



REDUCE RISK - INCREASE STUDENT KNOWLEDGE

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## Newsletter 1

### Young People and Risk Taking

Risk-taking in adolescence it is an essential part of learning and personal development. Every healthy adolescent takes risks as he or she grows towards independence. Most researchers agree that if there is no risk there is no growth. A common problem for some young people is their inability to evaluate the potential risks and consequences of everyday behaviour. Thrill seeking, speeding, the desire to impress one's friends; feelings of invincibility and the search for new experiences are all motivating forces that drive many teenagers. As a result they are over represented in every category of risk taking resulting in injury and trauma.

The RRISK Program aims to reduce risk-taking behaviour associated with alcohol and drug use, driving and partying amongst year 11 students in the North and Mid North Coast of NSW. RRISK is relevant to the social life, developmental stage and concerns of adolescents. It extends the school based drug education and road safety curriculum by providing opportunities for senior high school students to develop knowledge, attitudes and skills to reduce risk taking and develop safer celebrating strategies.

Over 4500 students from more than 59 high schools from Port Macquarie to Tweed Heads have registered to attend one of 10 RRISK Seminars. This year, two additional seminars will be held in Port Macquarie and Kempsey to meet the growing demand. If you have a year 11 student in your family, encourage them to attend.

#### RRISK seminar dates

<b>Port Macquarie</b>	Panthers Auditorium	7 and 8 November
<b>Coffs Harbour</b>	Southern Cross University	14 and 15 November
<b>Kempsey</b>	Melville High Community Hall	20 November
<b>Lismore</b>	Southern Cross University	25, 26 and 28 November
<b>Tweed Heads:</b>	Twin Town Services Club	5 and 6 December

### Research shows that RRISK is effective in reducing young driver crashes by 44%

The largest study ever undertaken into young driver behaviour was conducted by the George Institute of International Health and published in 2009. RRISK was identified as the only program to have resulted in a 44% reduction in road crashes for participants. The researchers consider RRISK a best practice program because it builds resilience by equipping young people with strategies and practical skills to manage risks in their social life and on the roads as drivers and passengers.

Look for information about the RRISK Program on the RRISK website [www.rrisk.com.au](http://www.rrisk.com.au) and in this newsletter over the coming weeks.



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## Newsletter 2

### Adolescent Drinking Behaviour

Young people aged 16-24 are amongst the heaviest drinkers in Australian society. In NSW, 46% of males and 43% of females in this age group are drinking at levels that could pose a serious risk to their health if they continue to drink at this level during their lifetime.

Over half of this group regularly drink to intoxication, which places them at risk of an alcohol related injury on any single drinking occasion. (NSW Health Statistics, 2011)

Young people are less likely than adults to be concerned about the negative consequences of heavy drinking. They are more at risk than adults as they are physically and psychologically immature, lack experience with alcohol, are more willing to engage in risk taking behaviour and are often unaware of the dangers of excessive consumption.

Choosing not to drink or learning how to drink responsibly can be among the most difficult tasks facing young people today. The earlier young people start drinking, the more likely they are to become high risk drinkers and experience alcohol related harm whilst they are young and in later life.

#### Alcohol and adolescent brain development

The brain is not fully developed until about 25 years of age. Drinking alcohol to intoxicating levels during adolescence can result in permanent brain damage. Areas of the brain that control memory, learning, decision making and problem solving can be permanently affected.

Learning problems can result in poor exam results and life skills which will reduce future career options and employment. Lack of judgement often leads to greater risk taking and increased likelihood of violence or sexual assault. Regular heavy drinking can cause irrational and aggressive behaviour, inability to understand social cues, depression and anxiety.

For more information on the effect of alcohol on the developing brain, see <http://darta.net.au/wordpress-content/uploads/2013/02/ALCOHOL-AND-THE-DEVELOPING-BRAIN.docx.pdf>

#### Mental health

Drinking at a young age increases the risk of mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, attention deficit disorder and increased risk of self harm, including suicide, delinquent behaviour and alcohol dependency in later life.

Look for information about the RRISK Program and risk taking at our website [www.rrisk.com.au](http://www.rrisk.com.au)

## Newsletter 3

### Parties - Will You Allow Alcohol at Your Adolescent's Party?

Many parents and carers will be helping young people in their family celebrate birthdays, special occasions, finishing their school year or leaving school.

It is time for careful planning so that everyone enjoys themselves. Some parents may not be aware of their responsibilities in relation to supplying alcohol to under 18's.

Regardless of where the function will be held, it is against the law to obtain for, or supply alcohol to anyone under 18 years of age - even at private parties. This activity is called secondary supply of alcohol - an offence that carries a maximum penalty of \$5,500 per offence or \$11,000 and 12 months prison in very serious circumstances. On the spot fines of \$550 can also be issued by police.

This information comes to you from the NSW Department of Liquor, Gaming and Racing. Check their website for further information: [www.olgr.nsw.gov.au/liquor\\_info\\_young\\_people\\_2nd\\_party.asp](http://www.olgr.nsw.gov.au/liquor_info_young_people_2nd_party.asp)

#### Points to consider:

- ◆ What do you do if an underage guest arrives with alcohol?
- ◆ What do you do if they arrive intoxicated?
- ◆ What do you do if your alcohol has been consumed during the course of the party?
- ◆ How can you plan a successful party that addresses these issues?

It is much easier to plan and control what happens at your next party if you follow some simple guidelines. Here are some suggestions that can make a difference:

- ◆ Ideally RSVP invitations should be issued, giving as many details as possible about times of starting and finishing, the nature of the party, a dress code, how it will be supervised and how guests will return home. Indicate guests will be required to bring their invitation for party entry.
- ◆ On the invitation, suggest guest parents contact host parents to fine tune details and discuss any concerns. This will ensure parents are not pressured against their better judgement and gives everyone permission to talk about supervision, safety, alcohol and drug issues etc.
- ◆ Have only one entrance or exit to make it easier to control who attends your party.
- ◆ Guest lists should be kept to a manageable size. If guest numbers are large, ask other parents to assist with supervision or consider hiring security personnel.

- ◆ Host parents need to be aware of appropriate return transport for guests and/or provide overnight, supervised accommodation.
- ◆ Make it clear in advance it is an alcohol free party. (Parents are reminded of the NSW Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing penalties cited earlier).
- ◆ Alcohol at parties is not easily supervised. Alcohol can easily be consumed in advance or mixed with soft drinks prior to the party. Alcohol may be left outside in cars or hidden in bushes. Although these problems can occur, they are less likely if the party is well supervised.
- ◆ Confiscate BYO alcohol from under 18s. Return it to their parents or carers.
- ◆ If guests are a mixture of under and over 18s, there is less control over the consumption of alcohol. A nominated adult should serve alcohol.
- ◆ Actively serve non-salty food throughout the party. This will slow down alcohol consumption for those who are drinking.
- ◆ Attractive non-alcoholic drinks should always be provided. For example, "Mocktails", non-alcoholic punches, soft drinks, fruit juices, coffee, tea and of course, water.
- ◆ If under 18s consume alcohol or other drugs during the party, their parents should be contacted and asked to collect them. Parents should be advised of unacceptable behaviour.
- ◆ Be firm about excluding gatecrashers. If admittance is by invitation only, gatecrashers are less likely. Prior to the party, encourage students not to broadcast party details in the school community, via the Internet or mobile phone. If gatecrashers arrive, ask them to leave immediately or tell them the police will be called.
- ◆ Parents should be present and provide active supervision throughout the party.
- ◆ If you are planning a large party, it may be a good idea to employ security guards.

### **Register your party with NSW Police**

NSW Police have developed a range of strategies and an online **Party Sign Up form** which must be completed at least 72 hours before your party. Register your party at [www.mynite.com.au](http://www.mynite.com.au). This way local Police will know that you are having a party and can offer support. Have emergency numbers handy and call police before the situation gets out of control. Advise neighbours of your party as common courtesy.

### **Other useful websites to help you plan a successful party and avoid problems:**

[www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/languagesupport/alcohol/acs\\_english.pdf](http://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/languagesupport/alcohol/acs_english.pdf)

[http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/hot\\_topics/safe\\_party](http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/hot_topics/safe_party)

[http://www.youthsafe.org/safe\\_celebrate.html](http://www.youthsafe.org/safe_celebrate.html)

This website has current safe partying information, games, and competitions on how to party safely for young people and information for parents

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## Newsletter 4

### Talking to Young People about Alcohol and Drugs

It is best for education about alcohol and drugs to begin before young people are exposed to personal decisions about their use. Young people who have accurate information, coping and decision making skills and understand the issues, will be in a good position to make responsible decisions about alcohol and drugs.

Parents provide a powerful role model when it comes to drinking and attitudes to alcohol and other drugs. Take time to talk. Sitting down with the young person in your care and mapping out a plan of action and what to say if they are offered drugs or alcohol can help equip them for the almost inevitable real event. Listen to what the young person in your family says about alcohol and drugs and follow up with a discussion. Take the opportunities when they come up during everyday activities, for example:

When you pour a glass of alcohol

When alcohol or other drugs are mentioned on TV or other media

When using or giving out medicines

When your young person has an assignment on alcohol, smoking, medicines or other drugs.

It is important to understand that in some situations young people may take risks. Sitting down afterwards and helping them identify where things started to go wrong enables them to consider what they could do differently the next time they are faced with a similar situation.

### Australian Alcohol Guideline for Children and young people under 18

Not drinking alcohol is the safest option.

#### For children under 15

Parents and carers are advised that children under 15 years of age are at the greatest risk of harm from drinking and that for this age group, not drinking is especially important.

#### For Young people aged 15-18 years

The safest option is to delay the initiation of drinking for as long as possible.

*Australian Alcohol Guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol.* National Health and Medical Research Council, 2009 can be found at

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/file/publications/synopses/ds10-alcohol.pdf>

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## Newsletter 5

### Young Drivers aged 17-25 years. Why are they at risk?

#### Facts:

1. Road crashes are one of the leading causes of injury, disability and death among young people.
2. Young drivers are over-represented in road crashes compared to other age groups especially young males.
3. Drivers in rural areas experience a higher rate of fatalities than those from urban areas.
4. Speeding is the major cause of road crashes in NSW and crashes which involve speeding are more likely to result in fatal crashes.
5. Other high-risk behaviours that significantly contribute to road crashes and injuries include:
  - Drink driving
  - Driver fatigue and distraction
  - Not using seat belts

**Driver inexperience:** Often young drivers don't realise that it takes time and lots of practice to develop safe driving skills.

**Developing brain:** Parts of the brain responsible for self-control and for recognising and managing hazards do not fully mature until after the teenage years, so young drivers are more likely to experiment and take dangerous risks.

**Overconfidence and risk taking:** Young drivers can be over confident about their driving ability and underestimate dangers on the road.

**Having friends as passengers:** Young drivers may be distracted by passengers or may feel pressured to take risks, such as speeding. Every extra peer passenger carried by a young driver increases the chance of crashing.

**Alcohol and other drugs:** Young people often do not understand that alcohol and other drugs affect a driver's skills, mood and most importantly behaviour. Safe driving requires clear judgement, concentration and ability to react to what's happening on the road.

**Busy lifestyles:** Work, sport and study often mean busy lifestyles for young people, which may cause them to drive when tired – especially late at night. Driving tired significantly impairs driving, even if the driver doesn't feel sleepy.

The RRISK program aims to increase awareness of these risk factors and how to improve road safety. For more information about the RRISK program and risk taking, visit our website [www.rrisk.com.au](http://www.rrisk.com.au)



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## Newsletter 6

### Supervising your Learner Driver (L)

#### Learner drivers under 25

- Must have at least 120 hours of supervised on-road driving experience, including 20 hours at night time;
- One hour of structured driving tuition by a professional driving instructor will count as 3 hours in the Learner Driver Log Book to a maximum of 10 hours counting as 30 log book hours.
- Must hold an L licence for at least 12 months.
- For L and P1 drivers mobile phone use is prohibited, even hands-free or loudspeaker.
- From 1 July will be allowed to travel up to 90km/h instead of 80km/h; and

#### Tips for Parents

- Safe driving takes time and practice – it is more than just operating a vehicle.
- Plan for a variety of driving experiences (e.g. different road conditions, weather conditions) and vary the time of day.
- Shorter drives can be useful early on.
- Reduce the risk of distraction (e.g. turn off mobile phones)
- Keep instructions short and clear.
- Be positive and acknowledge when your teenager does well rather than criticise.
- At the end of a drive reinforce achievements and discuss areas to work on.
- Real on-road driving experience is more beneficial than 'advanced' or 'defensive' off-road driver training.
- You and your young driver should be read the Road Users Handbook (NSW road rules) and understand licence conditions.
- For helpful information, attend a free 'Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Drivers Workshop' in your local area. Contact the Roads and Maritime Services (replacing the RTA) on 13 22 13, visit [www.rms.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au) or visit your local Council's website.

#### NEW Safer Driver Course for Young Drivers

**From 1 July 2013**, learner drivers who complete the Safer Drivers Course will receive a reduction of their logbook driving hours from 120 to 100.

The Safer Driver Course is a combined theoretical and practical course involving a facilitated group session discussing how to manage risks on the road and tailored in-car coaching addressing individual learning needs.

The group session will be two to three hours, and the in-car coaching will be one to two hours.

Not all learner drivers will be able to access the course immediately. The course will be progressively rolled out in NSW based on demand and provider availability.

For more information about the Safer Driver Course contact [rms.nsw.gov.au](http://rms.nsw.gov.au)

For more information about the RRISK program and risk taking visit [www.rrisk.com.au](http://www.rrisk.com.au)





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## Newsletter 7

### Supporting Provisional Drivers (P1 & P2)

- A P1 licence must be held for at least 12 months.
- After passing a hazard perception test, drivers progress to the P2 licence for a minimum of 24 months.
- Speed restrictions for P1 drivers is 90km/h and for P2 drivers 100km/h
- A zero blood alcohol limit applies to all L, P1 and P2 licence holders. This means NO ALCOHOL before driving.
- For P1 drivers mobile phone use is prohibited, even hands-free or loudspeaker. P2 drivers can only talk on a hands-free phone when driving; no text messaging.
- P1 drivers under the age of 25 can only carry one passenger under 21 between the hours of 11pm and 5am (some exemptions apply).

### Tips for Parents

***Remember your teenager is still very new to driving. Continue to encourage safe driving including:***

- Ensuring they organise their time so they can stick to posted speed limits and adapt to driving conditions, such as rain.
- Get them to plan their night before they leave.

Slowly increasing the amount of independent night driving – this is a time when young drivers are more likely to crash.

- Gradually allowing them to increase the number of passengers in the car once they have progressed to the P2 stage.

***Before your teenager goes out, particularly when partying, spend some time discussing options for getting home safely. Some ideas for young people to consider:***

- Leave the car at home.
- Catch a bus – check timetables to avoid waiting times at bus stops.
- Stay overnight with a friend.
- Arrange to be dropped off and picked up by a parent or other responsible adult.

***Also discuss:***

- Driving alcohol free.
- Dealing with pressure from friends to drive in an unsafe manner.
- Being a responsible passenger.

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## **Newsletter 8**

### **RRISK Seminar 2013**

Year 11 students are invited to attend this year's RRISK seminar. 59 high schools from across the North and Mid North Coast will be attending RRISK at the following venues and dates.

#### **RRISK seminar dates**

<b>Port Macquarie</b>	Panthers Auditorium	7 and 8 November
<b>Coffs Harbour</b>	Southern Cross University	14 and 15 November
<b>Kempsey</b>	Melville High Community Hall	20 November
<b>Lismore</b>	Southern Cross University	25, 26 and 28 November
<b>Tweed Heads</b>	Twin Town Services Club	5 and 6 December

RRISK (Reduce Risk Increase Student Knowledge) encourages students to:

- Know the facts
- Be aware of the risks
- Make informed decisions
- Plan ahead
- Look after your friends

This is the 15<sup>th</sup> year that the RRISK Program has been running on the Far North Coast and the 7<sup>th</sup> year the program has been offered to schools in the Mid North Coast. If your teenager is in year 11, please encourage them to attend.

#### **Free presentation for parents, teachers and anyone who works with young people**

Paul Dillon, Director of Drug and Alcohol Research and Training, Australia is keynote speaker at the RRISK Seminars. Paul works with young people in Australia and internationally and is regularly invited by the media to provide expert commentary on alcohol and drug issues. Paul will give a free presentation for adults on the latest evidence and how to communicate effectively with young people about alcohol and other drugs.

<b>Port Macquarie</b>	Panthers Club	7 November	4.00-6.00pm
<b>Coffs Harbour</b>	Southern Cross University	14 November	4.00-6.00pm
<b>Kempsey</b>	Melville High Community Hall	20 November	4.00-6.00pm
<b>Lismore</b>	Southern Cross University	26 November	4.00-6.00pm
<b>Tweed Heads</b>	Civic Centre	5 December	4.00-6.00pm

Look for information about the RRISK Program including the full evaluation reports at our website [www.rrisk.com.au](http://www.rrisk.com.au)