

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development



Australian Government
**Department of Education,
Science and Training**

School Community Approaches to Drug Education

CASE STUDIES

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Disclaimer
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Background

background

The Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training, under the National School Drug Education Strategy provided funding to all states and territories in Australia for innovative drug education programmes for students and training for teachers.

The Australian Government recognises that the messages delivered by schools need to be reinforced by parents and the wider community. The Australian Government released the *Principles for School Drug Education* in 2004 which heralded a shift in emphasis toward evidence-based whole school approaches to drug education. Critical to the success of these approaches was the quality of relationships and context in which these relationships develop. *'It is now clear that young peoples' attachment and connection to others, through the quality of their relationships and their social environments, affects their health and academic achievement.'*

The *Principles* go on to explain, *'research is demanding a shift in focus so that curriculum and classroom learning is seen as part of a broader and comprehensive approach to drug prevention and minimising drug-related harm for students and the school community.'*

The School Community Approaches to Drug Education (SCADE) project is based on the understanding that the quality of relationships at school do not occur in isolation. They are integrally related to the quality of relationships and social environments that students experience in their families and communities.

A safe and supportive environment can be a strong protective factor against a number of high-risk behaviours in young people's lives. An inclusive school fosters collaborative relationships with students, staff, families and the broader community providing opportunities for relevant drug education partnerships with parents, external agencies and services.

In Victoria, the SCADE projects were funded to build protection and reduce risk through whole school approaches that involved families and communities. As is evident from the following case studies, these initiatives take many forms, with the program organisers drawing on their knowledge to respond to the needs of their students and the environments in which they live.

Specific Aims of SCADE Projects:

In Victoria, selected schools were provided with a financial incentive to:

- explore innovative and creative approaches to drug education in partnership with local organisations
- encourage schools to develop a strategy for long-term change in their school community
- assist schools to work with Australian Government badged resources in their community

Key Considerations for School/Community-based Partnerships in Drug Education

Based on the *Principles for School Drug Education* and the evaluations of the SCADE projects described on this site, the following propositions have emerged as worthy of consideration. School/Community-based partnerships in Drug Education are most effective when:

- They contribute to a comprehensive (multi-faceted) approach to health and wellbeing.
- The development of **resilience** is a fundamental strategy that underpins effective drug education.
- They are based on evidence and the needs of constituents.
- They focus on behaviours and drugs that are relevant to the young people involved.
- Student involvement helps to ensure appropriate activities and methods.
- The formation of partnerships between families, schools and community services and organisations, has an attitude that encourages reciprocal benefits.
- Pro-active and sensitive liaison between schools and minority groups within the community lead to inclusiveness.
- Adequate professional development is provided for participants.
- Clear and achievable outcomes help participants to work together towards a common purpose. They also provide clarity for monitoring and evaluation.

Specific
aims
Key
considerations

Resilience

resilience

The development of resilience among young people is a key strategy in approaches to drug education in Australia. Resilience is the capacity to positively manage or overcome stress and is a key determinant of health and wellbeing. It is measured by a person's ability to adapt to, or recover from, difficulties and setbacks. In recent times, a significant breadth of research has been published about how to build resilience in young people. Three key factors that are commonly cited are:

- a warm, safe and secure environment where people genuinely care about each other
- access to significant relationships, especially with pro-social adults who provide supervision, guidance, mentoring, advocacy and general role modelling
- a focus on strengths.

A focus on strengths refers to the idea of protective factors. Previously, research tended to focus on risk factors and included little direction about how to reduce them. Following research by Michael Resnick and his colleagues (1993), a body of knowledge has developed about reducing risk through the promotion of protective factors.

Programs that promote resilience have an emphasis on protective factors (strengths) rather than deficits. Some examples of protective factors are included in the table on the next page.

Protective Factors that Promote Resilience in Young People

protective factors

	INDIVIDUAL	SCHOOL	FAMILY AND COMMUNITY
PROTECTIVE FACTORS	<p>A sense of belonging</p> <p>Positive self perceptions</p> <p>Coping and problem solving skills</p> <p>Emotional regulation</p> <p>Personal beliefs and a sense of purpose</p>	<p>Warm and supportive relationships</p> <p>Safe environment</p> <p>Connections to significant adult others</p> <p>Participation in extra-curricula activities</p> <p>Recognition for efforts</p> <p>Regular school attendance</p> <p>School policies on health and wellbeing</p> <p>High expectations</p>	<p>Warm relationship with parent</p> <p>Safe environment</p> <p>Connections to competent and caring adults</p> <p>Family/community supervision and support</p> <p>Positive expectations</p> <p>Non-deviant peer group</p> <p>Participation in a range of pro-social activities</p> <p>Health services</p>

1. Resnick MD, Harris LJ & Blum RW (1993) *The Impact of caring and connectedness on adolescent health and well-being*, Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health, 29 (Suppl 1)

One Year Projects

The SCADE one year projects were funded up to \$5,000 for an individual school project and up to \$10,000 for a group of schools.



Pre and Post L Plate Driver Education

Buckley Park SC, Keilor Downs SC and Taylors Lakes SC

Project Aim

Buckley Park, Keilor Downs and Taylors Lakes Secondary Colleges aimed to create a pre and post L Plate driver education program, as part of their drug education approach.

Getting Started

The project started with a working group of welfare and community members who had an interest in the idea. When we had clarified how the program might work, we involved the Year 10 coordinators and team leaders from the three participating schools. Through using working group contacts, we established further links with the project becoming a partnership between the Victoria Police, Calder Park Racing Promotions Unit, Melbourne Metropolitan Ambulance Service, Teenage Road Accident Group (TRAG), Brimbank and Moonee Ponds Councils, TAFE, Major Collision Unit, Relationship Australia, Road Safe, Jump Start and Victoria University.

Pre and Post Test Driver Education

Once the working group had built a large and varied base of agencies with expertise, we designed a pre and post test L Plate driver education program. Two key components were a drug education program conducted at school around the idea of risk taking with a focus on driving, alcohol and drugs. The second part of the program was a full day at Calder Park Raceway targeted at Year 10 and 11 students. Students from each school developed and presented a key component for the day, including a DVD, drama performances about a low-grade crash scene and peer-led workshops.

The staff from the three secondary colleges attended professional development workshops on drug education within a road safety framework. It was particularly useful to run an in-house day on using resources. Staff had the opportunity to really understand the resources and discuss how they might best be incorporated into the program.

Students were very excited about the program which they perceived as highly engaging and relevant to their lives. This was evidenced by the level of enthusiasm during the program, and the large turn out of parents and students to the 'Keys Please' event a week after the Calder Raceway experience.

Student Anecdotes

“You shouldn’t take drugs and drive as the consequences can be very serious or potentially fatal”

“Cars are powerful tools that require your full concentration when driving them”.

Critical success factors

- Three colleges working closely together
- Community involvement and support
- Effective working group
- Professional development program for a large number of staff
- An issue that was engaging for a large number of students, especially for boys

Highlights

There were many highlights, but one that stood out was the guest speaker, at the end of the day at Calder Park, he told the students about how he lost his daughter in a car crash. He explained how it had affected him and his family. It was very moving.

Recommended Resources

- *My TV*
- *In Tune – Students Participating in Drug Education*
- Headsets for students

Sustainability

The program became much bigger than just being about driving, alcohol and drugs. It incorporated a whole range of issues that relate to adolescent behaviour, risk taking and consequences. While it required a lot of coordination and effort, the program will run each year as part of the Buckley Park SC curriculum.

The Darkside of Dope Comic Book

Caulfield Community School

Project aim

To increase knowledge of harm minimisation and the effects of cannabis

Getting Started

Along with the *REDI* resource and *Cannabis and Consequences* resource, an artist was engaged to work along with the students to develop storylines for the comic book, *The Darkside of Dope*.

The Darkside of Dope Comic Book

The comic book was a meaningful strategy for engaging sometimes 'resistant' students in a thoughtful consideration of cannabis. Initially, our challenge was to shift the focus of the discussion from a competitive one, where students were grandstanding about their drug use, to one that was more thoughtful. This took time, perseverance, and reflection on practice by teachers.

The comic book gave students the opportunity to openly discuss issues as the stories and characters were developed. The characters in the comic book reflected the range of different personal effects of cannabis in young people's lives.

The project improved student self esteem and connection at school because it engaged respectfully with their experiences. Using these experiences to create a cartoon was a vehicle for helping students to reflect on their behaviour and its consequences in a non-judgmental and thoughtful way. This made students receptive to receiving alternate viewpoints and new information. Without an engaging strategy, that had a meaningful purpose, the students may have been more likely to lose interest once the grandstanding had finished. However, developing the cartoon encouraged them to begin working collaboratively and persistently. While attendance was a problem, a core group of students were very committed to seeing the project through to completion.

Critical Success Factors

- Relevance to student experiences
- Perseverance
- Non-judgmental approach
- Clear purpose

Highlights

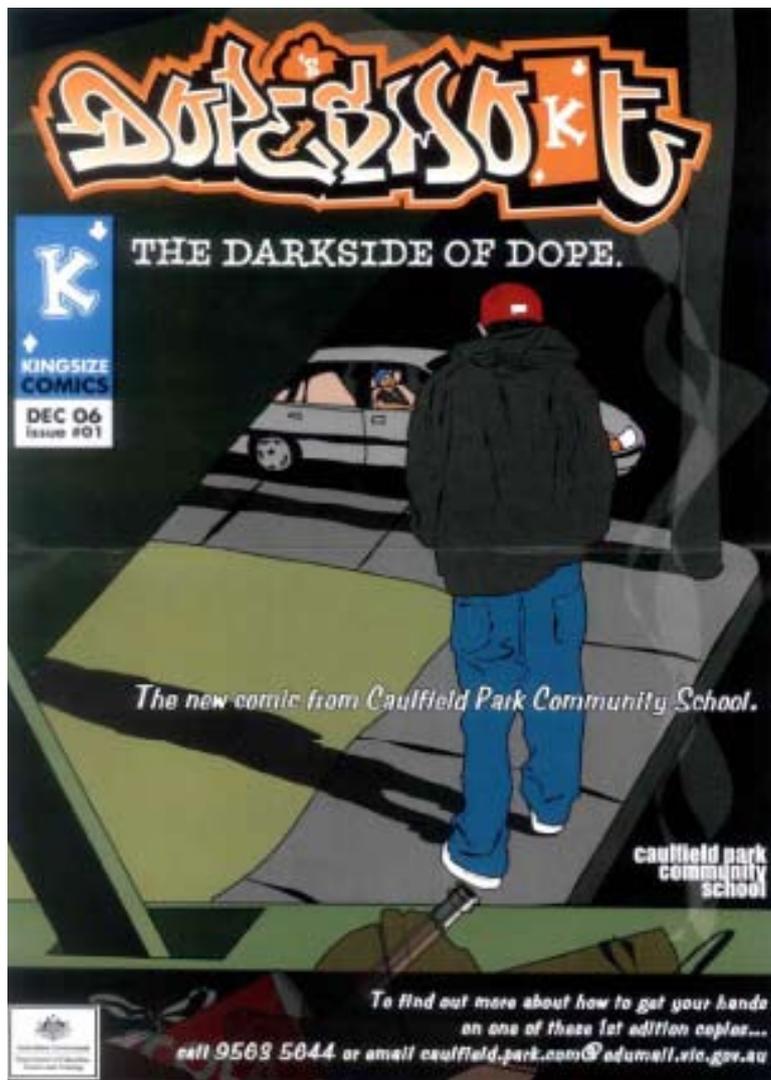
- Student pride in the project and their contribution
- Genuine engagement with the students about their lifestyles

Recommended Resources

- *Cannabis and Consequences*

Sustainability

Knowledge of the concept of harm minimisation is critical to the personal development of our cohort of students. The project was a strategy for developing this concept, and so is sustainable in the context that it will continue to be core curriculum.



Building Resilience through Partnerships – Enhancing Relationships across the School

**Haileybury College, Haileybury Senior School (Keysborough),
Haileybury (Edrington), Haileybury (Castlefield)**

Project Aim

The aim of the project was to build partnerships between school, family and community. These partnerships developed around a shared interest in understanding the lifestyle and community issues that relate to young people.

Getting Started

The project occurred across four school precincts. The school psychologists were given responsibility for managing the implementation of the project in their precincts. Drug Education training was provided by staff from Southern Metropolitan Regional Office. Agencies were contacted and arrangements made for participation in the program. Liaison occurred with school staff to find suitable dates. With the organisation in place, a range of activities, including a two week program was timetabled.

Building Resilience through Partnerships – Enhancing Relationships across the School

The project built on a whole school commitment to student welfare and drug education. This ensured the project was scaffolded by school policies, programs and the provision of personnel to support the project.

The project involved:

- Parent education about the school's approach to drug education
- Middle school parent evening where parents worked together in teams
- Senior school safe partying parent evening
- Senior students facilitated a cross-age tutor group on safe partying
- Workshop for senior staff on interactive teaching techniques
- Program specific training for junior, middle and senior school staff
- Drug education as part of a comprehensive whole of school approach to health and well-being
- Cross cultural training at relevant precincts
- Community Connections Week including involvement of community agencies in classroom program and a theatre production about substance abuse and risk taking

Critical success factors

- Whole school approach
- Built on existing program
- Coordination and organisation by school psychologists

Highlights

- The opportunities provided for senior students to participate in small group sessions with a range of community agencies including Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) update training, Ambulance and Drug Alcohol Program for Teenagers (ADAPT) ambulance program, interactive drug education programs from Taskforce, a performance of 'Wired' by Brainstorm productions, and first hand accounts from young people with schizophrenia through the Mental Health Fellowship.
- Constructing online directories of support services
- Participation in community service provision at a retirement village, special school and mission.

Recommended Resources

- *On the Edge*
- *The Big Move*
- *One and All*
- *My TV*

Sustainability

Building the project into a comprehensive whole of school approach to health and well-being means that all of the professional development and incorporation of resources will continue to be implemented and further developed.

Plan It Youth Mentoring

Traralgon College

Project Aim

The Plan It Youth Mentoring Program links young people with a trained mentor from the community.

Getting Started

A working group was established. It was comprised of college staff members, Department of Education Regional Senior Program Officers, Office for Youth, Berry St, police and Latrobe City. The initial aim was to use the project to build relationships. At this point, there was no drug specific focus. The belief was that by building relationships and community connectedness, students would be at reduced risk of harmful behaviours, including drug misuse.

Plan It Youth Mentoring

Two college staff members were sent to Brisbane to attend mentoring training. The education manager from Berry Street and a representative from the Office of Youth supported the college staff in promoting, recruiting and training mentors. A Berry Street staff member facilitated the training and the college's welfare staff coordinated the project at school.

The nine students who have spent time with mentors have become more closely linked to school and the community. They have experienced a range of activities outside of school and their motivation has massively improved.

Student Anecdotes

'Why can't we do this all year?'

'Having someone to talk to makes me feel better.'

Critical success factors

- Agency involvement and expertise
- Agency networks and access to volunteers
- Agency policies and procedures to ensure safety and protection standards

Highlights

- A half day of lawn bowls with all involved. The young people embraced the opportunity to participate which they would not have previously done.
- The participation of Berry Street.

Recommended Resources

- *My TV*

Sustainability

Sustainability is linked with on-going community networks and relationships. The development of skills, policies and procedures within the school will be enduring, however, the recruitment and training of mentors is something that relies on community expertise and support.

Safe Partying Project

Weeroona College

Project Aim

The project aim was to work with students to explore issues related to parties with a view to partying safely.

Getting Started

The staff member driving the project involved groups of students. The main ones were those who were committed to developing a DVD in media studies, and those who volunteered to train as facilitators for a *Creating Conversations* evening.

Safe Partying

Students in Media Studies created a DVD to highlight safe partying issues. This was used as a tool for discussion in other parts of the project.

Volunteers from Year 9 facilitated a *Creating Conversations* Drug Education evening to bring parents on-board and encourage on-going discussions at home. An expected bonus was the development of confidence and skills among the students who facilitated the evening. Their friendship and team work was lovely to watch.

To build a community focus, all neighbouring colleges were invited to attend an evening about safe partying. This evening was supported by the parenting program at Department of Human Services.

The project improved student skills in many areas. They were also highly motivated to participate in the project. This increased as the project progressed. The team work and relationships that developed among students were really energising and great to experience. Having a long term goal that students worked toward as a team really built a sense of belonging among students.

Critical success factors

- Support from teachers
- Enthusiasm of students
- The capacity to do creative things with modern equipment

Highlights

- One student who has Asperger's Syndrome became strongly accepted by the group. In fact, he stole the show in terms of performance capability. He gained enormous respect from the other students. To see the other students spontaneously clap and speak so highly of him when he performed. It was quite moving.
- The performance by the students at the Safe Party night.

Recommended Resources

- *My TV*

Sustainability

The project required a major commitment, but the student outcomes were worth it. Building the project into the formal curriculum would help to ensure sustainability.

Developing Resilience in the School Community

St Albans North PS

Project Aim

The project aim was to develop resilience skills in our school community by establishing links between students, parents and community agencies. This aimed to build protection by increasing student connectedness to their community, which was a change in our approach to Drug Education curriculum.

The focus was in Grades 5 and 6.

Getting Started

We initially envisaged only working with one agency, DASWest. However, as the project developed, we gained the support of a range of community agencies through our welfare officer. Their response was extremely supportive and encouraging, as many community agencies have school connectedness as part of their brief.

A Whole School Approach

By involving the broader community, the emphasis of the school's approach to health began to shift away from the weekly lesson, towards a more holistic way of teaching health. The teachers became more aware of the expertise available to support them. Consequently, they began to focus more on resilience as a life skill, subsequently embedding it in other aspects of school life, for instance, helping students to resolve conflict.

Staff professional development helped staff to deliver effective drug education across the school, using the *REDI* resources, programs 3 – 6. The staff found the video useful as a trigger to discussion. They found the activities easy to follow and the support materials practical.

The support from the community sector was overwhelming. The extra-curricular activities to build protection for students were extensive:

- Whitten Cup A.F.L. Multicultural Program
- Kids Tennis Foundation
- Student Pedometer Project (Physiotherapy, ISIS Primary Care)
- Families, Food, Photography (ISIS Primary Care)
- Photovoice (ISIS Primary Care)
- School Aerobics
- Basketball Vic Clinics

- Community Pedometer Project (Physiotherapy, ISIS Primary Care, Teacher Initiative Project)
- Jump Rope for Heart
- Melbourne Rugby Storm Visit, District Rugby Round Robin)
- Community Parent Forum, with students leading REDI activities and community agencies leading discussion groups

Presentations and discussions about the project were made at:

- ACHPER Victorian Essential Learning Standards Reference Group
- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority Progression Points Reference Group
- ACHPER Monash University Conference, 2006

Critical success factors

1. Communication and organisation was a key to:
 - developing close relationships with support agencies
 - informing staff through workshops and staff meetings
 - engaging with parents via e-mail and school newsletters.
 - establishing a Student Leadership group
2. Staff support
 - Through professional development
 - To support the whole school approach to health

Highlights

A community evening where students facilitated the activities utilising the Commonwealth Government *REDI* Resources. The students involved parents in decision making models related to potentially harmful situations. Then parents moved to different classrooms to hear a range of more detailed presentations from community service representatives. They interacted and asked questions before rotating to other presentations. The evening also gave the school-based welfare officer an opportunity to provide an overview of the support programs available to families. At the end of the evening, parents left with a community resources show bag.

Recommended Resources

- *REDI Resources*
- *St Lukes Strength Cards*

Sustainability

The involvement of many community services will be ongoing through the provision of services and the delivery of programs. The staff training and use of the *REDI* resources will continue to assist in the development of a holistic approach to health in our school. The establishment of links with community agencies has led to further programs occurring in our school, such as Photovoice (ISIS Primary Care), where families celebrate cultural diversity by photographing food in the home and healthy eating practices are promoted.



Two Year Projects

The SCADE two year projects were funded up to \$10,000 for an individual school project and up to \$20,000 for a group of schools.



Theatre of Transformation

Berengara School

Project Aim

The theatre production aims to develop greater awareness of the link between drug misuse and mental health outcomes. This will form the basis for the development of a resource that is relevant to the experiences and language of students.

Getting Started

We developed the submission for funding so that it was linked with the curriculum; theatre production in Drama, script development in English, alcohol and drug issues in Health, and DVD development in Media Studies. This provided the time necessary for a diverse group of teachers and students to become involved.

Theatre Production and Resource Development

The Theatre of Transformation process helped the students create a play about the impact of drugs on young people. Developing stories around the experience of students and discussing possible solutions formed a central part of the video documentary production.

The video documentary explored two themes:

- The impact of alcohol on young people and their families
- The experience of young people in the 'Theatre of Transformation' process.

The process allowed students to find their own ways of articulating issues that confront them, including alcohol, drug and mental health issues. The students' theatre production provided a vehicle for describing the social settings that create high-risk alcohol consumption and behaviours. The development of a DVD became a powerful reflective tool, where students processed the experience, and began to create their own meanings in terms of 'how things can spiral out of control' and about how peer support and having personal responsibility can help young people to 'remain in control'.

One of the challenges of the project was to protect the privacy of the participants.

This was managed by maintaining communication through:

- allowing time to discuss and debrief
- giving young people access to staff.

Student Anecdotes

“It was awesome to be acting out on stage, being someone else, and seeing the consequences.”

Critical success factors

- Flexible and open minded staff that supported an integrated approach
- Working with students as genuine and respected partners
- Strategically using outside expertise
- The use of interactive learning methods
- Having faith in the educative process, as opposed to using moralistic messages that dictate the ‘right outcomes’.

Highlights

The highlights of the project have been many. It has been terrific to see students, with no previous experience, stand up on stage and perform their play. From a student welfare perspective, it was good to bring the issue of drugs out in the open and have an honest discussion about its impact on people’s lives.

Recommended Resources

- *My TV*
- *On the Edge*
- *Rethinking Drinking*

Sustainability

- Linking the project to mainstream curriculum helped make the project sustainable.
- The resource kit ensured that a lot of what we had achieved, may be used by others, rather than forgotten.

Get Smashed Prepare to Crash

Camperdown College

Project Aim

Camperdown College's aim was to increase the awareness of alcohol and alcohol related issues for students in the community focusing on drink driving, with the Year 9 students.

Getting Started

Students worked intensively in class one afternoon a week for the duration of the project planning and undertaking project activities. Students were the drivers of the project which gave them ownership and confidence to present themselves proudly in front of a community forum.

Get Smashed Prepare to Crash

The project was a joint effort between Health and Art classes. The students participated in the following activities to promote awareness throughout the community about the risks of drinking and driving. They:

- Worked with a community artist to create a large billboard, in a prominent place, with the slogan 'Get Smashed prepare to crash!
- Designed and developed badges.
- Recorded an ad for local radio based on a script they wrote about the risks of drinking and driving.
- Surveyed the community about alcohol.
- Held a public forum to raise awareness of the risks associated with drinking and driving.

Students and the community gained a greater awareness about alcohol and its related risks and are permanently reminded by the billboard. Strong media coverage assisted in spreading the message and the work of the students. The students' enjoyed the hands on activities and the ability to use a range of multi media to explore ideas.

Student anecdotes

"More interesting than any project that I've ever done before"

"First project we have done with out of school people involvement"

"Style of presenting information suited my way of learning"

"I enjoyed having a bit of freedom in what we did"

Critical Success Factors

- Involvement of agencies
- Inter-disciplinary approach
- Students taking responsibility

Highlights

- Increased student engagement and attendance among Year 9 students.
- The recognition and positive comments made by the community, local police and Colac Road Safety Council.

Recommended resources

- *My T.V*
- *Rethinking Drinking*

Sustainability

The project was highly engaging for the students, which was demonstrated in the way it held their interest over an extended period of time. It was also a demonstration of the possibilities for inter-disciplinary learning that is encouraged by the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. In this sense, it is relevant to our mainstream curriculum.



M Power N Girlz

Croydon Community College

Project Aim

Girls experience a social experience laced with cliques, reputation, gossip, innuendo, rebellion, bullying, boyfriends and parties. The program aims to help girls identify those factors and situations that are protective and those that increase the risks to their health and well-being. The project will use peer education as its core strategy.

Getting Started

Involving the school's social worker, Ree Bucci, who had the knowledge and passion to develop the program.

M Power N Girlz

There were two main parts to the program; the social skills training for the secondary school girls and preparing them to become peer educators. The program was about learning skills to help girls cope more effectively with social interactions. The eight sessions involved:

- Understanding the range of roles that girls take on
- The different responsibilities that go with these roles
- Strategies for dealing with conflict, including the crucial DRA (Describe, Request, Affirm) technique
- Training to become peer educators

The second part of the program involved providing peer education to Year 6 girls from nearby primary schools. This was exceptional. The peer educators were incredibly committed, arriving early and staying late. One girl, who struggled with anxiety, commented that the program was her lifeline to school. She became a key driver.

Another parent told the program coordinator that her daughter had been targeted and bullied all throughout her primary schooling. She had received counselling from community agencies, psychologists and mental health professionals. The program has helped her daughter more than any other intervention.

To support the program, school staff were trained and two parent education sessions were provided. They were attended by 120 parents. The feedback was highly positive. Comments included:

“I have been given excellent strategies to connect with and enjoy my daughter’s journey.”

“I feel as if I have removed the demons that I have carried since being a target during my school years.”

Student Anecdotes

A Year 6 girl told her school Principal, “This program has changed my life. I can talk to my teachers, my parents and other girls without feeling sad. If we have differences of opinion I now know how to tell them what I think and feel without being scared. I didn’t use to tell my parents about how the other girls treated me but now I can talk to them and really tell them how I feel.”

Critical success factors

- Trained facilitator with knowledge and clear purpose
- Commitment by students
- Sufficient preparation and training

Highlights

- A decrease in conflict between girls
- Friendlier environment
- Enthusiasm of the girls
- Staff volunteering observations about the improved relationships among the girls
- The effectiveness of the girls as peer educators

Recommended Resources

- Ree Bucci
- Girls

Sustainability

Teachers participated in all of the sessions with the social worker. At the end of each session the program was evaluated and adapted. This ensured a growing knowledge base. The peer education component at primary schools has grown beyond what was originally planned. The way the program has been so powerful for the girls has ensured its sustainability.

Transition and Healthy Choices Project

Coburn Primary School

Project Aim

The aim of the project was to build relationships between Year 6 students and mentors from Year 9 through working on a project together. The project involved designing and creating some healthy choices murals with the assistance of a local artist.

Getting Started

We started the project through a classroom program on drug education. This gave students the drug education knowledge to embark on the healthy choices mural.

Healthy Choices Mural

The mural was a symbol for the healthy choices program we have developed at our school. The program involved a breakfast club one day a week, encouraging students to take water and fruit to class, and receiving donations of apples from a local orchard.

The drug specific component of the project involved students attending a session in the Life Education Van. This was supported by follow up activities taken from *Get Real* and *Get Wise*. The messages from these activities formed the basis for the messages in the mural design. The design began with students delivering a presentation about the project, and then working with the Year 9 students from Melton SC design posters. These posters were incorporated into the overall design of the mural in the form of a patchwork quilt.

When we were creating the mural, it was a challenge coordinating all of the students coming from different schools. We would try to streamline that process in the future. The results were worth it, since it brought the secondary students together with the primary school students. Friendships developed that will greatly benefit the transition for our students going to Melton SC.

The mural was launched at the 'Carols by Candlelight' event at the end of the year. The event was supported by the Lion's Club and the school communities.

Critical success factors

- Providing the scaffolding for the project through classroom activities, student presentations, planning, and posters and having someone responsible for overseeing the process at each stage.
- The organisation to coordinate the project across schools.
- The positive attitude of staff and students.

Highlights

- The supportive, kind and caring behaviours of the secondary students toward the primary school students.
- The friendships that developed between the younger and older students, as well as the friendships that developed between the schools. These are benefits we plan to further build upon.

Recommended Resources

- *Get Real*
- *Get Wise*
- Life Education

Sustainability

The amount of organisation across schools meant that, longer term, the transition component may prove difficult to sustain. However, the benefits of having primary and secondary students working together on a meaningful project, has fueled our determination to continue finding ways of providing this experience for our students. A part of the solution seems to be about ensuring that the project links with curriculum for all students involved. For the primary school students, it might be a part of drug education and healthy choices, while for secondary students; it might be part of their service education, peer education, health and/or interpersonal relationships. This is an issue we intend to continue discussing into the future.

An Integrated Approach to Drug Education

St Mary's – Mooroopna

Project Aim

The aim of the project was to provide a whole school approach to health and well-being by integrating drug education and health promoting habits across the curriculum.

Getting Started

Our first step was to ensure that all staff were involved in the project. We did this by having a professional development day where we built staff knowledge about drug-related issues, and then developed a framework for a prep – Year 6 drug education program. We followed this up with a series of twilight professional development sessions around the *Talking Tactics* resource.

An Integrated Approach

Parents were considered important partners in our whole school approach, so our next step was to build the knowledge of parents about our approach through a drug education parent forum. We used the *Talking Tactics* and *REDI* kits to support the content and activities.

Next we had a whole school day using activities from *The Big Move*. This reinforced the idea of physical engagement in all aspects of school life. We gained the services of a younger male AFL trainee, who co-facilitated many of the activities. This was very successful and we used his services for the remainder of the program.

Gross motor skill sessions were used to develop self esteem and confidence among students. Students played a number of games that were enjoyable, and through planned reflection, links were made between the games, healthy choices and coping strategies like anger management.

Students with additional needs were then targeted for additional support through a social skills program with an emphasis on cooperation and team work. This was reinforced with organised lunch time activities in which many students participated.

Critical success factors

- Whole school approach
- Planning time and resources
- Parent involvement
- AFL trainee

Highlights

- Students being involved in the parent forum. Many parents were surprised at how well the students could express themselves.
- The powerful impact of having a young male role model. Teachers appreciated his support and positive influence.

Recommended Resources

- *Talking Tactics*
- *REDI – The Big Move*

Sustainability

Having the AFL trainee working at the school may prove difficult to sustain without funding. However, the development of a comprehensive and integrated curriculum, staff training and the resources to support a whole school approach will all be enduring benefits from the project.

Culturally Appropriate Drug Education

Yeshiva College

Project Aim

The aim of the project is to involve students, staff and parents in developing a culturally appropriate approach to drug education

Getting Started

We began the project by running a series of professional development sessions focusing on communicating with students. These sessions were run by a psychologist who deals with drug and alcohol issues and the director of Hatzolah (Community Emergency Response Team).

Culturally Appropriate Drug Education

Meetings were held and a number of staff accepted responsibility for overseeing different aspects of the project.

Teachers initially engaged students through a creative art project using a range of media. These activities required students to work collaboratively in teams to make good choices. The context for choice was explored in depth. For instance, the difference in making a choice from perceived strength and self worth as opposed to making a choice from a perspective of fear and lack of confidence. Another significant issue was peer pressure and how one's relationship to the group influences decisions.

Senior students were engaged in more graphic representations of drug misuse. They were also involved in sessions with TAC and VIC Roads during which the improper use of alcohol was highlighted.

School camps and weekend retreats were used to provide challenges to students and develop self-esteem. The camps also offered an informal setting where relationships between students and staff were deepened.

The project has given teachers:

- a clear understanding about the extent of the issue in our community
- the skills to improve their communication with students
- an awareness of their responsibilities as role models
- a deeper understanding of their responsibility as educators to deal with these issues in a way that is meaningful and effective.

The students have developed their knowledge in an age and culturally appropriate way. The main focus has been around choice and decision making. We have developed general and transferable knowledge of these skills with younger students. This has involved teaching methods that build a sense of belonging, as well as interpersonal skills and resilience. With this foundation, our older students have considered the issues of alcohol and drug misuse more directly.

Parents have been involved in the project through information forums, where they have appreciated the opportunity to share their thoughts, and realise they are not alone when dealing with a range of adolescent issues.

Critical success factors

- Culturally relevant professional development
- Open mindedness by staff and parents

Highlights

The presentation by Hatzolah in that it had an enormous impact on the audience, destroying any misconceptions that our students were immune from drug misuse and risk taking behaviour. This created a firm foundation to proceed with the project.

Recommended Resources

- *Principles for School Drug Education* (especially for planning our approach)

Sustainability

The quality of the professional development and the subsequent skill development for teachers, has meant that the changes to teaching methods will be enduring.

Urban Art Project

Hoppers Crossing Secondary College

Project Aim

To increase self-confidence, initiative, respect and responsibility of 'at risk' young people in Years 7, 8 and 9 through street art.

Getting Started

A community artist was engaged to work with ten 'at risk' Year 8 and 9 students to create 5 large boards of Street Art depicting harm minimization themes.

The Professional Development of teachers enabled them to increase their

- knowledge about drug and alcohol issues and young people.
- confidence when using the commonwealth resources and leading classroom discussions about drug education.

Street Art

The Urban Art Project (UAP) was a very positive and successful experience for those students involved. It increased students' self-esteem and connection to the College. The project drew on their skills and experience as street artists. In this sense, the vehicle (street art) was meaningful to the students and created the conditions for the development for mutual respect. The students were subsequently, more open to exploring the theme of harm minimisation.

Wyndham Youth Affairs Police Officer launched the event which was well attended by the local school community and an enriching experience that raised the profile of harm minimisation for the whole school community and the students. Students that participated in the UAP were very engaged with the project.

Teachers noted improved behaviour by some students in their classes. Teachers reported that drug and alcohol sessions they conducted were well received and the students responded positively by participating in the activities and discussions.

Activities included the promotion of the project through school newsletters, local paper and conducting a school community launch of the artwork. The DVD and artwork was presented to the Year 8 and 9 level assemblies with great success.

Recommended Resources

- *Cannabis and Consequences*
- *Rethinking Drinking*
- *Principles for School Drug Education*

Critical Success Factors

- Professional development
- Meaningful and relevant activities for students

Highlights

- The launch of the Urban Art project.
- To see the proud expressions on the students' faces.

Sustainability

The general classroom activities and use of the drug education resources will be sustained, since they were incorporated into the mainstream program.