



Use of guest speakers in schools

School Fact Sheet

Effective drug education

Effective drug education in schools is known to be achieved best through a structured approach to the provision of information and support and the development of skills that aim to reduce students' risk of harm from drug use. As with any other area of education, knowledge is acquired over time and skills improve only with opportunity to practice. For these reasons and others, research (Principles for School Drug Education, DEST, 2004) tells us that the best people to provide drug education throughout a student's years of schooling are the school staff.

When guest speakers are used to offer 'one off' presentations on topics related to drugs or drug use (their own drug use or views on drug use), this provides no opportunity for the key elements of what make effective drug education - ongoing learning and skill development. Further, when this kind of information is provided by someone outside the school, there is no opportunity for follow-up by students for whom concerns may have been raised by the information that was delivered. Research also indicates that isolated presentations have little positive impact on student health or in changing drug using behaviour.

Guest speakers should complement existing drug education programs

To use guest speakers in a way that is effective means ensuring that these guests complement and add to your school's existing drug education initiatives. This would mean utilising a guest presenter to consolidate the drug education programs being offered by school staff. In this case the school should be clear about the particular aspects they would like the presenter to address and that the teacher considers what content may be covered with the students before and after the 'one off' session.

Alternatively, effective use of a guest speaker may be to invite an agency representative to promote awareness of

services that can provide guidance and help for anyone concerned about their own or someone else's drug use.

For more details around how best to use guest speakers, refer to SDERA's Getting it Together resource - Guidelines for engaging guest presenters on the SDERA website.

School drug education breeds resilience

While it is not the sole responsibility of schools to reduce student drug use or prevent drug-related harm, when schools provide effective drug education programs for students - including appropriate use of guest speakers - they are fostering resilience in young people. School programs can assist students to make healthier, informed choices which can contribute to reducing potential harms from drug use.

For information on how to implement drug education in your school see the Teaching drug education in schools section of the SDERA website.

For more information

For information on resources and support services in your area that can help if you think your child may have a drug use issue, call the Alcohol and Drug Support Line or your local Community Alcohol and Drug Service or talk with your doctor. Click on the Who can help? tab on the SDERA website for contact details and options.

Parent and Family Drug Support Line Meth Helpline

T: (08) 9442 5050

T: 1800 653 203 (country callers)

E: alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au

(24/7 free & confidential, counselling and referral)

T: 1800 874 878

E: alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au

W: alcoholdrugsupport.mhc.wa.gov.au

Alcohol and Drug Support Line

T: (08) 9442 5000

T: 1800 198 024 (country callers)

E: alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au

Where to go for help

If you need help for your own or someone else's drug use, information about support services is provided on the SDERA website under the Who can help? Tab and in the Connect directory which can be found in the Resources section. Support services are bound by confidentiality.

Contact SDERA

T: (08) 9402 6415

F: (08) 9402 6399

W: www.sdera.wa.edu.au

E: sdera.co@education.wa.edu.au