

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

SMASHED PROJECT is a Theatre-in-Education (TiE) programme committed to breaking the culture of underage drinking. SMASHED uses powerful live theatre and interactive workshops to engage students in learning about peer pressure, relationships and the dangers of consuming alcohol. Young audiences follow the lives of three young people and witness how they become involved with alcohol and how it affects their lives. Interactive workshops enable students to explore the facts about underage drinking and develop strategies for resisting peer influence and making positive choices.

SMASHED PROJECT was launched in the UK in 2004, and now spans across 19 countries, reaching 208,952 students in 2019. Adapted for New Zealand audiences, Life Education Trust launched SMASHED in New Zealand in 2019 and have now delivered the programme to over 31,000 year nine students across the country.

WHY ALCOHOL EDUCATION IS CRITICAL IN NEW ZEALAND

- While the legal purchase age is 18, we know drinking alcohol is common amongst young secondary school students: 48.8% of those aged 15 years or under 'currently drink' and 21.4% report they have participated in binge drinking in the last four weeks. (Youth 2000 Series, Auckland University)
- Peer pressure and tactics to respond are important. When asking how they access alcohol: 43.5% of 14 year olds say friends supplied them with alcohol. (Youth 2000 Series, Auckland University)
- Alcohol-related harm in New Zealand has been recently estimated to cost \$5.3 billion per year. This equates to a cost of \$14.5 million every day. (2016/17 NZ Health Survey, Ministry of Health)

OUR REACH

In 2019

20,463



&

In 2020

10,574

students took part
(Tour impacted by lockdown)



INCREASING RANGATAHI SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

The NZ Curriculum outcomes are increased skills and knowledge. Often health education programmes in schools are wrongly evaluated against health outcomes, seeking demonstrable changed behaviour.

SMASHED forms part of a teaching plan, rather than learning in isolation. It supports teachers by providing a platform to continue the learning in class, including teacher resources ensuring the learning extends.



DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLES

Theatre-in-Education delivers key messages utilising well-known education and psychological theory – Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). SCT contends that in addition to direct experiential learning, people learn vicariously by observing models of behavior. It's a tool that can aid a 'whole of school approach' enabling the conversations that flow to transcend all subject areas.

THE ROLE OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

AoD education programmes have an important and measurable educational role to play. They build knowledge and understanding and develop students' skills to critically analyse messages about alcohol and other drugs.

AoD education programmes do not directly influence behaviour change. Although they have sometimes been seen as 'prevention' programmes, they seldom show delay or prevention of AoD use as outcomes. For this reason it is not useful to assess their effectiveness in terms of impact on student behaviour.

Education about alcohol and other drugs is best provided in a context where knowledge and skills contributing to the development of protective factors and minimisation of risk factors can be learnt.

(Ministry of Education AoD guidelines for schools)



SMASHED PROJECT SURVEY SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

This summary highlights the key findings from the 2020 SMASHED PROJECT surveys conducted both pre and post programme delivery by students, and also post delivery by Teachers. Surveys were conducted online during the tour period of June to October 2020.

PARTICIPANTS

The 2020 SMASHED tour visited 50 schools across the country from Whangarei to Dunedin, performing to 10,574 year 9 students.

Students involved were aged 11 – 15 years old, with 97% falling into the 13 – 14 year old age group.

PERCEIVED VALUE OF SMASHED PROJECT

After seeing SMASHED PROJECT

79 PERCENT

of students agreed that it was a 'good way to learn about the dangers of underage drinking.'



97 PERCENT

of teachers agreed that it is important that programmes like this exist in schools.

- 74% of teachers thought their students understood more about the dangers of underage drinking than they did before taking part in SMASHED.
- 88% of teachers thought the performance and workshop explored issues around underage drinking which are relevant to this age group.
- 63% of teachers felt more confident to talk with young people about the dangers of underage drinking after participating in SMASHED.

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE DANGERS OF UNDERAGE DRINKING

After participating in SMASHED 49% of students reported they knew 'lots' about the dangers of underage drinking, an increase in 12%.

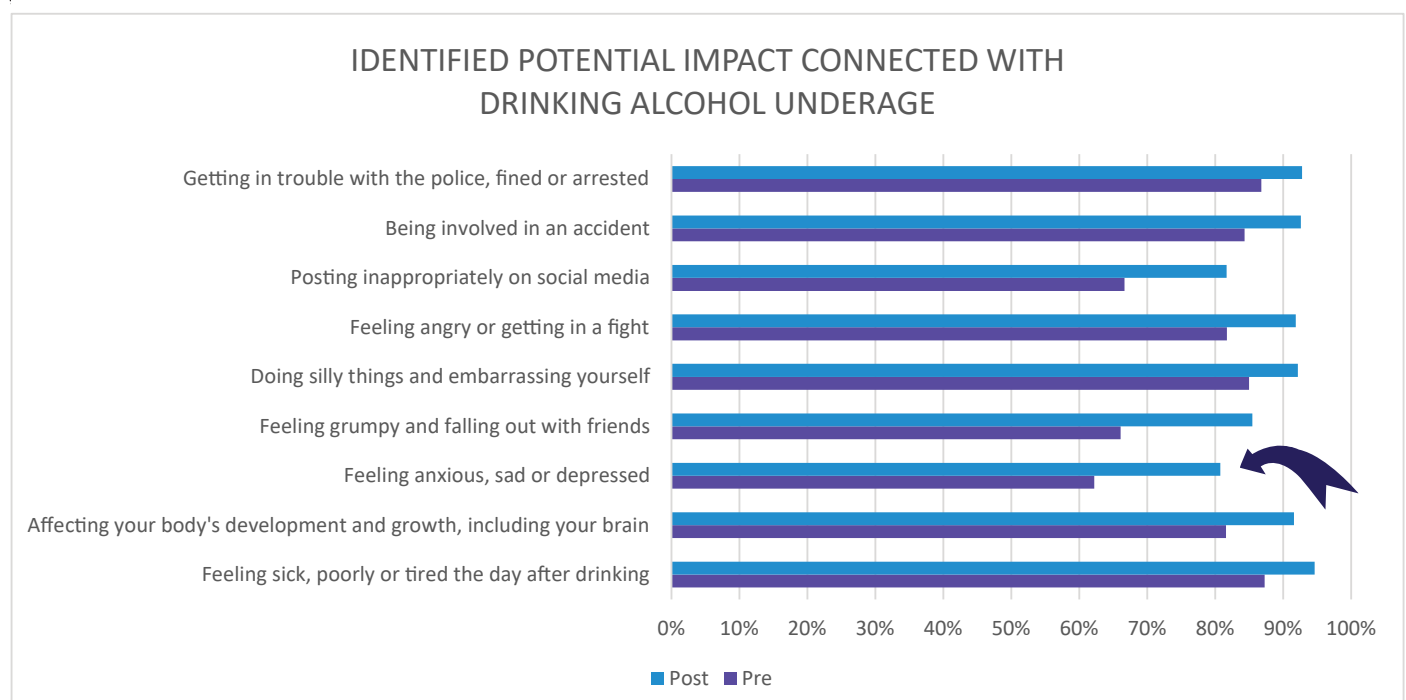
AWARENESS OF THE IMPACTS OF CONSUMING ALCOHOL

Before taking part in SMASHED a high proportion of students had awareness around the potential physical impacts of drinking alcohol such as feeling poorly the next day, impacts on brain and body development, potential to get in trouble, of doing something silly or getting in an accident.

The most significant shift between pre and post knowledge included the mental and emotional impacts; 'feeling sad, anxious or depressed' (19% increase in awareness), 'feeling grumpy and falling out with friends' (19% increase in awareness).

Research shows deteriorating mental health and emotional wellbeing statistics of young people in New Zealand as a whole, with rates of depression and anxiety on the rise¹. To see a large shift in awareness of the impacts that alcohol can have on emotional wellbeing is very encouraging.

We also saw a considerable shift in awareness about 'posting inappropriately on social media' (15% increase in awareness).



KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE LEGAL AGE FOR PURCHASING ALCOHOL

After participating in SMASHED 90% of students were aware of the legal age for purchasing alcohol in New Zealand, compared to 84% prior to taking part.

1. Youth19 Rangatahi Smart Survey

WHERE TO GET SUPPORT

After participating in SMASHED 69% of students knew where they could go to get help if they experience problems with alcohol, an increase in 24%.

With high depression statistics in youth, this increased knowledge of where to seek help is very positive.

PEER PRESSURE

It was observed that students had a high understanding of the term 'peer pressure', before participating in SMASHED. After participating 93% understood this term, an increase of 8%.

Students showed understanding of strategies to stand up to peer pressure if offered alcohol. The most common themes recorded were to:

- Say no
- Remove yourself from the situation
- Provide an alternative option or activity



Response examples:

- "Walk away and say no."
- "Provide a better alternative to do."
- "Be assertive and say NO."
- "Stand up for yourself and tell them about why you choose not to and the dangers."
- "Tell them how you feel about the situation, if they continue remove yourself"
- "I know the dangers of alcohol, I'll pass."
- "No I don't feel comfortable drinking and can you please be respectful of my decision."
- "Say no, strong and firm and stand your ground."



DECISION MAKING

Prior to taking part in SMASHED 78% of students felt equipped to make the right choices about drinking alcohol. After taking part this rose to 86%, showing an increase of 8%.

STUDENTS KEY LEARNINGS

The common themes in response to the most important learning taken from SMASHED were:

- The associated risks and impacts of alcohol
- How to avoid peer pressure
- The importance of making good decisions



Response examples:

- "Don't let people pressure you into doing things you don't want to."
- "The risks of drinking alcohol underage."
- "That you'll always have a decision to make, you just need to choose the right one."
- "Don't drink until you are more developed."
- "What damage it can do to your body and what happens when your drunk."
- "That there can still be discrete ways to say no to alcohol and that it does not have to cause an awkward situation."
- "About how alcohol can affect you and those around you."
- "Think before you act."



TEACHERS' FEEDBACK

- 83% of teachers would like SMASHED to visit their school again next year
- 97% felt the team of actors were professional and competent
- 91% felt SMASHED was well produced and presented
- 88% thought the performance and workshop explored issues around underage drinking which were relevant to the students' age group



Teachers reported that students gained new learnings about (response examples):

- "Our choices have consequences."
- "Links with Peer Pressure. Vital information that has come across from a different perspective (Youngsters rather than teachers!) and medium in the form of the skit. Taking responsibility."
- "Sexual harassment concept, aggressive behaviour can occur when intoxicated, peer pressure is so real!"
- "Legal age of purchase, consequences for well-being, friendship issues, peer pressure and strategies to deal with it."
- "That there are multiple strategies to say 'no' and how to...from a young persons perspective."
- "I think the modeling was great about how to resist pressure to conform to a poor drinking culture. There were some myths busted that needed busting."
- "Behaviours associated with excessive drinking...potential impacts on themselves and others."

CONCLUSIONS

SMASHED PROJECT survey results show students increased understanding about the programme key learning objectives:

- Awareness of the risk of alcohol consumption on the adolescent brain
- The potential risks of underage drinking including the physical and mental health issues, anti-social behaviour, accidents and injury and impacts on relationships
- Able to recognise causes of underage drinking for example peer pressure and social influence and identify strategies to resist these pressures
- Raised awareness about personal responsibility in making positive choices around alcohol and keeping safe
- Understanding where to go for help

Survey results show that Teachers' confidence in teaching this topic was increased. A significant majority of teachers would like their students to participate in SMASHED again next year.

Throughout teachers' feedback it was evident that students experiences with alcohol in year 9 are varied, with existing knowledge levels differing greatly from student to student, and school to school. Teachers reported that through the Theatre-in-Education style of teaching, the young SMASHED acting team were able to create scenarios that felt relevant to students reinforcing existing knowledge from a different perspective.

SMASHED creates a safe place for students to learn about and discuss the topics of underage drinking, peer pressure and relationships. It encourages students to engage in further discussion among their peers.

Teachers shared that the language used in the performance at times didn't feel very 'kiwi' and the performance lacked in use of te reo Maori. This is an area that we will look to improve in the future.

SMASHED increased students knowledge in all aspects surveyed. To add to this knowledge and the value of the programme teachers are encouraged to continue exploring key learning points after taking part. To support integration into the school classroom, lesson plans and teaching resources are provided to schools. In the future we plan to further promote resource use and track uptake analytics.

The large majority of students were engaged with the programme and agreed that it was a 'good way to learn about the dangers of underage drinking.'

After participating in SMASHED, rangatahi have a higher understanding of the potential impacts of underage drinking making them more equipped to make positive choices in the future.