Climate Schools Plus: online substance use prevention program for students and parents

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Climate Schools Plus

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[Logos and badges from NHMRC, NDARC, UNSW Sydney, Australian Government Department of Health, and the Society for Mental Health Research]

[Logos for Positive Choices and Drugs and Alcohol: Get the facts, Stay smart, Stay safe]
Why focus on prevention?

Being drunk increase the risk of:
- Being a victim of crime or violence
- Trying other drugs
- Accidents or injury
- Unwanted sexual situations

For each year we can delay the onset of drinking, we reduce the chance of developing a full-blown substance abuse disorder by 10 per cent.

(Grant et al., 2001)
Why include parents in prevention?

1. Parents play a pivotal role in their child’s alcohol and drug use
2. Parents want to be engaged in reducing the harms of alcohol and other drugs

9 out of 10 school based combined student and parent programs showed a reduction in alcohol and other drug outcomes

Newton et al., 2017
Online prevention for parents

• Barriers to parent involvement in face-to-face programs:
  Lack of time
  Costs
  Childcare
  Transport issues

• No parent components were delivered online
Filling the gap…

- The first combined parent-student substance use prevention program in Australia
- The first combined program internationally that adopts an online delivery method
Climate Schools: Student Program

Alcohol
Year 8
13-14yr olds

Alcohol & Cannabis
Year 9
14-15yr olds
Development Process

Scoping of the evidence-base

End-user consultation

Input from experts

Advisory Group

Beta-testing

EAG/Collaborators
Parents
Teachers
Substance use prevention experts
E-Health experts
Web developers and designers

Drugs and Alcohol
Get the facts. Stay smart. Stay safe
Development Process

- **Intervention Targets**
- **PAS program**
- **Scoping of the evidence-base**
  - End-user consultation
  - Input from experts
  - Advisory Group
  - Beta-testing

**EAG/Collaborators**
- Parents
- Teachers
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**Drugs and Alcohol**
Get the facts, Stay smart, Stay safe
How do parents influence adolescent alcohol use?

Risk factors:
• Parental alcohol use
• Parental supply of alcohol

(Yap et al., 2017)
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Protective factors:
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• Parent-child relationship
• Rules about alcohol

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(Yap et al., 2017)
Case study: Preventing heavy alcohol use in adolescents (PAS)

1. Presentation
2. Group consensus on a shared set of rules
3. Information leaflet

• Outcomes (when combined with a student intervention):
  • Delayed onset of drinking
  • Reduces heavy drinking
Parent scoping survey

- **Aim:** to seek feedback from Australian parents of high school students on the need for, and prospective features of the program

- **Sample:** 242 parents of Australian high school students
Parent Survey: Summary of key results

- **Parents need a program**: Only 19% of parents were confident they could definitely stop their child from becoming drunk.

- **Parents are interested in a range of features**: 60%+ parents are interested in webinars, automatic emails, modules and factsheets.

- **Parents would like to access this program online**: 71% of parents wanted access online.

- **Parents care about the credibility of the program**: 98% of parents said it was very/extremely important that information is evidence based.

- **Parents want the program to be brief, self-paced and easy to use**: e.g. Most (53%) of parents want to spend under 10 minutes per week on the program.
Climate Schools Plus: Parenting Component

- Parenting component is three part online intervention targeting **rule setting** and other modifiable parenting factors
Climate Schools Plus: Parenting Component

1. Interactive **webinar** targeting rule setting
   - Presentation on adolescent alcohol use and harms
   - Interactive rule ranking
Climate Schools Plus: Parenting Component

2. Brief, engaging **online modules** to support modifiable parenting factors

**Year 8 modules**

1. Getting the facts about alcohol
2. Parental attitudes and rule-setting
3. Parental supply and use
4. Communication and involvement

**Year 9 modules**

1. Getting the facts about cannabis
2. Cannabis and parents
Climate Schools Plus: Parenting Component

3. Emailed **lesson summaries** of student material
Beta-testing

• **Aim:** to seek feedback from Australian parents of high school students and relevant experts on the usability and usefulness of Climate Schools Plus

• **Sample:**
  – 15 parents of Australian high school students
  – 10 relevant experts
Beta-testing: Summary of key results

“I like the idea that there is work for parents as well as the kids. This is clever.”

- **CSP is useful:** 100% of participants agreed/strongly agreed that the content is relevant to parents of high school students, and most (80%) would recommend it to other parents.

- **CSP is attractive:** 83% of parents like/strongly like the layout of the modules, and most found the module graphics appropriate (87.5%) and engaging (87.5%).

- **CSP is easy to understand:** e.g. “very clear, information is to the point and easy to understand.” and “Module was great easy to read and complete. Very straightforward and to the point information.”

- **Climate Schools Plus is easy to use:** CSP scored 77.1/100 on the System Usability Scale, with parents commenting it is “easy to navigate”.

**Drugs and Alcohol**
Get the facts, Stay smart, Stay safe
Where to next?

- Pilot in Term 4, 2017
- A randomised-controlled trial to study the effectiveness of the program commencing in 2018
Thank you

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Declaration
• Nicola Newton and Maree Teesson are the directors of Climate Schools Pty Ltd. An Australian company set up in 2015 to distribute the online Climate Schools programs.
• Positive Choices is a trademark of UNSW and a government funded portal.