Yr 5–6), ACPPS054 (Yr 5–6), ACPPS072 (Yr 7–8), ACPPS073 (Yr 7–8), ACPPS074 (Yr 7–8), ACPPS075 (Yr 7–8), ACPPS077 (Yr 7–8), AC9HP6P08 (Yr 5-6), AC9HP6P10 (Yr 5-6), AC9HP8P08 (Yr 7-8), AC9HP8P04 (Yr 7-8), AC9HP8P06 (Yr 7-8), AC9HP8P10 (Yr 7-8)

Origin: Australian

Cost:
Costs Involved

Available

The Aussie Optimism program is managed and distributed by Curtin University.
Click below to be directed to the Aussie Optimism website for more information on accessing the program.

Access Aussie Optimism

Developers

School of Population Health, Curtin University

Format

The classroom-based programs consist of 10 weekly one-hour lessons. Age appropriate materials are available for the following levels:

Primary School programs:

- Kindy/Pre-primary: I Spy Feelings
- Years 1-3: Feelings and Friends
- Year 4: Positive Thinking Skills
- Years 5-6: Social Life Skills.

Secondary School programs:

- Years 7-8: Optimistic Thinking Skills.

Summary

Aussie Optimism offer a range of programs for students in different year levels from Kindy to Year 8. The programs aim to build resilience and equip students with the skills they need to have good mental health. Aussie Optimism is mapped to the Health and Physical Education Curriculum, and offer training to school staff both at Curtin University and at individual schools.

Children and adolescents often experience stress, for example peer pressure, family conflict, moving from primary school to high school, increased demands of study, performance expectations and body changes. Children and adolescents cannot always be protected from stress, however, they can be provided with the skills necessary to cope with stress and to rise above life's difficulties and challenges.

Aussie Optimism is a health promotion program for children in primary and secondary school. It takes a positive psychology approach, helping to build core competencies in students, such as how to:

- Identify and manage feelings
- Make and maintain friends
- Solve social problems
- Think optimistically to promote self-esteem and bounce back from difficulties.

The program is designed to be implemented in weekly lessons over the course of a term, where students learn practical skills and strategies that relate to social and emotional wellbeing. The program utilises empirically validated psychological and pedagogical techniques. The programs are mapped to the national curriculum for Health and Physical Education, and English.

Training & Costs

In order to implement the Aussie Optimism program, it is necessary to attend a one-day training workshop. These workshops are currently held at Curtin University several times a year. Alternatively, the Aussie Optimism team can come to your school or organise an online workshop for you. For more information, please contact aussie.optimism@curtin.edu.au

Cost
The cost of attendance depends on whether you would like to receive a full or provisional accreditation. Both accreditation types attend the same workshop. Please contact aussie.optimism@curtin.edu.au for up-to-date pricing information.

Full Accreditation

- Required to *teach* the program.
- Training includes a copy of the teacher manual and student booklet. For the whole school workshop, you can choose which program you want resources for.
- You can purchase program resources.

Provisional Accreditation

- Recommended for those *assisting delivery* of program.
- Training does not include any additional materials.
- Does not allow purchasing of program resources
- There is a cost to convert any provisional accreditation into a full accreditation. Includes a copy of the teacher manual and student booklet.

Expected Benefits

A study that tested this resource (see sources below) found evidence for the following benefits:

- Reduced likelihood of alcohol use
- Reduced likelihood of tobacco use
- Decrease in symptoms of depression and anxiety

Evidence Base

One randomised controlled trial evaluated the substance use prevention benefits associated with combined implementation of the Social Life Skills program (in Year 6), the Optimistic Thinking Skills program (in Year 7) and the Parents and Families program. Benefits were only observed when teachers received training and ongoing coaching while implementing the program. Benefits associated with the early primary school programs have not yet been evaluated in a published research study. Other published research about this program focuses on the mental health benefits.

Sources

Roberts, C., Williams, R., Kane, R., Pintabona, Y., Cross, D., Zubrick, S., & Silburn, S. (2011). Impact of a mental health promotion program on substance use in young adolescents. *Advances in Mental Health, 10*(1), 72-82.

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