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

Recommended program

OurFutures: Alcohol & Cannabis Module



Evidence ratings:

This resource is supported by a systematic review. See our Help/Q&A section for more details.

Year: Year 7–8, Year 9–10

Targeted Drugs: Alcohol, Cannabis

Tags: OurFutures, Climate Schools, social influence approach, harm minimisation, marijuana

Time Allocated: 1-6 lessons

Links to National Curriculum:
ACPPS070 (Yr 7–8), ACPPS072 (Yr 7–8), ACPPS073 (Yr 7–8), ACPPS074 (Yr 7–8), ACPPS076 (Yr 7–8), ACPPS079 (Yr 7–8), ACPPS089 (Yr 9–10), ACPPS090 (Yr 9–10), ACPPS091 (Yr 9–10), ACPPS092 (Yr 9–10), ACPPS093 (Yr 9–10), ACPPS095 (Yr 9–10), AC9HP8P08 (Yr 7-8), AC9HP8P04 (Yr 7-8), AC9HP8P06 (Yr 7-8), AC9HP8P09 (Yr 7-8), AC9HP8P10 (Yr 7-8), AC9HP8P02 (Yr 7-8)

Origin: Australian

Cost:
Costs Involved

Available

The OurFutures programs are managed by the OurFutures Institute, a not-for-profit joint venture between Climate Schools and the University of Sydney. Click below to be directed to the OurFutures website for information on accessing the programs.

Access OurFutures

Developers

OurFutures was developed by researchers currently based at the Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use at the University of Sydney, Australia, formerly based at the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC), School of Psychiatry, and the NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in Mental Health and Substance Use at UNSW Sydney.

Format

This curriculum-aligned online program is designed to be administered by teachers within classrooms. The program involves **6 × 40-minute lessons**, each with two components:

- A 20-minute computer-based component
- Teacher delivered classroom activities.

No specialist teacher training is required. This module is ideally delivered 6 months to 1 year after the OurFutures: Alcohol Module.

Summary

The OurFutures: Alcohol and Cannabis Module was developed for 13-15 year olds and aims to prevent and reduce alcohol and cannabis use and related harms. Designed to be implemented within the school health curriculum, OurFutures is based on a social influence approach to prevention and uses cartoon storylines to engage and maintain student interest and involvement.

Students follow six episodes of an online cartoon-based drama about teenagers and their experiences. Through the storyline, students learn about short- and long-term consequences of alcohol use, alcohol/cannabis and the law, acute and chronic harms associated with alcohol and cannabis use, substance use and mental health, identifying problematic use in friends and where to seek help. Stop & Think activities are embedded in the cartoons and each episode ends with a short quiz to assess and consolidate learning. The class and homework activities are designed to reinforce the material taught in the cartoon and encourage students to apply the preventative messages and practice skills. Feedback indicates that teachers and students enjoy the program, and implementation within the classroom environment is highly feasible.

Training and Costs

Pricing is based on student enrolment numbers. Contact the OurFutures team for more information and pricinghere.

Expected Benefits

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

- Increases alcohol and cannabis knowledge
- Reduces alcohol consumption
- Reduces frequency of binge drinking
- Reduces frequency of cannabis use
- Increases resistance to peer pressure
- Reduces psychological distress
- Reduces truancy

Evidence Base

The OurFutures program was evaluated, and the evidence was published, using the name Climate Schools. Nine published studies, including results from five randomised controlled trials, support the benefits of the OurFutures: Alcohol & Cannabis Module in Australia. Please note these results reflect when the module is also delivered alongside the OurFutures: Alcohol Module. The five most relevant studies are listed below. OurFutures programs have also been endorsed by a number of organisations as listed below.

Sources

Newton, N. C., Chapman, C., Slade, T., Birrell, L., Healy A., Mather, M., McBride, N., Hides, L., Allsop, S., Mewton, L., Andrews, G., & Teesson, M. (2020). A national effectiveness trial of an eHealth program to prevent alcohol and cannabis misuse: responding to the replication crisis. *Psychological medicine,* 1-9.

Teesson, M., Newton, N. C., Slade, T., Chapman, C., Birrell, L., Mewton, L., Mather, M., Hides, L., McBride, N., Allsop, S., & Andrews, G. (2020). Combined prevention for substance use, depression, and anxiety in adolescence: a cluster-randomised controlled trial of a digital online intervention. *The Lancet Digital Health,* 2, 74-84.

Champion, K. E., Newton, N. C., Stapinski, L., Slade, T., Barrett, E. L., & Teesson, M. (2016). A cross-validation trial of an Internet-based prevention program for alcohol and cannabis: Preliminary results from a cluster randomised controlled trial. *Australian and New Zealand journal of psychiatry,* 50, 54-73.

Newton, N. C., Andrews, G., Teesson, M., & Champion, K. (2014). Universal internet-based prevention for alcohol and cannabis use reduces truancy, psychological distress and moral disengagement: a cluster randomised controlled trial. *Preventive Medicine,* 65, 109-115.

Newton, N. C., Teesson, M., Vogl, L. E., Andrews, G. (2010). Internet-based prevention for alcohol and cannabis use: final results of the Climate Schools course,*Addiction, 105,* 749-759.

The OurFutures programs received a three-star rating from the National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) following their comprehensivesystematic review of alcohol education programs. OurFutures was the only Australian program to receive the maximum evidence rating.

The OurFutures programs were recognised at the 2014 Society of Mental Health Research conference with the Australian Rotary Health Knowledge Dissemination award.

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