Making The Link

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

Year: Year 9–10
Targeted Drugs: Alcohol, Cannabis, Drugs (General)
Tags: help-seeking
Time Allocated: 7 lessons or more
Links to National Curriculum:
- ACPPS091 (Yr 9–10)
- ACPPS095 (Yr 9–10)
- ACPPS096 (Yr 9–10)
- ACPPS097 (Yr 9–10)
- ACPPS098 (Yr 9–10)
Origin: Australian
Cost: Free

Developers
National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre (NCPIC); Orygen Youth Health; Turning Point, Eastern Health.

Available
- Making the Link: Student program
- Making the Link: Indigenous program
- Making the Link: Parent Workshop

Format
• A series of classroom (6-8) activities incorporating video content and interactive exercises (e.g., role-plays).

Summary
Student Program:
Making the Link is a curriculum-based program for schools to promote help-seeking for cannabis use and mental health problems. By seeking help early, young people are less likely to develop long term consequences as a result of mental health and substance use issues. Making the Link teaches young people how to help each other to seek professional help. It promotes the idea that “Mates Help Mates”. It reduces the barriers to seeking help from professionals. It also educates teachers about how to assist their students to access professional help.

Program materials include:
• Implementation guide and manual for teachers
• Classroom activities and presentation slides
• Four online videos demonstrating the most helpful approach to help a friend seek professional help.

Making the Link – Indigenous Program:
The curriculum package for students has been adapted for use specifically with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The original program was adapted because the authors felt it lacked specific cultural elements and would not be as effective among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The authors of this program acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities differ widely and this program is not intended to be ‘one size fits all’. For this reason many of the activities can be adapted to suit particular community needs, available resources, or facilitator confidence. It was developed for use in rural and remote settings, and can be facilitated by teachers as well as others who work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, such as social workers and youth workers. Making the link was extensively focus-tested amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and schools and has had input from the Centre's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group.

Program materials include:
• Manual for teachers
• Classroom activities and presentation slides
• Staff and parent information slides.

Parent Workshop:
Additional materials are provided to assist the facilitation of workshops to educate parents about the adolescent barriers to seeking professional help for cannabis-related problems, and how to minimise these. The workshop explains what kinds of helpers there are in school and the community, how to access them and how they can help. It promotes parents as important helpers and teaches them how to assist and motivate young people to seek professional help.

Program materials include:
• Implementation guide for workshop facilitator
• Workshop presentation slides
• Four online videos demonstrating the most helpful approach to talking to a young person.

Benefits
• Increased awareness and confidence to seek help.

Evidence
Benefits of the Indigenous version of the program and the Parent workshop have not yet been evaluated in published research studies. However the indigenous version was focus-tested amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and schools informed by an expert advisory group (see website for more information).

The following pilot study provides evidence to support benefits of the standard Making the Link program: