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It takes a village: Families, services, schools and young people

Psychologists are finding that disturbed young people have often been inappropriately parented. This is hardly surprising given how few parents have been taught effective parenting. In light of the growing concern among professionals about parenting, we provide three papers that outline parenting programs for families in which young people have substance abuse issues, in which children are making the critical transition to secondary school and in which adolescents have developed antisocial or conduct disorders.

In another paper, Karen Brooks points out that parents and educators are doing little better when it comes to educating young people about the influence of the media. In fact, many adults succumb to market pressure and buy children sexually provocative clothes and allow them to drink alcohol and watch sexually violent movies and videos.

We also feature a paper on the RRISK program, a harm minimisation program based in schools, which takes on the role of providing young people with the skills necessary to make informed decisions in regard to drug and alcohol use, driving and celebrating.

Finally, we look at research that outlines models of primary health care that take into account what young people think is important for their health care.

Comfortably numb: Young people, drugs and the seductions of popular culture

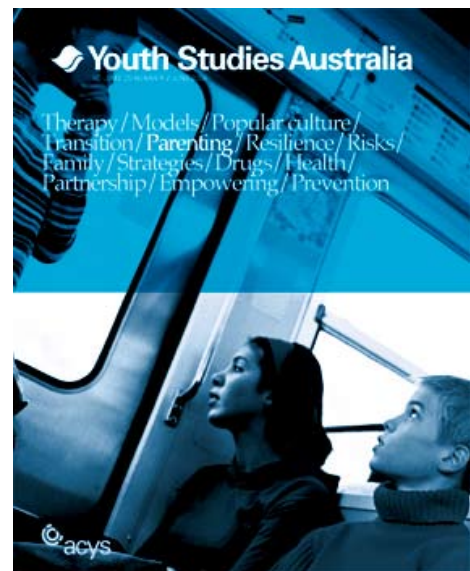
Karen Brooks

According to Karen Brooks, young people have adopted what she terms *resistance conformity*. That is, they believe they are fashioning a unique identity carved in their own self-image, when in reality they are donning a prefabricated corporate and cultural mould. She believes that parents, educators and caregivers need to educate young people to be discerning in their pop culture consumption, and adults need to educate themselves about what young people are consuming. By empowering young people to 'read' the images of themselves through cultural pedagogy, and providing them with tools to decrypt these images, adults will enable young people to make informed choices.

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Celebrities, in all their gory glory, addictions and abuses, are presented as extraordinary in every sense of the word and, somehow, their risk-taking has made them that way.

The BEST Plus approach to assisting families recover from youth substance abuse problems

John Bamberg, Steven Findley & John Toumbourou

Up until the mid-1990s, in the drug treatment area, most resources were aimed at the substance-using person, with little assistance made available to other family members. In response to the concerns expressed by families and parents of adolescents abusing substances, the authors designed the BEST Plus program, which is a whole-of-family therapy option for families to address not only youth substance abuse issues, but also challenging and antisocial adolescent behaviours.

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The Resilient Families program: Promoting health and wellbeing in adolescents and their parents during the transition to secondary school

Alison Shortt, John Toumbourou, Rianna Chapman & Elke Power

A number of health-compromising behaviours, such as tobacco, alcohol and illicit drug use, unsafe sexual practices, depression and antisocial behaviour, escalate during the early years of secondary school. However, there is evidence that interventions focusing on family can have a positive preventative effect on adolescent substance use. Resilient Families is designed to build within-family connectedness and improve social support between different families, and between families and schools.

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The Teen Triple P Positive Parenting Program: A preliminary evaluation

Alan Ralph & Matthew Sanders

The Teen Triple P program is a unique parenting and family support system for parents of children who exhibit antisocial/conduct behaviour problems in early adolescence. The program provides parents with assertive discipline skills to preserve parental authority in a consistent and nurturing manner and to help teens maintain regard for family norms of appropriate behaviour as well as respect for school and wider community expectations.

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RRISK: A sustainable intersectoral partnership

Jane Elkington, Eric van Beurden, Avigdor Zask, Reyna Dight & Wendy Johnson

RRISK (Reduce Risk Increase Student Knowledge) is a school-based harm minimisation program that provides Year 10 and 11 students with skills to make informed decisions to reduce the risks associated with drug and alcohol use, driving and celebrating. A detailed assessment of the intersectoral partnership that has conducted RRISK for five years revealed that while individual commitment may be a key ingredient to establishing an effective intersectoral partnership, it is essential that organisational commitment is also maintained.

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Primary health care for young people: Are there models of service delivery that improve access and quality?

Melissa Kang, Diana Bernard, Tim Usherwood, Susan Quine, Garth Alperstein, Helen Kerr-Roubicek, Abigail Elliott & David Bennett

Using seven principles as reference points, the NSW Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health has developed six 'models' of primary health care, which appear promising for improving youth access and quality of primary health care for young people aged 12 to 25. The authors argue that these models now need to be extensively evaluated so that sustainable, evidence-based health care can be more widely adopted.

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Parents are encouraged to modify their family practices by returning the responsibility for unacceptable behavioural choices to their children.

Parents with aspirations to improve their own and their children's economic status were considered to place parent education lower in their priorities relative to income-generating activity.

Teen Triple P targets parenting risk factors, such as harsh, coercive discipline styles; parent-teenager conflict and communication difficulties; parental monitoring of teenagers' activities; parental depression and marital conflict.

We recommend that such programs establish partnerships that are clearly focused on a single long-term goal, one that all partners share with each other and also with the wider community.

Young people cite concerns about confidentiality breaches, embarrassment, lack of awareness about services and difficulty accessing them.

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