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

Recommended program

Preventure

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: Drugs (General)

Tags: personality style, impulsive, sensation-seeking, negative thinking, anxiety sensitivity

Time Allocated: 1-6 lessons

Links to National Curriculum:
ACPPS073 (Yr 7–8), ACPPS075 (Yr 7–8), ACPPS092 (Yr 9–10), ACPPS093 (Yr 9–10), AC9HP8P06 (Yr 7-8), AC9HP8P10 (Yr 7-8), AC9HP10P08 (Yr 9-10), AC9HP10P04 (Yr 9-10)

Origin: International

Cost:
Costs Involved

Developers

University of Montreal.

Format

The program is administered by a trained facilitator and co-facilitator within classrooms. Facilitators can be educators or mental health practitioners (e.g., teachers, school support officers, counsellors, psychologists). Training is required to run the program (see training and costs below).

The program involves:

- A short screening questionnaire to identify which personality types students relate to.
- 2 × 90-minute small group sessions (e.g., 4-12 students).
- Manualised materials for students and facilitators.

Summary

Preventure is an evidence-based prevention program that uses brief, personality-focused workshops to delay substance use and promote mental health among secondary school students. The program aims to equip young people with self-efficacy and cognitive behavioural skills to help them cope with the numerous developmental challenges that adolescents face, such as academic stress, peer pressure, and identity development.

The Preventure program has a solid evidence base, having been tested in multiple randomised controlled trials internationally. These trials demonstrate that Preventure delays and/or reduces substance use and mental health problems. In Australia, reductions in drinking and alcohol-related harms have been observed 7 years after the program, and reductions in depressive and anxiety symptoms, conduct problems, tobacco smoking, bullying, and suicidal ideation, have been sustained for 3 years post-intervention. Personality factors play a key role in the choices people make and how they respond to stress.

The Preventure program is unique in that it focuses on the specific personality traits that have the potential to influence adolescent risk-taking behaviours and mental health. When understood and properly channelled, these personality traits can be beneficial in helping young people achieve their goals in a positive way. Preventure was designed by researchers at The University of Montreal, and adapted for Australian youth by researchers at the University of Sydney.

You can find more information about Preventure at preventureprogram.com or you can watch our webinar.

See below for more detail about training and costs.

Training & Costs

Facilitator training workshops are currently being offered online by the University of Montreal: https://preventureprogram.com/next-steps-facilitators/

In order to implement the Preventure program, it is necessary to be a trained facilitator. Preventure training in Australia is proudly supported by the Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use at the University of Sydney and Positive Choices.

Preventure facilitator training details:

- **Format:** 2 day training workshop ($725 per person) (plus optional additional supervision if of interest)
- **Suitable for:** teachers, student support officers, counsellors, youth workers, social workers, or mental health professionals, employed by an educational institution or government service/organisation
- **Outcomes:** Upon completion of training, trainees will be certified as facilitators by the Preventure coordinating team (CHU Sainte Justine, Montreal, Canada), and will be able to deliver the program*

*Please note that if you would like to continue being a licensed facilitator, you will be asked to pay the $120 license fee in line with the facilitator agreement (provided to all trainees prior to signing up for the training). This license fee entitles trainees to several resources, including the PreVenture Zone, PreVenture lecture series and continuing education activities.

All attendees have a 1 year period in which they can lapse in their license fee payments, and then by paying the license fee they can have their license reinstated. If a lapse occurs for more than 1 year, attendees will be asked to re-train before being eligible to deliver the PreVenture program again.

Student manuals: The purchase of student manuals and digital screeners are additional to the training costs, and are outlined in the facilitator agreement which is provided to all potential trainees before they sign up for the training. If you have already been trained as a PreVenture facilitator, you can purchase student manuals here. Two free digital PASS screening questionnaires are now included with student workbook purchases.

If you have any questions about PreVenture please email info@preventureprogram.com.

Expected Benefits

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

- Reduced alcohol consumption
- Reduced uptake and frequency of alcohol use and binge drinking
- Reduced alcohol-related harms
- Reduced tobacco use
- Reduced uptake and frequency of cannabis use
- Reduced uptake and frequency of illegal drug use
- Reduced symptoms of depression, anxiety, hyperactivity and conduct problems.
- Reduced suicidal ideation
- Reduced bullying victimisation
- Reduced truancy

Evidence Base

Preventure is supported by over 12 published studies, the most relevant studies are listed below. For a full list see Publications.
See below also for an endorsement from an external organisation and an evidence base caution for a Preventure trial among teenagers in the Netherlands.

Sources

Studies supporting benefits of the program when administered by teachers who have received a 2-3 day training workshop with the developers:

Mahu, I. T., Doucet, C., O'Leary-Barrett, M., & Conrod, P. J. (2015). Can cannabis use be prevented by targeting personality risk in schools? 24-month outcome of the adventure trial on cannabis use: a cluster randomized controlled trial. *Addiction, 110*, 1625-1633.

Conrod, P. J., O'Leary-Barrett, M., Newton, N., Topper, L., Castellanos-Ryan, N., Mackie, C., & Girard, A. (2013). Effectiveness of a Selective, Personality-Targeted Prevention Program for Adolescent Alcohol Use and Misuse A Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial. *JAMA Psychiatry, 70*, 334-342.

Studies supporting the benefits of the program delivered by a psychologist or experienced special needs teacher:

Lammers J, Goossens F, Conrod P, Engels R, Wiers RW, Kleinjan M. (2017). Effectiveness of a selective alcohol prevention program targeting personality risk factors: Results of interaction analyses. Addictive Behaviors. 71:82-8.

Conrod, P. J., Castellanos-Ryan, N., & Mackie, C. (2011). Long-Term Effects of a Personality-Targeted Intervention to Reduce Alcohol Use in Adolescents. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 79*, 296-306.

The program has been adapted for use in Australia, and the benefits have been demonstrated in four published studies:

Champion, K. E., Debenham, J., Teesson, M., Stapinski, L. A., Devine, E., Barrett, E. L., Slade, T., Kelly, E. V., Chapman, C., Smout, A., Lawler, S., Castellanos-Ryan, N., Conrad, P. J., & Newton, N. C. (2024). Effect of a selective personality-targeted prevention program on 7-year illicit substance related outcomes: A secondary analysis of a cluster randomised controlled trial. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence,* 256, 111266

Newton, N. C., Debenham, J., Slade, T., Smout, A., Grummitt, L., Sunderland, M., Barrett, E. L., Champion, K. E., Chapman, C., Kelly, E., Lawler, S., Castellanos-Ryan, N., Teesson, M., Conrod, P. J., & Stapinski, L. (2022). Effect of Selective Personality-Targeted Alcohol Use Prevention on 7-Year Alcohol-Related Outcomes Among High-risk Adolescents: A Secondary Analysis of a Cluster Randomized Clinical Trial. *JAMA Network Open*, *5*(11), e2242544-e2242544.

Teesson M, Newton NC, Slade T, Carragher N, Barrett EL, Champion KE, et al. Combined universal and selective prevention for adolescent alcohol use: A cluster randomized controlled trial. Psychological Medicine. 2017;47(10):1761-70.

Newton, N., Conrod, P., Slade, T., Carragher, N., Champion, K., Barrett, E., Kelly, E., Nair, N., Stapinski, L. & Teesson, M. (2016). The long-term effectiveness of a selective, personality-targeted prevention program in reducing alcohol use and related harms: a cluster randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 57,* 1056-1065.

Evidence-base cautions

A randomised controlled trial examining the effects of the program on the binge drinking behaviour of teenagers in the Netherlands found the program had little or no effect on reducing the overall prevalence of this behaviour among this group. However, longer term beneficial effects are promising i.e. reductions in the development of binge drinking over time. See the paper below for full details:

Lammers, J., Goossens, F., Conrod, P., Engels, R., Wiers, R. W., & Kleinjan, M. (2015). Effectiveness of a selective intervention program targeting personality risk factors for alcohol misuse among young adolescents: results of a cluster randomized controlled trial. *Addiction, 110*, 1101-1109.

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