

Oxley College

with

Dr Michael Carr-Gregg

Keeping Our Adolescents Safe

Coping with Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs

What parents need to know about contemporary adolescent drug use and their role in reducing the harms from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. The latest research and statistics on teenage drug use will be shared.

Thursday 18 August 2016
7:00pm
Hoskins Hall, Oxley College

RSVP 10 August 2016 (for seating requirements)
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Dr Michael Carr-Gregg is one of Australia's highest profile psychologists. He is currently the Managing Director of the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre, which is committed to exploring and understanding the role of new and emerging technologies in the lives of young people.

He believes that the risks of the online environment can be managed and that technologies can be deployed to improve the mental health and well-being of young people. He wrote his PhD at the University of NSW on Adolescents with Cancer and named and founded CanTeen over 30 years ago with a group of young cancer patients.

He has worked as an academic, researcher, and political lobbyist. He is also the author of ten books including the best selling Princess Bitchface Syndrome and is working on his eleventh. Michael has been using technology in the form of web-based programmes, apps and wearable devices for the last five years. He has been a member of the National Centre Against Bullying and sits on the Federal Government's Online Safety Working Group.

He also sits on the Board of Smiling Mind, as well as being a Community Ambassador for Big Brothers Big Sisters and Playgroup Victoria. He sits on the National Board of the Australian Psychological Society, Smiling Mind and Project Rokit. He is a columnist for a number of publications including the Huffington Post, Girlfriend Magazine and the Australian Boarding Schools Association publication, LightsOut.

He is the resident parenting expert on Channel 7's Sunrise as well as psychologist for the Morning Show with Neil Mitchell on Radio 3AW. He is married with two children and is a Special Patron of the Hawthorn Football Club.



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SAFE PARTYING CHECKLIST

Dear Parents,

For many parents of teenagers, the most frightening question they can hear from their children is 'Mum/Dad can I have a party?' Luckily, as a parent of slightly younger children, the worst I have had to deal with personally was a child who was stung by a wasp on the inflatable jumping castle in our backyard. However, there is a lot of advice out there that I have read and been involved with over the decades, and I have distilled some of it below.

Despite the best attempts of parents who do all the right things, parties can still go wrong. However, happily, many events or gatherings are incident free. If we don't collectively offer venues for our children to gather sometimes, then they are more likely to congregate in a park or a state forest.

We do think it is important to keep giving guidance where we can to our students about alcohol, drugs, parties and so on. We have Dr Michael Carr-Gregg coming to speak to parents on Thursday 18 August. We discuss these issues in Mind matters and elsewhere. Peter Ayling and others are always happy to talk with parents who are organising a gathering, or find themselves on the wrong end of an event gone bad. As parents we have to keep in mind that we have legal responsibilities for partygoers on our property. I hope that the suggestions below are of some use.

BEFORE THE EVENT/GATHERING

- a) Be careful with the invitations. Put the party details on a form that is least likely to go viral. An old fashioned printed invitation is the best, with a request not to create an 'events' page on Facebook. Nothing is secure of course- many party details will end up on social media anyway- but if you are prudent with your details, you are less likely to end up with an Allianz Stadium size crowd.
- b) A smaller invite list is better than a larger one. Your child is not so popular that they have 200 close friends.
- c) Avoid 'plus ones'.
- d) Consider making the upstairs /bedroom area of the house off limits to the party. Alternatively, demarcate which areas ARE accessible to the party.
- e) Gatecrash-proof the house as much as you can. Have a clear and single point of entrance. This can be harder with larger properties, but have some sort of surveillance of other potential entry points.
- f) For larger gatherings, consider hiring some professional security for the entrance and to be a presence. This can be handled delicately, so they look like the slightly burly uncle instead of a SWAT squad. This delicate handling also means that the mood of the party is not too heavy and controlled. The 'outsourcing' to a professional will take some of the angst out of it for you. Alternatively use some friends or relatives who you can rely on to both be strong and also not escalate or personalise conflict. Twenty one year old big brothers very rarely fit the bill.
- g) Have a lot of food. BBQs are good and it allows slightly burly uncles to stay near the centre of the action.
- h) Inform the police that you will be having a party. This will help if the party gets out of control and you need their assistance.
- i) Inform the neighbours. Give them details about the expected size of the crowd and the finishing time. Give them an opportunity to evacuate in advance.
- j) Offer to talk to parents of guests about the arrangements. Offer your phone number so parents can ring you to check. (This also closes the loophole of everyone claiming they are at someone else's house when they have actually gone to the Belanglo State Forest.)
- k) Telegraph that it is a no alcohol event at your house (for harm minimisation purposes at least). This keeps you out of trouble at all but 18th birthday party events where you may wish to relax this. If your child wishes to argue the toss, offer to go halves in the mortgage. Unless s/he takes you up on it, it's your call.
- l) Accept your lot as 'the strictest parent in year'. That's what all the other kids are telling their parents too, so technically it's a tie.

AT THE PARTY

- a) Get in touch with your inner fascist. S/he will be needed when turning away gate-crashers, phoning parents to come and collect a troublemaker early etc.
- b) However, your inner fascist is always ice cool and doesn't lose his/her temper. This may be hard if you find your house literally being invaded, but it is vital.
- c) Assume you will be at work for most of the night. Set your expectations to management, not 'enjoyment'. And don't hideout in a bedroom or 'parents retreat'. Be a steady presence in the vicinity, even if it is a strategic spot in the kitchen.
- d) Similarly, your aim is not to be the coolest Dad/ Mum on the block, but the one who can facilitate a party where everyone has fun without things getting out of control.
- e) Don't drink alcohol yourself at a party at which the guests cannot.
- f) Be on the lookout for guests who may have become very intoxicated or worse despite your best endeavours. This could be at the beginning of the night if an invitee has pre-loaded. If you find them, treat it as a medical issue, not a moral one. However, err on the side of overreacting. Call parents or even an ambulance. Don't let kids 'sleep it off'.
- g) If you feel that you are in physical danger from argumentative gate-crashers, call the police.
- h) Try to play some role in how people leave. Try to encourage taxis, particularly maxi-taxis. Have a say about how many people are getting into a car (and double-check that the driver has not drunk). Check that parents are coming. Try to minimise people walking home, unless they live very close indeed.
- i) Um... have fun.

Mr Michael Parker
Headmaster

