

Co-designing parental alcohol supply prevention messages with parents and adolescents: insights to inform future campaigns

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Introduction:

Parents are one of the most common sources of alcohol for current underage drinkers. Although many believe supplying alcohol promotes responsible consumption, research shows it is linked to earlier initiation, heavy drinking, dependence, and negative impacts on brain development. This study engages both parents and adolescents to co-design campaign message concepts aimed at discouraging parents from supplying alcohol to adolescents.

Methods:

Five in-person co-design workshops with parent-adolescent (aged 12-17 years) dyads (n=66) were conducted across Australia during February-April 2025. Participants were introduced to existing evidence, preliminary research and shown past campaign ads before brainstorming messaging ideas in separate groups. Parents and adolescents identified what

they believed parents should think and feel after seeing a parental supply campaign. Data were analysed thematically.

Key Findings:

Participants believed campaigns should highlight the negative consequences of parental alcohol supply, including its effects on physical health, cognition and brain development. They endorsed social norms messaging that makes it clear that most parents do not supply alcohol. Discussions emphasised the need for a campaign to deliver a clear message discouraging supplying alcohol to adolescents, while encouraging parents to discuss risks of alcohol with their teens. Participants favoured a campaign that evoked subtle negative emotions such as concern, guilt, shock and regret relating to supply of alcohol, while also fostering feelings of empowerment, determination, and confidence. Participants believed emotions evoked by messages should reinforce parent's desire to protect their child.

Discussions and Conclusions:

Messaging that conveys the risks, consequences, and social norms of parental supply and evokes emotions of parental protectiveness may empower parents to reconsider alcohol supply.

Implications for Practice or Policy:

Findings will inform development of prototype campaign messages. Subsequent message testing with parents will be used to refine these concepts to develop a campaign discouraging parental alcohol supply, thereby reducing adolescent alcohol-related harms.

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