Climate Schools: Alcohol & Cannabis Module

Evidence ratings:
This resource is supported by multiple published studies. See our Help/Q&A section for more details.

Year: Year 7–8, Year 9–10
Targeted Drugs: Alcohol, Cannabis
Tags: 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)
Origin: Australian
Cost: Free

Developers
Climate Schools 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.

Available Format
This curriculum-based online program is designed to be administered by teachers within classrooms. The program involves 6 × 45-minute lessons, each with two components:
- A 15-minute computer-based component
- Teacher delivered classroom activities.
No specialist teacher training is required. Booster sessions are also available. This module is ideally delivered 6 months to 1 year after the Climate Schools: Alcohol Module.

Summary
The Climate Schools: Alcohol and Cannabis Module was developed for 13-14 year olds and aims to prevent and reduce alcohol and cannabis use and related harms. Designed to be implemented within the school health curriculum, Climate Schools 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, cannabis and the law, acute and chronic harms associated with cannabis use, cannabis and mental health, identifying problematic use in friends and where to seek help. 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 skills. Feedback indicates that teachers and students enjoy the program, and implementation within the classroom environment is highly feasible.

Training and Costs
Access to Climate Schools is currently FREE to help support school staff, parents and young people during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please note there is usually an annual subscription cost of $250-$950. If your school already has an active paid subscription, the subscription expiry date will be extended to account for this complimentary period (not action is required).

Climate schools Pty LTD was established in 2015 by Maree Teesson and Nicola Newton to distribute the Climate Schools programs and maximise social well-being. Refer to the website for registration and subscription details.

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
Five recently published studies, reporting results of three randomised control trials, support the benefits of the Climate Schools: Alcohol & Cannabis Module:


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

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

The Climate Schools Alcohol and Cannabis module is included in SAMSHA’s National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (USA).

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