

Dr YES

Teacher's Guidebook 2026



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Preface

The Australian Medical Association (WA) Foundation, established in 1996, is passionate about improving the health and well-being of young people. Through initiatives like the Dr YES program, we focus on helping adolescents navigate the exciting yet challenging transition to adulthood. We know that many young people are hesitant to seek help when facing health concerns, and with the natural curiosity and sense of adventure that often comes with youth, this can sometimes lead to risky situations. That's why it's so important to empower young people with the knowledge and skills they need to make informed choices, stay safe, and embrace the changes in their bodies and lives with confidence and responsibility.

The AMA (WA) Foundation has identified three principal areas of need. These are:

- Better engagement with young people on health issues
- Provision of accessible and accurate information to empower young people to reduce risks to themselves and others
- A reduction in barriers to primary health services

Our Dr YES (Youth Education Sessions) preventative health education program is designed to meet these principal areas of need.

The program is led by medical students, who are trained to act as peer-group facilitators. Their primary role is to empower young people to make informed and healthy choices and to reduce barriers to health care by advising on issues such as Medicare entitlement, confidentiality and consent. During the health education sessions, Dr YES uses presentations and small group discussions to engage the students and to promote the Dr YES messages. Dr YES is not a stand-alone program, it is designed to complement and enhance school health curriculum for students aged 14-17 years, not to replace them.

We are delighted to have your students participate in the Dr YES sessions with our dedicated medical student volunteers. We hope they gain valuable knowledge and skills that will support their health and well-being. As with all youth health programs, we are committed to continually improving our engagement with young people and enhancing the quality of our sessions. Your ongoing feedback and support are greatly appreciated.

Dr Rachel Collins

Medical Director

Australian Medical Association (WA) Foundation

About Dr YES

Dr YES is a school-based health initiative run under the auspices of the AMA (WA) Foundation. The program sends specially trained volunteer medical students into metropolitan and rural high schools



to have frank, open discussions on topics concerning youth health such as Drugs and Alcohol, Sexual Health and Mental Health.

The purpose of all the sessions is to help high school students make healthy choices in risky situations. The medical students discuss the issues high school students face with the aim of equipping them with the confidence and knowledge necessary to make that healthy choice.

The sessions at the schools are fun, entertaining and informative, helping to provide accurate information about topics that may not normally be discussed with a teacher. Dr YES is incredibly successful due to the messages being provided by medical students who are not much older than the high school students themselves. This helps students to develop an atmosphere of mutual respect and confidence. Dr YES is well supported by the medical faculties of the University of Western Australia, Notre Dame University and Curtin University. The program is also well received by high schools across Western Australia, with requests from schools well more than what the team can manage.

The Dr YES program reaches around 10 000 students across Western Australia each year. We regularly run trips to areas out of Perth, including the Pilbara, Kimberley, Mid-west, South-west, Goldfields, Wheatbelt and Mandurah. We have a large group of volunteers that run sessions up to three times a week. Each session involves around 12 medical students, with school class sizes preferably between 60 and 100 students. Dr YES can cater for up to 120 students in one session.

In conjunction with the Dr YES program, a youth specific GP education program, Youth Friendly Doctor (YFD), is organised through the AMA (WA) Foundation. Dr YES encourages students to see a GP about any health issues they may have, and the YFD program facilitates this by training GPs to be as approachable to young people as possible.

Mission Statement

Dr YES is a peer led program that educates young people about the consequences of risky behaviour, empowers them to make informed and healthy decisions, and improves their access to the health care system. More specifically, Dr YES aims to:

- Educate youth in mental health, sexual health and alcohol and other drug use, enabling them to make informed and healthy choices.
- Promote the use of primary health care services and improve access by providing information on the role of the GP, Medicare cards, confidentiality and consent.

Teachers

This guidebook is intended to provide a brief overview of the way each Dr YES session is run, and to provide a summary of the content. The guidebook should answer most questions regarding Dr YES visits, however, please feel free to contact the program with any further enquiries.

To book a Dr YES session, please go to www.dryes.com.au, 'How to get Dr YES to your School' and complete the booking form. Due to the demand of sessions, it is recommended that you do this at your earliest convenience. After completion of the booking form, Dr YES will be in contact to confirm the sessions, and again one week before the booking. The availability of bookings is determined by volunteer capacity to attend sessions. Dr YES strives to see as many students as possible, however not all requests and bookings are able to be filled.

What do you need to provide for the sessions?

The sessions start with a short introductory presentation, therefore, a large enough area for all the students to congregate in necessary. We bring our own equipment to schools.

After the presentation, groups will go in to break out spaces, in groups of 6-12, depending on the size. During the small group sessions, it is recommended for teachers to have a circulating presence for behavioural support. It is preferred that teachers do not sit with groups (unless there is a particular need), as this can make it difficult for students to talk openly. All volunteers undergo a training course on peer group education in alcohol and drug use, sexual health and mental health with experts in the relevant fields. The volunteers are experienced in the facilitation of small groups with students in metropolitan, rural, and remote areas.

After the session, an email with a survey link will be sent to you, it would be greatly appreciated if you would complete this short 2-minute survey as it provides valuable feedback for the program.

Sessions

Dr YES sessions follow a general format and consists of content which will be covered at every session, as well as allowing facilitators to discuss topics that the students ask about. Dr YES will primarily focus on content that the groups are asking about as we have found that this is the best way of keeping the content relevant to their needs. If there is content you would specifically like Dr YES to cover, you can indicate this when booking the session.

Session Plan

- Introduction
 - Introduce Dr YES volunteers and what the program is about
- Small group work
 - Introductions
 - Set standard of confidentiality within the group
 - Delivery of session specific content and discussion - if the group is interested in a particular discussion topic, the facilitator will address those issues more directly
- Evaluation, referral and close
 - Direct students to Dr YES website and social media
 - Distribution of evaluation forms

Alcohol and Other Drugs

Session Content

- Classes of drugs
- Reasons people drink and use recreational drugs
 - Alternative coping mechanisms
- Alcohol
 - Explanation of standard drinks
 - How to stay safer when drinking alcohol
 - Importance of food and water consumption
 - Plan your night, including transport
 - Do not mix drugs
 - Caring for an intoxicated person
 - Types of drinks
 - Ambulance use
- Marijuana
 - Short- and long-term effects of marijuana use
 - How to stay safer when using marijuana
 - Link with mental illness
- Vaping
 - Short- and long-term effects of vaping
 - Contents inside a vape
 - How to stay safer when vaping
 - Legalities of vaping
- Other drugs
- General harm minimisation principles
- Further discussion surrounding other drugs more specifically is available if it is relevant to the group
- Addiction
 - Understanding addiction, tolerance & dependence
 - How to help a friend with addiction (HANDS mental health model)
- YFD, Medicare & patient confidentiality
 - How to access doctors and Medicare
 - Explain confidentiality guidelines
 - Encourage students to use the health care system

Sexual Health

Session Content

- Introduction of STIs
 - Symptoms, testing and long-term consequences
- Sexual consent
 - Sexual consent model: ready, willing and able
 - Sex and the law
 - Intoxication and consent
 - Verbal and non-verbal cues
 - Conditional consent – negotiating different forms of sex, condom use etc.
 - Active consent – a person’s ability to give and take away consent at any time
- Contraception
 - Condom demonstration – method for maximum effectiveness, including lubricant
 - Dams, contraceptive pill, Implanon, Depo-Provera injection, IUD (hormonal and copper), emergency contraceptive
 - Discussion will cover how each contraceptive is accessed and used, the advantages and disadvantages, STI prevention, cost and effectiveness
- Pornography
 - Activity to help students recognise differences in what is portrayed in pornography vs what real life sex may be like
 - Aim is to identify potentially harmful attitudes and ideas that may be shown in pornography
 - Pornography addiction
 - Tips for safer pornography use
- Sexting
 - Sexting and the law
 - What to do if you receive a sext
 - How to be safer when sexting
- YFD, Medicare & patient confidentiality
 - How to access doctors and Medicare
 - Explain confidentiality guidelines
 - Encourage students to use the health care system

Mental Health

Session Content

- Define and discuss mental health and mental illness
- Discuss prevalence of mental illness by age and gender
- Discussion surrounding attitudes of mental illness and seeking medical help
- Preventative vs reactive help
 - The difference between the preventative and reactive help
 - Self-care (HANDS Module)
 - Mechanisms to create a support network/safety net that helps to maintain positive mental health
 - Explore self-worth, people/relationships and engagement
 - Reactive help (HANDS Acronym)
- Framework for supporting a friend who may be experiencing a mental illness
- Stigma
 - Discussion around stigma that surrounds mental health and ways of overcoming it
- Stress/anxiety/depression, self-harm/suicide, social media/eating disorder, cyberbullying/bullying
 - Explore how these topics affect mental health and positive ways to handle them
- YFD, Medicare & patient confidentiality
 - How to access doctors and Medicare
 - Explain confidentiality guidelines
 - Encourage students to use the health care system

Contact Us

Contact Details

If you have any further questions regarding Dr YES, the best method of contact is via email at dryesschoolbookings@amawa.com.au. Alternatively, phone 9273 3000 and ask for Dr YES.

Dr YES Coordinators

- Esther Santoso
- Isabeau van der Kooy
- Jannah Safar
- Joel Chemmanam
- Krittika Meghani
- Leo Xu
- Zara Denovan