

**Educating
young people
about medications:
a professional
learning package
for teachers**

Educating young people about medications: a professional learning package for teachers contains teaching and learning materials and professional learning tasks. The aim of the resource is to enhance teachers' knowledge of the key issues relating to medication use, particularly among young people. It also seeks to support teachers effectively implement medications education in Stage 4 (Years 7 and 8).

The tasks will enable teachers to gain a deeper understanding of medications and medications education.

Professional learning tasks

Objectives

- [Task 1](#) To raise awareness about young people's views concerning medications.
- [Task 2](#) To increase understanding about research concerning effective drug education.
- [Task 3](#) To raise awareness about where medications education is included in the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) Years 7-10 Syllabus.
- [Task 4](#) To increase knowledge and understanding about the effects of prescription and over-the-counter drugs.
- [Task 5](#) To identify information in the teacher fact sheets relevant to the activities in the classroom ideas.
- [Task 6](#) To review knowledge, understanding and attitudes about medications education.

[Further assistance](#)

Teaching and learning materials

- [Teacher fact sheets](#)
 - [Medications](#)
 - [Analgesics](#)
 - [Benzodiazepines](#)
 - [Caffeine](#)
- [Syllabus links](#)
- Classroom ideas - activities that can be included in existing teaching and learning programs.
 - [Activity 1: Unwrapping packaging](#)
 - [Activity 2: TV journalism](#)
 - [Activity 3: Drug use, a dicey game](#)
 - [Overhead transparencies](#)
- [Websites](#)

Useful Link

- [Resources](#) to support drug education

Professional learning tasks

Task 1

Objective

- To raise awareness about young people's views concerning medications.

Tasks

- List five things that you think young people believe about the use of over-the-counter medications and prescription drugs.
- Print and read the information about [young people's views](#).
- Compare the research findings with the list that you made.

Consider the following:

- which of the young people's beliefs and misconceptions are important to focus on at your school?
- what changes, if any, should be made to your medications education in the light of what young people think about medications?

The research identified a number of key issues that could be incorporated into school based education.

Consider the following:

- are the key issues included in the medications education for Stage 4 (Years 7 and 8) in your school?
- if not, consider where and how they could be included. For example, teaching and learning activities on analgesics could be included in Drug use, when addressing Outcome 4.6 in the *Personal Development, Health and Physical Education Years 7-10 Syllabus*.

Task 2

Objective

- To increase understanding about research concerning effective drug education.

Tasks

- Read the [research](#) concerning effective drug education.

Choose one of the following examples.

Example 1

- Print and read the activity, [Unwrapping packaging](#).
- Record examples of how the findings of the research about effective drug education are incorporated into the *Procedures* section of the activity, *Unwrapping packaging*. For example, identify opportunities for students to practise interpersonal skills.
- Compare your responses with [Features of unwrapping packaging](#). It shows examples of how the findings from the research have been incorporated into the activity.

Example 2

- Print and read the activity, [TV Journalism](#).
- Record examples of how the research is incorporated into the *Procedures* section of the activity, *TV Journalism*. For example, identify opportunities for students to gain up-to-date and accurate information about drugs.
- Compare your responses with [Features of TV Journalism](#). It shows examples of how the findings from the research have been incorporated into the activity.

Consider the medications education currently taught to the students in Stage 4 (Years 7 and 8) at your school.

- Do the current teaching and learning activities incorporate [What works?](#) For example, does delivery of the activities promote the involvement of all students and allow the students sufficient time to practise skills such as assertiveness? If not, how can they be modified? If the teaching and learning activities omit analysis of media and social influences that promote pro-drug attitudes consider how these issues could be incorporated.

Additional task

Consider how the activity, [Drug use, a dicey game](#), incorporates the research on effective drug education.

	What works	What doesn't work
Knowledge	Short-term effects Long-term health consequences of drug use	Omission of short-term consequences
Attitudes about drug use	Feedback from surveys of peer drug use Analysis of media and social influences that promote pro-drug attitudes	Omission of perceptions of peer drug use Omission of media influences Approaches which mainly focus on ethical/moral decision making or values teaching
Interpersonal skills	Drug refusal skills Assertiveness skills Communication skills Safety skills	Omission of interpersonal skills, particularly drug refusal skills
Intrapersonal skills	Coping skills Stress reduction techniques Goal setting Decision making/problem solving	Solely intrapersonal focus Solely self esteem building exercises
Delivery of lessons	Everyone actively involved Participation between peers Student-generated role plays Supportive comments from peers Rehearsal of drug refusal skills Sufficient practice time Peer modelling of appropriate behaviour Developmentally appropriate activities to promote bonding between younger adolescents	Passive participation Lectures Teacher-centred class discussions Unstructured dialogue sessions Effective classroom management techniques without an accompanying drug program

From: What works and doesn't work in drug prevention programs: content and delivery features

Adapted from Midford, R., Lenton, S. and Hancock, L. (2001) *A critical review and analysis: Cannabis education in schools*, NSW, Department of Education and Training

Features of Unwrapping packaging

The classroom idea, *Features of Unwrapping packaging*, shows examples of how research is incorporated into the activities.

Aim

To enable students to recognise the importance of reading information on packaging and to investigate alternatives to drug use.

Students will be able to:

- recognise the importance of reading information on drugs/medications packaging
- investigate alternatives to the use of various drugs/medications
- identify the positive and negative effects of various drugs/medications
- investigate legal requirements for the packaging and labelling of drugs.

Preparation

- Collect a number of clean, empty medication packages and other drug containers e.g. cold and flu tablets, cough medicine, analgesics, asthma medication, alcohol bottles, cigarette packages, energy drink containers (minimum 5 different products).

Note: Ensure all packaging is free of medication or other drugs and that all identifying features e.g. person's name, address and prescribing doctor have been removed.

- Photocopy *Worksheet 1.1, Medication placemat* to A3 size.
- Photocopy *Worksheet 1.2, Unwrapping packaging*.
- Prepare *OHT 1* and *OHT 2*.
- Computers (with internet access).

Procedure

1. Students work in groups of four, preferably sitting on four sides of a table, with four different coloured pens. Provide *Worksheet 1.1, Medication placemat* to each group.
2. Explain that the discussion topic is *How can a person reduce the risk of harm when using medications and other drugs?*

3. Each student writes their ideas in the space on the worksheet in front of them.

The four students then discuss and clarify the ideas they have written.

The final step is for the group to prepare one set of summary points that they all agree with in the middle space on the worksheet. It is important a consensus for each group is formed for the summary.

Delivery of lessons

- Everyone actively involved

Delivery of lessons

- Participation between peers

Interpersonal skills

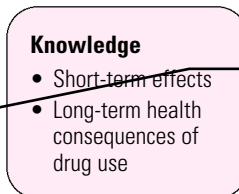
- Assertiveness skills



4. Each group shares their ideas with the class.

Possible answers for the placemat activity:

- consult a doctor or pharmacist and ask questions e.g. can a person drive when using this medication? Can this medication have an effect on the other medications I am taking? Can this medication affect my sporting performance? Can this medication affect my ability to study?
- follow instructions and warning labels
- ask for and read the consumer medications information leaflets available for most prescribed medications
- don't take medications prescribed for someone else
- don't mix drugs unless advised by your doctor
- limit the number of caffeine drinks drunk in a session.



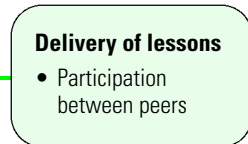
Extend this red box so that it starts above Jigsaw activity and finishes after the website ie all the information in the red box. the box should line up on the side with No 4 above.

5. Jigsaw activity

Set up a variety of information stations around the room. The stations should have various empty medication packages and other drug containers as well as printed information (from suggested internet sites). In addition, computers (if they are available) can be set up and linked to internet sites including:

- Reach Out! www.reachout.com.au
- National Prescribing Service www.nps.org.au
- HealthInsite www.healthinsite.gov.au/topics/Medicines
- NSW Office of Drug and Alcohol Policy www.druginfo.nsw.gov.au
- Therapeutic Goods Administration www.tga.gov.au/pmeds/pmeds.htm
- Drug Aware www.drugaware.com.au
- Australian Drug Foundation www.adf.org.au
- drug info @ your library www.druginfo.com.au

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Students form 'sharing' or 'home' groups e.g. groups of four. Each student is given one of the drug packages to explore and research. Every member of the home group has a different package to research. Students then form 'expert' groups, where all members of the group are exploring/researching the same drug packaging. Students research their topic in their expert groups using information from both the packaging and the internet sites and complete the appropriate section on *Worksheet 1.2, Unwrapping packaging*.

On completion of their research, students move back to their home groups. Each member reports, as an expert, to the group on the drug they researched. All students should complete the worksheet in full by using the group expert's report.

Interpersonal skills

- Safety skills

6. Discuss the usefulness and credibility of internet sites and why it is important to read information on packaging.

- What information is commonly provided on drug packaging?
- What are the key messages on the package? What hazards are explained? Why do we look for this information?
- Why is the information on drug packaging important?
- How is the information on these packages useful?
- Is the information easy to read and understand?
- What changes to this information would you suggest to make it easier to understand?
- What additional information could be included on the packaging?
- How does the packaging of medications compare to alcohol and tobacco packaging? Are there similarities and/or differences? Explain why this might occur.
- Where do people commonly get information about medications and drugs?
- Was the internet site you used useful? Why/Why not?
- Was the internet site you used credible? What makes a website credible?

7. Concluding questions

- What did you learn?
- What surprised you? Why?
- What questions do you now have?
- Where can you go to find more information on medications and other drugs?
- Should the laws around legal drug packaging and labelling be changed? Why? How?
- What drug-free alternatives did you find in your research? How effective do you think these alternatives would be?
- What would be your top five safety tips when buying/using medications?

Teacher note: This is a good opportunity to summarise safe medication use with *OHT 1 The 5 Rs of Medication Use* and *OHT 2 The Dos and Don'ts with medications*.

Features of TV journalism

The classroom idea, *Features of TV Journalism*, shows examples of how research is incorporated into the activities.

Aim

Students will understand the short-term and long-term effects of legal drugs and the influences and reasons why people choose to use or not use drugs.

Students will be able to:

- recognise reasons why people choose to use or not use drugs
- suggest drug-free alternatives to the use of various medications and other drugs
- explain the intended effects, the side effects and the adverse effects of various medications and other drugs.

Preparation

- Photocopy *Worksheet 2.1, Storyboard*.
- Photocopy *Worksheet 2.2, Peer evaluation*.
- Photocopy *Worksheet 2.3, Self evaluation*.
- Computer room/library.
- Video camera and TV (if filming students' productions).

Procedure

1. Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5. Students are to use media skills to produce a TV news report on a legal drug and the effects this drug can have on young people. Students complete this task using the following steps.

A) Research the facts on one of the legal drugs/medications listed below:

- Alcohol
- Analgesics
- Tobacco
- Caffeine
- Asthma medication
- Other.

Knowledge

- Short-term effects
- Long-term health consequences of drug use

Teacher note: Researching various medications and drugs may raise sensitive issues. Consider the background and cultural experiences of the students in regard to personal practices in the home.

Ask students to use the following questions and websites to guide their research.

- Who might use the drug/medication?
- Why would a person use this drug/medication?
- What are the possible positive and negative effects of this drug/medication?
- Are there any drug-free alternatives to using this drug/medication? If so, what are they?
- What are the effects of misuse? (Short/long-term effects)
- What are some dos and don'ts in regard to this drug/medication?
- Where can you go to find more information on this drug/medication?
- Which would be the best source of further information? Explain.

Websites:

NSW Office of Drug and Alcohol Policy www.druginfo.nsw.gov.au

- Reach Out! www.reachout.com.au
- National Prescribing Service www.nps.org.au (Look at the CMI leaflets)
- Drug Aware www.drugaware.com.au
- drug info @ your library www.druginfo.sl.nsw.gov.au
- HealthInsite www.healthinsite.gov.au/topics/Medicines

B) Students create a storyboard, using *Worksheet 2.1, Storyboard*, to develop a draft concept for the production of the TV news report using one of the drugs being investigated. (Refer to the sample storyboard for clarification of its use).

Teacher information

A storyboard is a sequential series of sketches illustrating stages or scenes in a production. Storyboards are used as a visual script or shooting plan and are similar to a comic strip. Storyboards develop planning and organisational skills.

This activity lends itself to discussions involving media studies. The teacher could ask students to consider the purpose, audience and persuasive techniques used in a variety of media. Points to consider with students include:

- showing them a sample news report
- discussing what elements make up a news report
- discussing what makes a news report interesting.

Useful references for this activity include:

- the Australian Government’s REDI Resource *My TV* (www.redi.gov.au)
- NSW RTA, *Road Risks*.

Attitudes about drug use

- Analysis of media and social influences that promote pro-drug attitudes

C) Construct a TV segment using a variety of mediums e.g. digital camera, video camera, drama performance, PowerPoint presentation or puppet show.

D) Present the production to the class.

E) Evaluate each production using *Worksheet 2.2, Peer evaluation* and *Worksheet 2.3, Self-evaluation*.

2. Discuss the following questions with the students.

- Which production did you like best? Why?
- Which production did you learn the most from? Why?
- Can the media influence a person’s attitudes towards medication and drug use? Explain.
- What other influences can affect a person’s attitude towards medication and drug use?
- Why do people take other types of drugs or medications e.g. herbal medicines, bush medicines?
- Can culture influence a person’s use of medications and drugs? In what ways?
- Where do people get their medications?
- Where could young people find more information on medications and other drugs?

Task 3

Objective

- To raise awareness about where medications education is included in the *Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) Years 7-10 Syllabus*.

Tasks

- Locate in the *Content for Stage 4* (pages 21-31) of the *Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) Years 7-10 Syllabus* where issues concerning medications are included. Identify the *Outcome* and the relevant content from *Students learn about* and *Students learn to*.
- Read the *Aim* and *Students will be able to* from each of the following activities:
 - [Unwrapping packaging](#)
 - [TV Journalism](#)
 - [Drug use, a dicey game](#).
- Compare the *Students will be able to* in the activities with the *Students learn to* in the PDHPE Years 7-10 syllabus.
- Record where the three activities could be included in the medications education taught at your school.

Task 4

Objective

- To increase knowledge and understanding about the effects of prescription and over-the-counter drugs.

Tasks

- List some things you know about each of the drugs - medications, analgesics, benzodiazepines and caffeine.
- List any additional things you think you need to know about these drugs to enable you to teach about them.
- Read the following teacher fact sheets:
 - [Medications](#)
 - [Analgesics](#)
 - [Benzodiazepines](#)
 - [Caffeine](#).

The [Glossary](#) may be of assistance with this task.

- Record new things you have learnt.
- Compare the new things you have learnt with the list of additional things you wanted to know.
- Identify information that you wanted to know about but did not find on the teacher fact sheets. Also, note any additional facts that you now want to know about. The [websites](#) may be useful sources of information.

Task 5

Objective

To identify information in the teacher fact sheets relevant to the activities in the classroom ideas.

Tasks

- Print and read one of the following activities from the classroom ideas:
 - [Unwrapping packaging](#)
 - [TV Journalism](#)
 - [Drug use, a dicey game.](#)
- Use a highlighter to identify components in the activity where you need to gain greater knowledge.
- Print and read the teacher fact sheets that support the activity that you chose.
 - [Medications](#)
 - [Analgesics](#)
 - [Benzodiazepines](#)
 - [Caffeine](#)
- Highlight the parts of the teacher fact sheets that are relevant to the activity.
- Compare these parts of the teacher fact sheets with the components in the activity that you previously identified.
- Identify information that you wanted to gain greater knowledge about but did not find in the teacher fact sheets. Also, note any additional facts that you now want to know about. The [websites](#) may be useful for this information.

Additional task

Choose one of the other activities and follow the same process to identify information in the teacher fact sheets relevant to the activities in the classroom ideas.

Task 6 Tying it all together

Objective

- To review knowledge, understanding and attitudes about medications education.

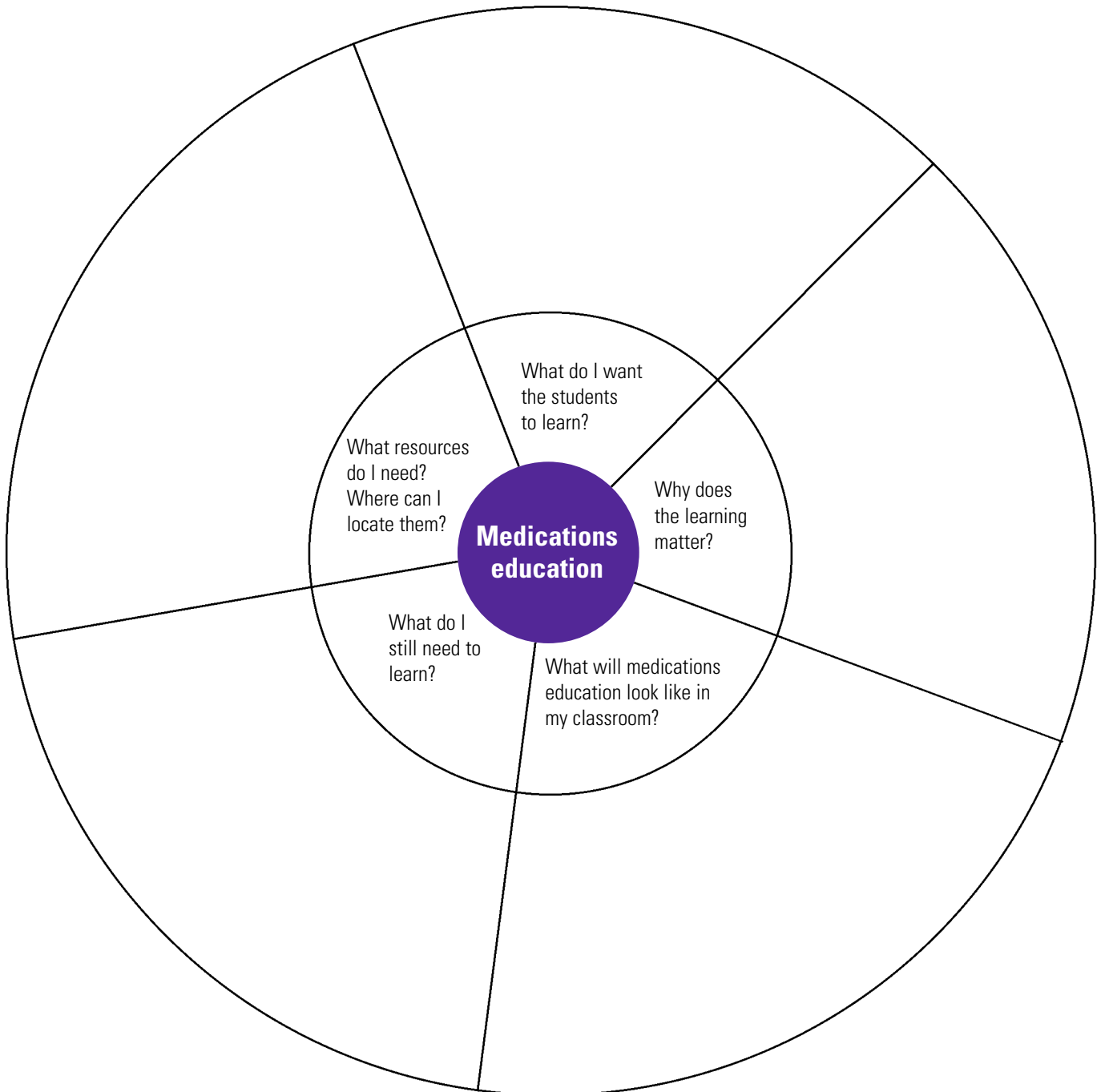
Task

- Print and read [Tying it all together](#).
- Complete the chart to summarise your thoughts about medications education.

The completed *Tying it all together* chart can be used to assist you to plan for and implement medications education in Stage 4 (Years 7 and 8).

Tying it all together

Complete the chart below to summarise your thoughts about medications education.



Further assistance

Medicines Line

- Telephone: 1300 888 763

Medicines Line is a national information service, providing up-to-date information about medicines including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, complementary medicines and herbal and natural therapies.

Alcohol and Drug Information Service

- Telephone: (02) 9361 8000 Toll Free: 1800 422 599

This service provides confidential advice and facts about drugs.

Aboriginal Medical Service

Medical Service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre (DAMEC)

- Telephone: (02) 9699 3552

This service provides confidential advice and facts about drugs.