

Supporting parents to discuss alcohol use with their teenagers: the development of Keep their Futures Bright campaign

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Background

To reduce parental supply of alcohol to teenagers, the ADF developed, tested and employed values-based messaging. This messaging informed the development a mass media campaign designed to improve parental knowledge and shift attitudes about the risks of underage alcohol use.

Method

Research was undertaken to identify parent attitudes and beliefs about alcohol supply to teenagers. Data collection occurred from May to June 2023, involving 15 elicitation interviews with alcohol and other drugs advocates and analysis of 2227 text samples discussing parental alcohol supply from diverse Australian sources. These samples were coded for common framing elements, including metaphors and values, with a subsequent discourse analysis identifying dominant reasoning patterns. We then conducted eight focus groups with parents and quantitative message testing with 1728 parents and carers, including high-risk drinkers, using a variety of survey formats and audio-recorded messages.

Key Findings

Findings underscored the importance of values and framing in shaping attitudes and behaviours. After the eight focus groups, many parents were still of the opinion that supplying alcohol to their children was a responsible approach to parenting. However, when messages were refined and framed with values, parents became more open to facts about the dangers of underage supply, with some admitting to re-thinking their parenting approaches. Segmentation analysis dividing parents into Supporters, Persuadables and Opponents identified Persuadables as pivotal, given high responsiveness to messaging strategies, emphasising the importance of a targeted approach.

Conclusions

Values-based messages that focussed on proactive approaches and solutions, such as having open conversations about alcohol were welcomed by parents. The research underscores that leveraging values to craft messages around underage alcohol use will resonate with parents and can effectively influence their attitudes and behaviours. Targeting Persuadable parents is also key in maximising campaign effectiveness.