

Co-design of preventive messages to discourage parental supply of alcohol to adolescents

“be a parent, protect your growing children against alcohol harms”

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Background

- In Australia, parents are among the most common reported source of alcohol for adolescent drinkers¹
- Parental supply of alcohol to adolescents is often motivated by a desire to protect against alcohol-related harms,² despite evidence linking it with earlier initiation, higher levels of risky drinking and other alcohol-related harms³
- Co-design ensures messages are relevant, resonate with target audiences, and address barriers to behaviour change⁴, which is particularly useful in jurisdictions with limited public health campaigns on the harms of alcohol
- Less is known about what messages deter parental alcohol supply to adolescents.

Study aim

This study engaged parent-adolescent dyads to co-design development of campaign messages that build trust and maintain open communication between parents and adolescents while discouraging supply of alcohol.

Methods

Co-design workshops

Five in-person co-design workshops were conducted with parent-adolescent dyads (N=66 participants; adolescents aged 11-17 years), across four Australian jurisdictions (SA, NSW, VIC, NT) between February and April 2025.

Data generation

Participants were sensitised with evidence on parental supply, associated risks, and past campaigns. Parents and adolescents then worked in separate facilitated groups to brainstorm key messages and identify how they believed parents should think and feel after viewing a campaign discouraging parental supply.

Data analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis⁵ was used to explore campaign messaging ideas considered relevant, acceptable, and engaging based on participants' responses.

Key findings

Parents and adolescents identified three key areas of consideration for campaign messaging to discourage parental supply of alcohol:

Risk communication

Communicate risks of adolescent alcohol use and parental supply

- Outline evidence-based risks of adolescent alcohol use and parental alcohol supply, particularly impacts on physical health, cognitive function and brain development
- Encourage parents to talk with their teens about alcohol-related risks.

Social norms

Use social norms to reshape perceptions of what is typical and acceptable

- Use social norms messaging to highlight that most parents do not supply alcohol
- Deliver a clear and direct message discouraging parental supply.

Emotional resonance

Evoke emotional connection and reinforce positive parenting identity

- Evoke subtle negative emotions (e.g., concern for adolescent wellbeing and missed potential)
- Foster empowerment and confidence to say no to parental alcohol supply
- Strengthen parents' feelings of protectiveness and desire to keep their child safe.

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Discussion and implications for policy

- Messaging that **outlines harms of adolescent consumption and parental supply** may help shift parental supply behaviour
- Challenging norms misperceptions and evoking **protective emotions** could **empower** parents to prevent supply
- Findings will inform **prototype campaign message development**. Messages will undergo **testing with parents and adolescents** to refine concepts to support an evidence-informed campaign **that discourages parental alcohol supply**.

References: [1] AIHW. National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2022-2023. Canberra: AIHW. [2] Jones SC. Health Promot Int 2016;31:562-571. [3] Aiken A, et al. Drug Alcohol Depend. 2020;215:108204. [4] David P, et al. Soc Mark Q 2019;25, 55-68. [5] Braun V & Clarke V. London: SAGE Publications Ltd; 2021;77-101

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