

Introduction

Trauma is responsible for 40% of deaths in the 15-25 year old age group – but many more youth are disabled from the effects of injuries sustained through involvement in a major trauma situation. Trauma data collected across Australia shows that traumas involving this age group are still on the increase and many are preventable, often sustained through the toxic combination of alcohol and/or drugs and risk-related behaviour.

Programs aimed at effecting behaviour change and assisting teens in identifying risks, and making better and safer choices are a primary strategy in preventing trauma in this age group.

The P.A.R.T.Y Program

P.A.R.T.Y is an acronym for **Prevent Alcohol and Risk-related Trauma in Youth**, and is an in-hospital injury awareness and prevention program originally established in Ontario, Canada in 1986. P.A.R.T.Y. is aimed at providing teenagers with information about trauma that will enable them to recognise potential injury-producing situations, make prevention-oriented choices, and adopt behaviours that minimise unnecessary risk.

The Shock Trauma Service (STS) has received funding to implement the P.A.R.T.Y. in Canberra program to service Year 10 High School Students across the ACT. The program is designed to engage young people by meeting emergency service professionals, doctors and nurses, therapists, and people who have experienced trauma and survived - often with significant disabilities. Holding the program within a hospital environment enhances the experience by the participants, and leaves a significant and lasting impression of the consequences of trauma and risk taking behaviours.

The P.A.R.T.Y. Program fits within the Personal and Social Capability learning continuum of the Australian Curriculum, in that it encourages students to recognise and regulate emotions, develop empathy for others, make responsible decisions and handle challenging situations.

The short term objectives of the program are to:

- Deliver high quality evidence based prevention education to teenagers across a broad social and demographic spectrum
- Influence a change in risk taking behaviour in teenagers through the introduction of education around making informed choices

With the aim in the long term to:

Reduce the incidence of trauma related death and disability in teenagers and young adults

What it involves:

The Program involves a full day hospital visit The Canberra Hospital. It commences at 9am and concludes at approximately 3pm. Participants spend the day with various trauma services at The Canberra Hospital, meeting the people that care for trauma patients - paramedics, doctors, nurses, allied

health professionals and volunteers. Through DVD and PowerPoint presentations, interviews with previous patients and real-life clinical scenarios, participants are exposed to the journey of a trauma patient. They learn about trauma injuries, and have hands-on experience with some of the equipment used in trauma care and rehabilitation.

At the end of the day, participants meet a trauma injury survivor. They talk about the choices and events that led to their injury. They also speak about what their lives are like now. Students are given an opportunity to ask the injury survivor questions and learn what life is really like after an injury.

Please note: Whilst every effort will be made to comply with the above-noted activities, changes may occur on the day due to unavoidable circumstances (e.g. presenting staff being called away to attend an emergency). Contingencies are in place to accommodate such situations with back up presentations to ensure continuity of the program and an optimum experience for students.

Assessing Participant Capacity

When selecting the group of participants to attend your P.A.R.T.Y. Program visit, please consider the following:

- **AGE:** Participants must be in Year 10 between 14-16 years of age
- **SPECIAL NEEDS:** the program welcomes participants with special needs. However, we ask that they are accompanied by an allocated assistant, and that their attendance is pre-arranged with the Coordinator in order for us to meet their needs
- **RECENT TRAUMA:** Any participant who has experienced recent personal trauma or trauma within their family is advised not to participate in the Program.
- **CLASS OF PEERS OR HAND SELECTED:** It is up to the school to decide how they select which participants should attend the Program.

Preparation of students to attend

The following must be covered with students prior to attendance at Canberra Hospital and Health Services:

- The need for appropriate behaviour in a hospital (level of noise, level of activity, care when passing patients in the corridors, behaviour in lifts and public areas of the hospital)
- The need to always stay with the group they have been allocated to for safety reasons.
- The need to dress in appropriate clothing for the visit (preferably a uniform which can be a sports or summer uniform)
- The need to bring lunch or money to purchase lunch (morning refreshments will be provided)

Preparation of staff to attend:

Please cover the following with staff prior to attendance at Canberra Hospital and Health Services- please ensure all staff attending have received the Excursion Management plan in the Schools pack:



- Staff will need to supervise participants throughout the day including during the presentations and when touring the hospital in smaller groups
- Be aware of any potential medical conditions and associated treatment or medications required for the students attending, as the students may be exposed to situations which could trigger reactions such as fainting, anxiety or an asthma attack (please ensure staff bring a copy of any medical plans for students with medical conditions with them on the day)
- Be prepared to be “off line” for the day- limited mobile and computer access is available.

Thank you for the resources you are considering allocating to making this a safe, exciting and challenging experience for your students. An information pack including general information, a map of the hospital and program timetable will be sent to your school’s nominated P.A.R.T.Y. contact teacher. Student and Parent information and consent forms will be copied and placed in envelopes and sent with the information pack to save your school time and resources.

Should you feel you or your staff require any other information - or to offer feedback on the information supplied to your school, please contact:

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