

Alcohol and Other Drugs

It's common for young people to experiment with alcohol and other drugs (AOD). The average age of initiation to illicit drug use is 19 years.⁴ However commonly used legal drugs such as tobacco and alcohol contribute toward the most harm among people.⁵ All AOD use contains an element of risk. It is important to remember that just because a young person is experimenting or is exposed to AOD, this does not necessarily mean they will become AOD dependent.⁶

Young people are a key population group to target in order to sustainably reduce AOD harm in the community. In partnership with AOD and other allied services, youth services have an important role to play in helping young people to minimise AOD related harm. It is the responsibility of the entire service system to develop strategies to effectively respond to these issues. By working together, services and sectors can take many practical steps to better support and improve the health and wellbeing of young people and their families affected by AOD issues.

In this section you will find:

- Some information on talking about alcohol and other drugs with young people;
- Some alcohol and other drug services; and
- Additional resources including more information and some key dates for your diary.

The following sections also contain AOD resources: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; Counselling; Family; Health and Sexual Health; Legal; Mental Health; Peak Body; Some Key Government Services; Young Carers; Youth Centres and Youth Support.

Ways of Working

Talking about alcohol and other drugs (AOD) with young people

As a person who works with young people, you are well placed to discuss AOD use with young people. Providing accurate information about the risks associated with AOD use allows young people to make informed decisions while taking into account the genuine risks associated with AOD use. Perpetuating myths or providing misinformation hinders young people's ability to engage in safer practices or take responsibility for their choices.⁷ Below are some tips that will assist you when talking to young people about AOD.

- It is important that you have a general understanding of AOD. You should know the main categories (depressant, stimulant, hallucinogenic, etc) and how they fit together.

⁴ National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (2004) 2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey.

⁵ Drug Info Clearinghouse (2002) Drug Prevention in the Community. Australian Drug Foundation.

⁶ National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (2004) What About Young People and Illicit Drugs? Factsheet 2.

⁷ Australian Drug Foundation (1996) Young Drug Users Slip Through the Gaps. Melbourne.

- It may take time for a young person to trust you so it is important that you demonstrate that you are not judgemental, that you are informed and that it is a safe space for them to ask questions.
- Many young people are poly drug users, meaning that they use more than one or a combination of AOD at the same time. Despite this, many young people are unaware of the effects that mixing AOD could have. It is important to consider poly drug use when discussing the risks associated with AOD use.
- Remember that you don't have to be an expert to talk to young people about AOD. Sometimes we can feel like we have to pretend to know things when we don't. However, providing misinformation can be very dangerous and could cause harm to the young person and your service. The best way to prevent this is to keep up to date on training and get your information from credible sources such as those listed under more information in this section of *The Big Red Book*. Always follow up with information that you could not provide on the spot and you may want to provide additional and reinforcing material such as brochures.
- Young people require information relevant to their individual needs and experiences. It's important that a number of factors are considered prior to providing AOD information. These include: prior knowledge, age, reason for seeking information, level of AOD use and what supports they may require⁸. Make sure that you listen to the young person, that you take their responses seriously and let their questions guide the conversation.
- Often workers feel pressured to disclose their personal history. This is not necessary to develop rapport with the young person.
- Present a balanced view. Think about your personal views and find out how this might be influencing your support. AOD information should seek to assist young people to make informed decisions, not to make the decisions for them. You should not simply tell young people what to think about AOD, but it should provide them with the information and tools that enable them to think it through themselves.
- Don't just focus on the AOD use but look at the wider context. Remember that many young people have had experiences of AOD use in their family.
- It is important that you acknowledge you cannot force a young person to address their AOD use. You can support the young person to identify issues and their priority over time. For example, a young person may choose to prioritise housing before addressing AOD issues.
- Co-existence of mental health issues is common.

⁸ Australian Drug Foundation (2001).

Services

DIRECTIONS ACT

Provides a range of non-residential services for people experiencing difficulties with AOD issues.

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Phone | (02) 6122 8000 |
| Mailing Address | PO Box 538, Woden ACT 2606 |
| Email | reception@directionsact.com |
| Website | www.directionsact.com |
| Location | 1 Bradley St, Woden |

Who Can Access

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| <i>Gender</i> | Females and males |
| <i>Age</i> | Any age |
| <i>Young people under the influence</i> | Yes |
| <i>Income required</i> | No |
| <i>Disability access</i> | Yes |
| <i>Young people with comorbidity</i> | Yes |
| <i>Children of clients</i> | Yes |

How to Access By phone, email and drop in, 9am - 5pm, Monday - Friday. No referral necessary.

Drop In Hours 9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday,

Programs

Provides information and referral, advocacy, outreach, counselling, education, promotion and case management.

COMPASS support group for families, weekly Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings held in Woden. Needle and Syringe Program mobile service. Free counselling for individuals and families is available at Woden. Treatment Support Service can assist clients with options and advocacy.

Althea Wellness Centre – GP Clinic for AOD issues, Bulk Billing available – up to date medicare card needed. The Junction Outreach Clinic – Naturopath Clinic – Liver Clinic – Hepatitis C Wellness Clinic and Mental Health Clinic and Support .

Community Education

Provides AOD education for community and government organisations. Directions ACT provides and facilitates training for the AOD sector in a number of areas including NSP training, Party Safe and amphetamines 'Go to Whoa'.

Other

Arcadia House - a detoxification and withdrawal

Families service is available 24 hours, 7 days a week. Free counselling, information, education, advocacy and referral are available for families and friends.

Oasis Bridge Program

Non-residential rehabilitation program for persons and/or concerned family members wanting to deal with their AOD issues.

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Phone | (02) 6248 7191 |
| Mailing Address | GPO Box 435, Canberra ACT 2601 |
| Email | nicole.smith@ae.salvationarmy.org |
| Website | www.canberracity.salvos.org.au |
| Location | 1 Elder Street, Braddon |
| Parent Organisation | Salvation Army |

Who Can Access:

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| <i>Gender</i> | Females and males |
| <i>Age</i> | 12 years and over |
| <i>Young people under the influence</i> | Yes |
| <i>Income required</i> | No |
| <i>Disability access</i> | No |
| <i>Young people with comorbidity</i> | Yes |
| <i>Children of clients</i> | Case by case basis |

How to Access By phone, 9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday. After hours appointments can be arranged.

Programs Provides individual counseling, case management, outreach support, addictions, gambling, AOD information and education, relapse prevention, and life skills work. Groups may be available on relapse prevention work as needed.

Other Families Free for young people. Donations welcomed. Family members and support persons welcomed. Interested persons can also access other programs within the Salvation Army.

Ted Noffs Foundation ACT

Provides a range of residential and non-residential services for young people experiencing difficulties with AOD issues.

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Phone | (02) 6123 2400 |
| Mailing Address | PO Box 7132, Watson ACT 2602 |
| Email | actadmin@noffs.org.au |
| Website | www.noffs.org.au |
| Location | 350 Antill St, Watson |
| Parent Organisation | Ted Noffs Foundation |

Who Can Access:

| | |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Gender</i> | Females and males |
| <i>Age</i> | 14 – 18 for ADWU and PALM |

| | |
|--|---|
| | 12 – 18 for the CO-OP Program |
| <i>Young people under the influence</i> | Yes |
| <i>Income required</i> | No |
| <i>Disability access</i> | Yes |
| <i>Young people with comorbidity</i> | Yes |
| <i>Children of clients</i> | Case by case basis |
| How to Access | By phone, 24 hours, 7 days a week. Self-referral or worker referral with young person's involvement. Assessment may be conducted over the phone or in person. |
| Programs | |
| <i>Adolescent Drug Withdrawal Unit (ADWU)</i> | Provides up to 14 days of residential support for young people experiencing withdrawal. Social and living skills, sport and recreation, vocational education, AOD and safe behaviours information and education are available. |
| <i>Program for Adolescent Life Management (PALM)</i> | Provides up to 3 months residential rehabilitation treatment. Employment support, training, relationship building, mood management, personal growth and development, relapse prevention skills, life skills, group work, counselling, support and information are available. |
| <i>Community Outreach and Outclient Services (CO-OP)</i> | Provides semi-structured day program for young people who do not want or need residential rehabilitation services. Also provides outreach to schools and other services. One-on-one outreach counselling services also available. Provides communication skills, managing emotions and relationship support, advocacy, group work, case management, information and referral. Transport, computer, Internet and food are available. |
| Other | ADWU and CO-OP are free for young people. PALM is \$140 a week. \$30 interstate deposit. |
| Families | Family and support people can access some programs such as the Family and Carer's Support Group. |

The following services also provide AOD specific programs:

- Children and Young People Worker, Domestic Violence Crisis Service (Youth Support)
- Children and Young People's Workers, Canberra Rape Crisis Centre (Youth Support)
- Gugan Gulwan Aboriginal Youth Corporation (Youth Centres)
- headspace ACT (Mental Health)
- Open Family Australia (Youth Support)
- STEPS (Mental Health)
- The Connection (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)
- The Junction Youth Health Service (Health and Sexual Health)
- Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)
- Youth and Wellbeing (Mental Health)
- Youth Law ACT (Legal)

- See also the Youth Centres section

Resources

More Information

There is a huge amount of information on AOD on the Internet. Sometimes it is hard to assess what is credible. The resources below should help you.

ACT Alcohol and Other Drugs Sector Project

Auspiced by the Youth Coalition of the ACT

A capacity building project that aims to build the capacity and identity of the AOD sector in the ACT, foster intra and cross sectoral relationships, and improve outcomes while maintaining respect for the diversity of services and for people who are affected by AOD. Activities include a monthly eBulletin, monthly forum, the Annual ACT AOD Sector Conference, ACT AOD Workers Group meetings and ACT Drug Action Week Planning Group meetings. Other initiatives of the Project include the Minimum Qualification Strategy, Review of AOD Written Materials for Young People in the ACT and the Comorbidity Project.

Phone: (02) 6247 3540

Web: www.aodsector.org.au

Email: info@aodsector.org.au

ACT Alcohol and Other Drugs Services Directory (Version 3, May 2009)

ACT Alcohol and Other Drugs Sector Project, Youth Coalition of the ACT

The ACT AOD Services Directory aims to support workers to make referrals to AOD services in the ACT, increase cross and intra-sectoral knowledge and foster collaborations. It also aims to better communicate the diverse range of services and programs in the ACT AOD Sector. The Directory contains over 35 program profiles, and is updated biannually.

Phone: (02) 6247 3540

Web: www.aodsector.org.au

Email: info@aodsector.org.au

Australian Drug Information Network (ADIN)

ADIN search results are from 1500+ quality assured sites to ensure the most comprehensive search of Australian and international AOD information. AOD professionals have critically reviewed websites for credible and useable content.

Web: www.adin.com.au

Centre for Youth Drug Studies (CYDS)

Australian Drug Foundation

The youth specific research arm which aims to develop effective drug policy and prevention programs within a variety of community settings.

Web: www.cyds.adf.org.au

Drug Info Clearinghouse

Australian Drug Foundation

Offers a range of services, including many free information products such as AOD

specific fact sheets, a special library, a telephone and email information service, a website, and email alert services for people interested in drug prevention.

Web: www.druginfo.adf.org.au

Drug Laws in the ACT and NSW

The Youth Law Centre has produced a brochure on drug laws in the ACT.

Phone: (02) 6262 7077

Web: www.youthlawact.org.au

ACT Policing has information available on drugs and the law in the ACT.

Phone: (02) 6256 7777 (switchboard)

Web: www.afp.gov.au/act/drugs_alcohol/drugs_and_the_law

Queanbeyan, NSW have different AOD laws. To find out more about the laws in each state and Territory visit Lawstuff, a national youth specific site developed by the National Children's and Youth Law Centre.

Web: www.lawstuff.org.au

Koori Drug Info

Australian Drug Foundation

Aims to build capacity among Indigenous communities by increasing the relevance and accessibility of DrugInfo Clearinghouse information and services.

Web: www.kooridruginfo.adf.org.au

Multicultural Drug Info

Australian Drug Foundation

AOD information targeting culturally and linguistically diverse workers and communities. This website has a Victorian focus, however, it also includes general information.

Web: www.druginfo.adf.org.au/multicultural

National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre (NCPIC)

National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC)

Aims to reduce the use of cannabis in Australia by preventing uptake and providing the community with evidence-based information and interventions. It offers services to a range of target audiences including a free Cannabis Information and Helpline. The Helpline operates 2-11pm Sunday to Friday (including public holidays).

Phone (Helpline): 1 800 30 40 50

Web: <http://ncpic.org.au>

National Drug Research Institute (NDRI)

Conducts and disseminates high quality research that contributes to the primary prevention of harmful drug use and the reduction of drug related harm in Australia.

Web: www.ndri.curtin.edu.au

National Drug & Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC)

University of New South Wales

A multidisciplinary research centre. Activities include: general drug information, a bibliographic database, research projects, an Annual Symposium, workshops and monthly research seminars, and a free quarterly newsletter.

Web: ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au

OxyGen

Quit SA

The only Australian website dedicated to informing young people about tobacco and its use in Australia.

Web: www.oxygen.org.au

Play Now Act Now

NSW Health

A health education initiative that invites young people to produce creative resources focusing on issues associated with the usage of AOD. Includes information sheets targeted at young people.

Web: www.playnowactnow.net.au

Resilience and Drug Information

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

The national drug information initiative for Australian school communities. Provides information and tools on relevant information on drug education, managing drug use issues and managing drug-related incidents in schools.

Web: www.redi.gov.au

Roadside Drug Testing

ACT Policing, Australian Federal Police

Roadside drug testing is similar to drink driving breath testing and is aimed at detecting whether people are driving under the influence of illicit drugs. Police conduct roadside saliva tests that aim to detect THC (the active component in cannabis), amphetamines (speed, crystal methamphetamine, base) and MDMA (ecstasy). Drug driving has been introduced in NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland. At January 2008 it had not yet been introduced in the ACT. For more information contact the ACT Policing.

Phone: (02) 6256 7777 (switchboard)

Some Dates For Your Diary

March 2010 National Youth Tobacco Free Day

Aims to encourage young people to explore all the facts about smoking and the tobacco industry.

Web: www.OxyGen.org.au

June 2010 Drug Action Week

A national week of activities to raise awareness about AOD issues and to promote the achievements of those who work to reduce drug related harm.

Note: Dates can change each year.

National Web: www.drugactionweek.org.au

ACT Web: www.aodsector.org.au