



Newsletter 1

Young People and Risk Taking

Risk-taking is an essential part of learning and personal development for young people. Teenagers need to explore their own limits and abilities, as well as boundaries set by others. They also need to express themselves as individuals. It's all part of their path to becoming independent young adults, with their own identities¹.

Unfortunately, the risk involved in different activities and settings can often be poorly judged by young people and they are over represented in every category of risk-taking resulting in injury and trauma. For more information about the different types of risks for young people, see <http://www.kidshelp.com.au/grownups/news-research/hot-topics/risk-taking.php>.

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. Attending RRISK extends the school based drug education and road safety curriculum by providing opportunities for senior high school students to further develop knowledge, attitudes and skills to reduce risk taking and develop safer celebrating strategies².

Over 5,000 students from more than 53 high schools from Port Macquarie to Tweed Heads have registered to attend one of 9 RRISK Seminars. If you have a year 11 student in your family, encourage them to attend.

RRISK seminar dates 2016

Port Macquarie	Panthers Auditorium	8, 9 November
Coffs Harbour	Southern Cross University	17, 18 November
Kempsey	Melville High Community Hall	15 November
Lismore	Southern Cross University	21, 22, 23 November
Kingscliff:	Kingscliff Tafe Automotive Centre	24 and 25 November

Research shows that RRISK is effective in reducing young driver crashes by 44%³

The largest study ever undertaken into young driver behaviour was conducted by the George Institute of International Health and published in 2009. 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 and in this newsletter over the coming weeks.

¹ http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/risktaking_teenagers.html

² <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16635759>

³ Senserrick T, Ivers R, Boufous S, Chen HY, Norton R, Stevenson M, van Beurden E, Zask A. 2009. Young driver education programs that build resilience have potential to reduce road crashes. *Pediatrics*;124;1287-1292



Newsletter 2

Alcohol and Young People

Trends relating to young people and alcohol are increasingly improving. Specifically, there has been an increase in the age at which 14–24-year-olds first tried alcohol, from 14.4 years in 1998 to 15.7 years in 2013⁴. Also, fewer people aged 12–17 are drinking alcohol and the proportion abstaining from alcohol increased significantly between 2010 and 2013 (from 64% to 72%)⁵.

However, whilst more young people aged between 12 to 17 years of age are abstaining from alcohol than in previous years⁶, almost 5 million people in Australia aged 14 or older (26%) reported being a victim of an alcohol-related incident⁷.

Young people are less likely than adults to be concerned about potential negative consequences of alcohol and are at greater risk than adults (being both physically and psychologically vulnerable).

Current research suggests the brain is not fully developed until about 25 years of age. Binge drinking alcohol before this age can result in permanent brain damage⁸, affecting memory, learning, decision making and problem solving.

Recognising the serious impact of alcohol on young people, NSW Office of Liquor and Gaming have changed the laws regarding supply of alcohol to young people. Under Section 117 of the New South Wales Liquor Act 2007 it is illegal to supply alcohol to people aged under 18 years in a private home unless it is supplied by:

- the child's parent or guardian, or
- an adult who has the approval of the child's parent or guardian.

A person convicted of secondary supply in NSW can be fined up to \$11 000 for each underage drinker involved.

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. For more information or support contact Beyond Blue www.beyondblue.org.au 1300 22 4636

Look for information about the RRISK Program and risk taking at our website www.rrisk.com.au

⁴ <http://www.aihw.gov.au/alcohol-and-other-drugs/ndshs/>

⁵ <http://www.aihw.gov.au/alcohol-and-other-drugs/ndshs/>

⁶ <http://www.aihw.gov.au/alcohol-and-other-drugs/ndshs/>

⁷ <http://www.aihw.gov.au/alcohol-and-other-drugs/ndshs/>

⁸ <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=122765890>



Newsletter 3

Parties - Will You Allow Alcohol at Your Young Person'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.

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 up to \$11,000 and 12 months prison⁹. On the spot fines of \$1100 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.

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.

⁹ <https://www.liquorandgaming.justice.nsw.gov.au/Pages/liquor/underage-drinking/underage-drinking-laws.aspx>



- ◆ Remove BYO alcohol from under 18s and return this to 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 and non-alcoholic drinks throughout the party. Attractive non-alcoholic drinks are a great alternative! For example, “Mocktails”, non-alcoholic punches, soft drinks, fruit juices, coffee, tea and of course, water. This will slow down alcohol consumption for those who are drinking.
- ◆ 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. 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:

<http://www.youthsafe.org/services/socialising>

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

Look for information about the RRISK Program and risk taking at our website www.rrisk.com.au



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>

Look for information about the RRISK Program and risk taking at our website www.rrisk.com.au



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 and their passengers 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.

For more information on risks for young drivers see;

<http://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/campaigns/donttrustyourtiredself.html>

Look for information about the RRISK Program and risk taking at our website
www.rrisk.com.au



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; and
- Learner drivers are allowed to travel up to 90km/h

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 read the Road Users Handbook (NSW road rules) and understand the 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 on 13 22 13 or visit

=www.rms.nsw.gov.au

For more information see <http://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/stayingsafe/drivers/index.html>

NEW Safer Driver Course for Young Drivers

The Safer Driver Course helps young drivers understand more about speed management, gap selection, hazard awareness, safe following distances as well as preparing them for their Ps. They will receive 20 hours log book credit once they have completed the course.

To attend the course drivers must have a learner's license, be under 25 years old and have completed 50 log book driving hours (not including 3 for 1 structured professional instruction)

The Safer Driver Course costs \$140. It comprises:

1. A 3 hour group discussion module with other learners about managing risks on the road
2. A 2 hour in-vehicle session with a coach and another learner to learn a range of practical safe driving behaviours. For more information about the Safer Driver Course see www.saferdrivers.nsw.gov.au or call 13 2213 to find out where the closest Course Provider is located. Also see promotion video on you tube.

Look for information about the RRISK Program and risk taking at our website www.rrisk.com.au



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.
- P1 drivers may drive up to 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 (for making or answering calls, playing music or using as a navigational device) is prohibited, even hands-free or loudspeaker. Currently, P2 drivers can only use a hands-free phone (securely mounted or via Bluetooth) when driving; no touching the phone or text messaging. However from the 1 December 2016, P2 licence holders must not use any function of a mobile phone while driving or riding, or when stationary but not parked. This aligns with the current mobile phone restrictions for L and P1 licence holders.
- P1 drivers under the age of 25 can only carry one passenger under 21 between the hours of 11pm and 5am (some exemptions apply)
- P1 and P2 drivers are banned from driving high-performance vehicles that have power to tare mass ratios of greater than 130kW per tonne, modified engines that need to be approved by an engineer or other vehicles classified as high performance. For more information about the new rules for turbo, supercharged and v8 vehicles, see the Centre for Road Safety Website.
<http://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au>
- To select a safer new or used car, ANCAP has ratings that reflect the relative safety of cars in preventing severe injury to people involved in crashes. To find out 'how safe is your car' see <http://www.howsafeisyourcar.com.au>

Tips for Parents

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

- Ensuring they organise their time so they can stick to posted speed limits and adapt to driving conditions, such as rain.
- Getting them to plan their night before they leave.
- Ensuring they observe their license conditions.
- 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 there and back 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.
- Catch a taxi: a shared maxi taxi is a cheaper option. Put the taxi phone number in their phone address book. Plan the cost of the taxi (you can ring a taxi company and get a quote).
- Stay overnight with a friend.
- Arrange to be dropped off and picked up by a parent or other responsible adult.
- If they are planning to drive, find out where they are going (travel route), how long it will take and safe parking (especially for night events).

Also discuss:

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

Look for information about the RRISK Program and risk taking at our website www.rrisk.com.au



Newsletter 8

RRISK Seminar 2016

Year 11 students are invited to attend this year's RRISK seminar. 53 high schools from across the North and Mid North Coast will be attending RRISK at the following venues and dates.

RRISK seminar dates

Port Macquarie	Panthers Auditorium	8, 9 November
Coffs Harbour	Southern Cross University	17, 18 November
Kempsey	Melville High Community Hall	15 November
Lismore	Southern Cross University	21, 22, 23 November
Kingscliff:	TAFE Automotive Centre	24 and 25 November

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 18th year that the RRISK Program has been running on the Far North Coast and the 10th 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.

Port Macquarie	Panthers Club	8 November	4.00-6.00pm
Coffs Harbour	Southern Cross University	17 November	4.00-6.00pm
Kempsey	Melville High Community Hall	15 November	4.00-6.00pm
Lismore	Southern Cross University	22 November	4.00-6.00pm
Kingscliff	TAFE Automotive Centre	24 November	4.00-6.00pm

Look for information about the RRISK Program including the full evaluation reports at our website www.rrisk.com.au