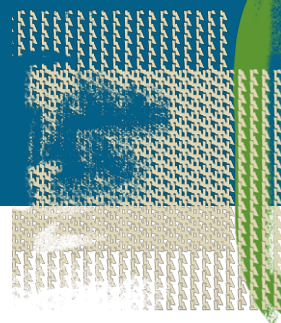




MAKINGtheLINK

Promoting **HELPSEEKING** for Cannabis Use & Mental Health

MAKINGtheLINK is a helpseeking program which educates students and teachers about assisting others to seek professional help for cannabis and mental health problems.



What is MAKINGtheLINK?

MAKINGtheLINK is a curriculum-based program for schools to promote helpseeking for cannabis use and mental health problems.

By seeking help early, young people are less likely to develop long term consequences as a result of mental health and substance use issues. However, research indicates young people are reluctant to seek professional help and tend to keep their problems to themselves or turn to their friends, parents or teachers for support – people who often don't know what to do.

MAKINGtheLINK teaches young people how to help each other to seek professional help. It promotes the idea that *'Mates Help Mates'*. It reduces the barriers to seeking help from professionals. It also educates teachers about how to assist their students to access professional help.

Why aren't young people seeking help?

It is not uncommon for young people to believe that they should be able to sort out their problems on their own, or be too embarrassed to talk to someone about their problems.

They are also worried about the confidentiality of information they give a professional. Existing school resources do not teach students how to overcome these barriers to helpseeking nor focus on improving helpseeking skills for substance use and mental health. This is the focus of **MAKINGtheLINK**.

“Australian principals believe one in five students need mental health support and rated alcohol and drug abuse as having the biggest impact on the psychological wellbeing of young people” (Intercamhs survey, 2008)

MAKINGtheLINK is made up of four components:

1. **Implementation Guide**
2. **Staff Professional Development Information Session**
3. **Parent Information Session**
4. **Student Helpseeking Program which has four resources**
 - a. Teacher manual
 - b. Classroom activities
 - c. *Mates Help Mates* DVD
 - d. Information flier and poster

Young people need to believe that the benefits of seeking help outweigh the fears they have about seeking help from a professional.

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NCPIC is an Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing initiative