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

Factsheet

School based prevention- choosing resources



Evidence ratings:

This resource has undergone expert review. See our Help/Q&A section for more details.

Year: Foundation Year, Year 1–2, Year 3–4, Year 5–6, Year 7–8, Year 9–10, Year 11–12

Targeted Drugs: Alcohol, Drugs (General)

Tags:

Origin: Australian

Cost:
Free

Choosing drug and alcohol education resources for the classroom

When selecting a resource or prevention program to use in your classroom, it is useful to consider whether the resource:

- Is tailored to the appropriate age and developmental level.
- Is culturally appropriate for the class.
- Has been implemented previously in similar settings and with similar students.
- Will be engaging and motivating for students.
- Fits well within the Australian Curriculum.
- Requires specific training and/or materials.
- Is fact-based and accurate. Does the information come from a reliable source?
- Is evidence-based. Has the resource been tested and proven to produce beneficial outcomes for young people?

On Positive Choices, we provide detailed information about each resource to help you determine whether it is suitable for your classroom. We have also provided a number of search filters to help you refine resources according to your specific needs. Search filters can be seen on the top of the search result pages or when viewing a list of resources (e.g., **Recommended Program Resources**).

Recommended and not recommended school-based prevention

A number of reviews have identified the components that are effective in school-based prevention.
Recommended and not recommended characteristics are listed in the table below:

Recommended

- Interactive teaching methods
- Delivery by trained facilitators
- Delivered via multiple, structured sessions once a week
- Challenge misconceptions about substance use as a normative behaviour
- Promotion of realistic perceptions of risk (including immediate and relevant consequences)
- Opportunities to learn about and practice personal and social skills (e.g. decision-making, resistance and coping skills)

Not recommended

- Non-interactive teaching methods e.g. lecturing
- Providing information only, particularly the use of scare tactics
- Non-structured, dialogue-based sessions
- Focusing solely on self-esteem and emotional competence
- Use of people with lived experience of drug and alcohol dependence as guest speaker

Research shows that the most effective school-based programs promote a comprehensive social influence approach. This approach comprises three key factors:

1. The provision of accurate, relevant information.
2. Resistance training and life skills (e.g. assertiveness, problem-solving and decision-making).

3. Normative education.

Normative education aims to challenge the commonly-held misconception among young people that "everyone is doing it".

This can be done by simply and effectively by providing accurate data on rates of alcohol and drug use. These are often much lower than young people believe.
See how many young people in Australia use alcohol or other drugs for the latest statistics.

A strengths-based approach to drug education can also be helpful. This involves emphasising the strengths and resources of young people, rather than focusing on their problems.

Evidence Base

This factsheet was developed following expert review by researchers at the Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use at the University of Sydney, the National Drug & Alcohol Research Centre at the University of New South Wales, and the National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University.

The summary of what works/doesn't work is based on the conclusion reached by the following reviews:

Faggiano, F., Vigna-Taglianti, F. D., Versino, E., Zambon, A., Borraccino, A., & Lemma, P. (2008). School-based prevention for illicit drugs use: A systematic review.*Prev Med, 46*, 385-396.

Foxcroft, D. R., & Tsertsvadze, A. (2012). Cochrane Review: Universal school-based prevention programs for alcohol misuse in young people.*Evidence-Based Child Health: A Cochrane Review Journal, 7*, 450-575.

Roche, A., Lee, N., & Cameron, J. (2014). Alcohol Education: What Really Works in Schools? . Flinders University: Adelaide, South Australia.

Teesson, M., Newton, N. C., & Barrett, E. L. (2012). Australian school-based prevention programs for alcohol and other drugs: A systematic review.*Drug and Alcohol Review, 31*, 731-736.

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