'Temptations': The role of pastoral care in prevention (or at least delaying!) harm

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Keynote presentation to AHISA Conference, Gold Coast on August 23, 2014
Outline of presentation

- history of 'teenagers', rebellion and 'temptations'
- are today's temptations more dangerous?
- the school's and parents' role in keeping young people safe
- what about pastoral care?
- the 'Icelandic Model'
- how many young Australians are drinking and using illicit drugs?
- where to from here?
History of teenagers

1900 – 'teenagers' did not exist

- "no culture or institution that united them or fostered peer group development on a societal scale" (Schrum, 2008)
- legislation began to separate adults and children – e.g., minimum age requirements for sexual consent, marriage, school attendance and work
- later – voting, driving and drinking

Dramatic rise in high school attendance – single most important factor in creating teenage culture

- high school, based on biological age, reshaped experiences of 13-18 year olds
- US between 1910-1930 – enrolment rose almost 400%
- high schools promoted "unsupervised peer interaction"
During the 1920s, 30s and 40s companies began to recognize high schoolers as consumers.
The term 'teenager'

Advertisers and marketers saw a new market ...

"Celebrating the notion of carefree, high school bobby soxers ... they began to promote a new social type they dubbed 'teeners,' 'teensters,' and, in 1941, 'teenagers.' ... tied to the new high school world of dating, driving, music, and enjoyment. Although it would take a few years for the term 'teenager' to catch on in the popular mind, the concept was spreading rapidly, particularly as a marketing tool" (Palladino, 1996)

Growing media technology (e.g., development of TV and FM radio) linked to teenage culture

Unprecedented amounts of leisure time and more independence from their families

"peer groups and market advertising became as influential as families once were ... ideology of 'youth as fun' also began to be read by many adults as 'youth as trouble'" (Abbowitz & Rees)
Teenage rebellion

With an identity established, teens began to imitate adults, at the same time rejecting adult rules.
Teenage rebellion and the 1950s

Teens hit 'mainstream' in the 50s - distinctive dress, habits and culture fuelled by popular media
'Temptations'

Since the 20s 'temptations' have caused parental (adult) concern

- pool halls (1920s)
- music – jazz (40s), rock and roll (50s), punk (70s)
- make-up and clothing
- smoking, alcohol and other drugs

New temptations now exist

- new range of drugs
- social media
- internet porn
- internet gambling

Also know more about harms associated with 'older' problems

- body image
- mental health issues
Increasingly schools are being asked to deal with these problems. In an already crowded curriculum and little, if any, professional development available ... how can a school do this?
Are they worse than in the past?

Adolescence always been a dangerous time - most get through relatively unscathed ... why worry?

There are differences ...

- adolescents exposed to issues much earlier
- very young teens are now specifically targeted by advertisers
- exposure is relentless
- information communicated immediately - no 'wait-time'
- trends and fads spread fast – worldwide
- often linked to technology that is constantly changing – difficult for adults to track
So, what's the school's role here?

Schools do not operate in a vacuum – there must be a partnership with parents, however, from my perspective ...

- fewer parents are actively engaged with schools than in the past
- some believe they have 'paid the fees' – the school needs to fix the problem
- fewer parents are actively parenting
  - some try but it all gets too difficult
  - others are frightened of not being liked or fear conflict
  - some are simply being bullied by either their children or other parents
My observation of parents ...

When it comes to alcohol I am yet to meet a parent who is thrilled when they find out their teen is drinking ... however ...

- small minority simply don't care – abusive in their response
- there are certainly cultural issues to consider – drinking small amounts in a family context is a 'tradition'
- some desperately want to be their child's friend and are frightened of saying 'no'
- "we all did it ... there's nothing wrong with us!"
- others may want to relive their adolescence by drinking with their teens or 'becoming one of the gang'
- it's just too hard and whatever they do, it won't make a difference
Parents need to 'parent'

Unfortunately, schools are increasingly being asked to do the parenting for them ...

No parent wants to be 'hated' but giving a child everything they want to avoid conflict is problematic

They need to hear 'no' regularly ... there also needs to be age-appropriate monitoring

Allowing a 14-15 year old to go to a sleepover without checking up on them is not appropriate!

Put simply, if a parent wants to prevent or delay risky drinking and/or illicit drug use ...

- know where their child is
- know who they're with, and
- know when they'll be home

Parents need to 'parent'

Unfortunately, schools are increasingly being asked to do the parenting for them ...
So, is education the key here?

Schools can't parent ... they provide education – should they focus on ensuring students are well informed on these issues?

- teachers can't possibly keep up-to-date on all these areas
- should you be bringing in outside speakers with specialist knowledge? Is that the answer?
  - can be expensive
  - not always good quality
  - they have no relationship with school or students
  - no evidence that they actually work!
- we know by experience that information alone does not change behaviour – it certainly improves knowledge but that's about it ...

Let's not forget the importance of pastoral care ...
My observations of pastoral care ... 

Pastoral care has changed dramatically in schools over the past 20 years. It means different things to different people - my definition is "the way in which a school demonstrates it cares for the student as an individual."

What do I look for in a school from a pastoral care perspective?

- **what does the front office look like** and who is behind that desk?
- **do students freely approach teachers** to talk to them as they're walking through the school? What is the interaction like?
- **how often do teachers address students using their name**?
- **do teachers listen to my presentation to students or are they up the back marking**?
- **does the Principal or a member of the Executive attend my presentation or introduce me to the students**?
- **what does the staff room look like** and how are staff interacting?
Pastoral care and AOD use

Quality pastoral care builds resilience so if young people do become involved with such activity they are able to 'bounce back'

- enhances protective factors and attempts to reduce risk factors that young people may be exposed to
- schools do this by ensuring that young people develop 'connectedness' or 'a sense of belonging'

- one international program that has been extremely successful in reducing alcohol and other drug use by enhancing protective factors is the 'Icelandic Model'
The 'Icelandic Model'

A preventive program that focuses on enhancing protective factors

Evidence based primary prevention
The Icelandic Model
Substance use decrease amongst 15-16 year old adolescents in Iceland

2013 National Drug Household Survey

1998 - 42% of 15 to 16 year old Icelanders had become drunk during the past 30 days. In 2013 only 5% of students report the same. Daily smoking and the use of cannabis has also decreased dramatically.
The 'Iceland Model'

Substance use amongst Icelandic adolescents is now the lowest in Europe in 2013 after recording amongst the highest rates in the late 90s.

Prevention work has focused on identifying **risk and protective factors** in the lives of youth – enhancing those that are protective.

Interestingly it has not involved any formal drug education being provided in schools!
The 'Icelandic Model'

Four risk and protective factors identified

- General well-being
- Extracurricular activities, sports, etc.
- Peer group effect
- Family factors
The 'Icelandic Model'

Four risk and protective factors identified

- Organized activities vs unorganized activities
- Extracurricular activities, sports, etc.
- Family factors
- Peer group effect

General well-being

Time spent with parents
- support
- monitoring
- control

Both positive and negative impacts

In and out of school – physical, psychological and social – e.g., bullying
The 'Icelandic Model'

Some of the factors they 'track' in their regular surveys include the following:

- regular participation in leisure activities, e.g., organized sport, music, etc
- how much time is spent with parents on weekdays
- do their parents know where they are in the evenings?
- how much time is spent out after 10pm
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Percentage of students in the 9th and 10th grade whose parents know where they are in the evenings (very or rather well)
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Percentage of students in the 9th and 10th grade who have been out after 10pm (3 times or more) in the past week
The 'Icelandic Model'

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Percentage of students in the 9th grade that participate in sports in a sport club 4 times per week or more

Percentage of students in the 9th and 10th grade who spend time (often/almost always) with their parents during weekdays

Percentage of students in the 9th and 10th grade whose parents know where they are in the evenings (very or rather well)

Percentage of students in the 9th and 10th grade who have been out after 10pm (3 times or more) in the past week
Substance use decrease amongst 15-16 year old adolescents in Iceland

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Limitations of the 'Icelandic Model'

Iceland is a unique country – small population, with 75% of them being members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

At the same time as the program was rolled out, legislative changes were made:
- raising the legal age from 16 to 18 years
- raising age limits - tobacco to 18 years and alcohol to 20
- stricter regulations for sellers of tobacco
- a total advertising ban of tobacco and alcohol
- restricting access to buying alcohol and tobacco
- total visibility ban of tobacco and alcohol
- rules on outside hours for adolescents (a curfew)

That said, the program is currently being used in 18 cities across 12 countries.
Are we using more illicit drugs now than in the past?

Australian drug use
Lifetime illicit drug use (%) - 14 years and over

2013 National Drug Household Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cocaine</td>
<td>8.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>heroin</td>
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<tr>
<td>ecstasy</td>
<td>10.9</td>
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<td>hallucinogens</td>
<td>9.4</td>
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<td>meth/amphetamine</td>
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<tr>
<td>inhalants</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>cannabis</td>
<td>34.8</td>
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</table>
Never used illicit drugs (%) - 14 years and over

2013 National Drug Household Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cocaine</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heroin</td>
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<tr>
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<td>hallucinogens</td>
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<tr>
<td>meth/amphetamine</td>
<td>93.0</td>
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<td>inhalants</td>
<td>96.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cannabis</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1991-2013: Changes in 'recent use' (%)

2013 National Drug Household Survey


% 20
15
10
5
0

cannabis heroin amphetamine cocaine ecstasy

DARTA Drug and Alcohol Research and Training Australia
What about young people?

How many school-based young people have ever used drugs?
Prevalence (%) of lifetime drug use (excluding tobacco, and alcohol) among 12-17 year old students

2011 ASSAD Survey

Apart from a small number of substances, drug use is uncommon amongst this group. Analgesics continue to be widely used across all ages, with inhalants being favoured by younger groups and tranquilisers more popular with the older students. Cannabis use had risen from 2008 from 13.6% to 14.8% in this survey.
Prevalence (%) of 12-17 year old students who have never drugs (excluding tobacco and alcohol)

2011 ASSAD Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Prevalence (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analgesics</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tranquilisers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cannabis</td>
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<td>Inhalants</td>
<td>97.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hallucinogens</td>
<td>98.1</td>
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<td>Amphetamines</td>
<td>98.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steroids</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Opiates</td>
<td>98.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine</td>
<td>97.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecstasy</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Prevalence (%) of last year drug use among 12-17 year old students, 1996-2011

2011 ASSAD Survey

Overall, the story is a positive one. Once again, most secondary school students do not use drugs. However, this is the first time that cannabis use has not decreased and hallucinogens are now the second most popular drugs amongst this population.
What is happening in Australia? Are we drinking more than in the past?
What Australians are drinking has changed substantially since the early 60s. Beer consumption has decreased dramatically, while wine and spirits account for a much greater proportion of all alcohol consumed.
Apparent consumption of pure alcohol per capita has fluctuated over the past 50 years, hitting a peak in the late 70s. We're drinking less but our drinking patterns have changed.
So what is happening?

Unfortunately it is how we drink when we do that appears to be the problem – **when we drink, we drink a lot** (usually quickly, over a short period of time) – we are a nation of binge drinkers.

When we drink less, alcohol companies profits drop – aggressive marketing and great resistance to restrictions on advertising and sponsorship regulations.
Never consumed alcohol, Australian secondary school students (%), 2011
2011 ASSAD Survey

The majority of young people across all age groups have tried alcohol, with use increasing as they get older. That said, it is important to remember that almost one in five Year 10 students have never consumed alcohol.
Australian secondary school students who describe themselves as non-drinkers (%), 2011

2011 ASSAD Survey

Even though many of them have tried alcohol, the vast majority of them still regard themselves as 'non-drinkers' until they reach 16 years of age.
Proportion of 12-15 year old current drinkers and the proportion drinking more than four drinks on a single occasion in the past seven days, 1984-2011

2011 ASSAD Survey

The proportion of 12-15 year old 'current drinkers' continues to decrease. Less young people are drinking and the number who report drinking more than four drinks on a single occasion in the past week has also dropped since a peak in 2002 (7% down to 3%)
Proportion of 16-17 year old current drinkers and the proportion drinking more than four drinks on a single occasion in the past seven days, 1984-2011

2011 ASSAD Survey

The proportion of 16-17 year old 'current drinkers' has also decreased. Once again, less young people are drinking and the number who report drinking more than four drinks on a single occasion in the past week has also dropped since a peak in 1999 (24% down to 16%)
Respondents were classified as 'non-drinkers' (never had a glass of alcohol), 'moderate drinkers' (had a full glass but not more than four drinks on a single occasions in the last month) or 'risky drinkers' (had more than four drinks on one or more occasions in the last month). Although there are more small numbers of 'risky drinkers' in Years 8 and 9, it is Year 10 where things begin to change.
Unfortunately 'current drinkers' consumed a lot of alcohol. Across all ages, average drinking levels reported exceeded recommended levels for adults.
So what does this mean?

Many young people consider themselves 'non-drinkers'

Number of 'current drinkers' is actually decreasing - however, a small, but consistent number of these are putting themselves at great risk

- they're drinking a lot, doing it regularly
- likely to be spirit drinkers
- Yr 10 appears to be the year where drinking patterns change – much smaller numbers in Yr 9 and below ...
Times are changing re: the legal status of cannabis around the world – number of places around the world where it is now a legal drug

What impact do changing attitudes have on usage patterns here?
How have things changed?
Lifetime and recent cannabis use, 1993-2013

2013 National Drug Household Survey

- lifetime use
- recent use

How have things changed?
Lifetime and recent ecstasy use (%), 1991-2013

2013 National Drug Household Survey

DARTA
Drug and Alcohol Research and Training Australia
How have things changed?
Lifetime and recent meth/amphetamine use, 1993-2013
2013 National Drug Household Survey

- Lifetime use
- Recent use
2007-2013: Form of meth/amphetamine used, recent users aged 14 years or over

2013 National Drug Household Survey

%
Cocaine

2013 NDSHS
How have things changed?
Lifetime and recent cocaine use, 1993-2013
2013 National Drug Household Survey

% lifetime use

% recent use


DARTA Drug and Alcohol Research and Training Australia
The term 'hallucinogens' includes synthetic and naturally occurring hallucinogens (acid, trips, mushies, magic mushrooms, blotter, angels trumpet and blue meanies)

Hallucinogens 2013 NDSHS
How have things changed?
Lifetime and recent hallucinogens use, 1993-2013
2013 National Drug Household Survey
What does all this mean?

Adolescence is a risky time

- take more risks not because they don't understand the dangers but because they weigh risk reward **differently** – they value the reward more heavily than adults do
- reward increases if around their peers
- "they don't downgrade the risk, they give more weight to the payoff"

We're not going to be able to stop this from happening – it's a biological feature!

- we can try to keep them as safe as possible
- give them information that is useful and credible
- provide an environment that supports them and also has clear boundaries and rules
The future?

We have had great success in AOD

- lowest rate of daily tobacco smoking in the world
- more young people choosing not to drink than in the past
- secondary school students recent illicit drug use at some of the lowest levels since records began

Still challenges ahead - we continue to see some students put themselves at great risk

With a crowded curriculum and schools asked to deal with more social issues – it is in the pastoral care area where we are likely to have most success - no matter what the 'temptation' may be …
For further information or you are interested in more of what I have to say …

Teenagers, Alcohol and Drugs is available at your local bookstore or on-line

For a PDF copy of this presentation or a list of references and supporting information, please go to my website - www.darta.net.au

Please feel free to contact me by email - p.dillon@darta.net.au or follow me on Facebook or Twitter (Drug and Alcohol Research and Training Australia) or go to my blogs – 'Doing Drugs with Paul Dillon' or 'The Real Deal on Drugs'