

Peer Education: From Evidence to Practice

*An alcohol and other
drugs primer*

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Mitch Durbridge, Natalie Skinner

National Centre for Education and
Training on Addiction

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“AOD peer education involves sharing and providing information about alcohol and other drugs to individuals or groups.

It occurs through a messenger who is similar to the target group in terms of characteristics such as age, gender or cultural background, has had similar experiences and has sufficient social standing or status within the group to exert influence.”

In 1999–2000, the National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) and the Youth Advisory Forum (YAF) jointly conducted a project entitled:

**Youth for Youth
A Project to Develop Peer Educator Skills
and Resources for Peer Education**

The final report of the Youth for Youth project is available on the NCETA website:

www.nceta.flinders.edu.au

This monograph is an extension of the work initiated during the Youth for Youth project. The initial project was funded under the Community Partnerships Initiative of the National Drug Strategy. The writing of the monograph was jointly funded from the initial grant with additional financial support from NCETA. Printing of the monograph was funded by the South Australian Department of Human Services.

Foreword

As we progress further into the 21st Century, it is becoming increasingly apparent that many social problems are escalating. Problematic alcohol and drug use, especially among young people, is one area of considerable concern. Patterns of drug use and their associated problems are becoming more complex and more difficult to manage. This is a problem that is impacting at a global level.

The increasing use of psychoactive substances by younger and younger people is a worrying trend. It is evident that different approaches will be required to address these problems. It is also apparent that there has been insufficient application of good rigorous science to many areas of health care, including the prevention and management of alcohol and other drug problems. It is incumbent upon those with the responsibility in the alcohol and other drugs area to support and encourage the application of evidence-based practice.

This book on Peer Education is an excellent example of how to translate best evidence into meaningful action. What is provided here is a bridge between the researcher and the practitioner. The background literature on drug education generally, and more specifically peer education, is reviewed together with the underpinning theoretical models that support strategies such as peer education. The reader is then provided with a user-friendly guide in ways to implement peer education. Importantly, however, this information is offered with all the appropriate cautions and caveats that should ideally accompany the translation of science into practice. Clearly, this is an area where there is no “one size fits all” solution.

The South Australian Department of Human Services is pleased to support this resource. It is an indication of our commitment to increased knowledge and understanding in this important area of health and social policy.

*Dr Tom Stubbs
Executive Director
Metropolitan Health Division
Department of Human Services*

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Authors' Biographies

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