

Using guest speakers in drug education

Fact Sheet

Effective alcohol and other drug education

Effective alcohol and other drug (AOD) education in schools is achieved with a structured approach to providing information and support and the development of skills that aim to reduce risk of harm from AOD use. As with any other area of education, knowledge is acquired over time and skills improve only with opportunity to practice.

Research tells us that the best people to provide AOD education throughout a student's years of schooling are school staff (Principles for School Drug Education, DEST, 2004).

When guest speakers or external organisations 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 makes effective AOD education - ongoing learning and skill development.

When schools use a 'one off' external service for this purpose, there is no opportunity for students to follow up if concerns 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 AOD use.

Guest speakers should complement existing AOD education programs

To use guest speakers in a way that is effective means ensuring these guests complement and add to the school's existing AOD education initiatives. This would mean utilising a guest presenter to consolidate the AOD 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.

School AOD education breeds resilience

While it is not the sole responsibility of schools to reduce student AOD use or prevent AOD-related harm, providing effective AOD education programs for students can build resilience in young people.

School programs can assist students to make healthier, informed choices which can contribute to reducing harms from AOD use. For information on how schools can implement best practice AOD education, refer to the fact sheets at www.sdera.wa.edu.au/drug-information.

Where to go for help

School Drug Education and Road Aware
Department of Education
T: (08) 9402 6415
W: www.sdera.wa.edu.au
E: sdera.co@education.wa.edu.au

Parent and Family Drug Support Line
T: (08) 9442 5050
T: 1800 653 203 (country callers)
E: alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au

Meth Helpline (24/7 free & confidential, counselling and referral)
T: 1800 874 878
E: alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au
W: www.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