

Sample Mentoring Activities and Case Studies.

Mentoring is flexible and can - and should - be tailored to suit the individual needs of the young people who will be involved in the program.

What works for one community may not work for the next, so an assessment of the community's needs is recommended to ensure the program is what the young people want and ensure it can be supported by the community.

Here are some success stories of mentoring programs run by our LDATs:



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Then

In 2017, a proportion of high school students in various locations across Queensland were identified as being at-risk of disengagement from school – a risk factor for alcohol and other drug use.

The Blue EDGE (Educate, Develop, Grow, Empower) Program is designed to use physical training as a tool to engage young people before school. Students take part in two sessions per week for eight weeks.

Each morning session involves 30 to 45 minutes of physical activity, followed by showers, a healthy breakfast and mentoring and life skills sessions. A bus transports students to school, ensuring they attend for the day.

Improved attitudes towards police, school and community were recorded following participation in the program. Students showed increased self-esteem, resilience, respect for others, improved mental health, increased school retention, improvements in school performance and a positive view of the future.

The LDAT was assisted by KPMG to develop an evaluation framework for the Blue EDGE Program. The evaluation, produced in June 2018, found that overall, the program achieved its goals in strengthening school engagement in the local area. In all, 28 programs were completed between 2017 and mid-2019.

Now

Queensland Blue Light LDAT continues to roll out the program across Queensland. It delivered 14 further Blue EDGE Programs by the end of 2019 in Logan, Cunnamulla, Murgon, Charters Towers, Townsville, Cairns West, Marsden, Park Ridge, Charleville, Manunda, Mount Morgan and Capalaba. The communities have welcomed the program back in a number of areas.

The evaluations conducted by KPMG on these programs continue to show positive outcomes for the participants. In the most recent evaluation of 71 participants, 95% of the students demonstrated increased resilience post-program. Additionally, 75.9% demonstrated increased self-esteem and 72.4% talked more positively about others.

Partner organisations in this LDAT are Queensland Blue Light Association, Queensland Police Service, Queensland Police Citizens Youth Welfare Association and local high schools.



Pictured left and right: QLD Blue Light LDAT's Blue EDGE program



Then

There was concern in the Hepburn community regarding relatively high numbers of students disengaged from learning and at risk of leaving school early, resulting in restricted opportunities for further education and employment. Lack of engagement, academic failure, unemployment, poor mental health and low attachment to school and community are all risk factors for harm from alcohol and drug use.

In 2018, a group of 16 students from Daylesford Secondary College participated in a 19-week hospitality program called 'The Cook, The Chef and Us'. They spent one day a week in the program, instead of their regular Year 9 and 10 school classes.

The program educated them about potential future opportunities, encouraging them to find part-time employment and increasing their skills, aspiration and confidence in the hospitality industry.

Students were given the opportunity to complete three hospitality certificates throughout the course: Safe Food Handlers, Responsible Service of Alcohol and Barista Training. The industry certificates gave participants practical skills for employment advancement and provided a sense of hope in their ability to thrive in the future beyond school.

At the end of the course, students hosted and catered a launch event for their families and friends.

Pictured: The Cook, the Chef and Us Program
- Hepburn LDAT

Now

The evaluation following 'The Cook, The Chef and Us' reported great success in building protective factors. All participants obtained at least one certificate, with many obtaining two or three over the course of the 19 weeks. Students' attendance in the program was at 100%. This was higher than regular school attendance for the same period.

After completing the program, 60% of students showed improvement in their literacy and numeracy skills. Of the participants, 100% identified feeling a sense of achievement in the program, 93% discussed increased self-confidence and confidence in a more positive future, and 80% reported increased social connections.

Following the program, all participants re-enrolled at Daylesford Secondary College in 2019.

“(This program) is the reason I am still at school. I now know I would like to pursue a career in the hospitality industry... I have gained so much confidence.”

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To give you some inspiration, below are some examples of mentoring programs that have been delivered by our LDATs.

Work skilling program

Enhance the success of an existing work skilling program by incorporating three 2hr specialised activity-based workshops, and through the training of eight local mentors. (Logan Youth at Work LDAT).

Before school activities and breakfast

Blue Edge is a successful prevention program which increases the protective factors and decreases the risk factors associated with AOD use in young people with the support of local police and sports clubs, the Blue Edge program sessions consist of physical activity, team building activities, a healthy breakfast, discussions regarding the importance of social connection and the harms associated with alcohol and other drugs, followed by a shower before school attendance. (Queensland Blue Light LDAT).

Community Connections

A mentoring program that aims to increase community connections, health and nutrition knowledge, peer support and school attendance among young mothers and school-aged children respectively. (Stonnington Housing Estate LDAT).

Mentoring Excursions

Adding value to existing programs through excursions targeting young people aged 14-18 who have disengaged from school and are at risk of getting involved in substance misuse or crime. The mentoring excursions will work on increasing the protective factors of building self-confidence, trying new skills, building relationships with adults and learning about culture. The excursions are a reward and run alongside an alternative schooling program to prevent the uptake of alcohol or other drugs, incarceration and assisting young people to gain job-ready skills and/or TAFE certificates. (Bunbury Geographe Aboriginal LDAT)

E-Waste Recycling

Substation33 is a social enterprise that specialises in e-waste recycling. Substation33 provides workspace where volunteers and individuals who are long-term unemployed can gain the confidence and skills needed to transition to sustainable employment. Substation33 facilitates this through education and practical engagement with green technology and renewable energy in a collaborative environment. (Logan Youth at Work LDAT).

Links to positive community activities

Shift young Aboriginal people's behaviour by connecting them with community mentors in recreational settings. Mentors (from the LDAT partners, community Elders, sports people, school and police) will be trained to work with the young people and inform them of harms related to alcohol and drug misuse and link them to other community recreational/sporting activities. The young people will be encouraged to maintain their engagement and achieve goals with milestone incentives. (Deniliquin Community LDAT).

Hands on Learning

Offered to 30 Year 7-10 students at a local high school who have low attachment to school and community. The purpose of Hands on Learning is to cater to different ways young people learn and increase their sense of belonging and engagement to school and community. Students build skills and confidence to support employment and complete tasks that build self-confidence and self-esteem. This supports them to re-engage in education, thereby decreasing the chance of becoming involved in risky behaviours such as early age alcohol use, leading to disengagement from school. (Geelong Drug Action Network).

Photography

Engaging local LGBTQI young people to share their experiences and awareness of drugs and alcohol through a camera lens. These young people will attend up to six exploratory sessions where the participants will experience a positive mentoring relationship with attending AOD service experts and discuss AOD use its impact on community and self. They will explore future hopes and harm reduction techniques with experts, whilst using photography to showcase their experiences and learnings. These photos will then be showcased at a launch event at the project conclusion. (Regional Victoria LGBTQI LDAT).



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Community and Cultural Connectedness

Provide diversionary activities for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders that develop skills and provide participants with opportunities to increase community connectedness and relationships with their culture. These are protective factors that reduce the risk of alcohol and drug use. (Catch N Cook LDAT).

Music Mentoring

A music mentoring program that can be available and cost effective in any setting. A digital system, initiated through necessity due to Covid, will enable young people from diverse settings to participate in one-on-one mentoring sessions, online and in person, experiencing positive social connections and self-confidence in making healthy life choices. (Auburn Youth Sound Project).

Music Industry activities

Encouraging young people's engagement by mentoring them through music industry activities to promote their self-esteem, self-awareness, and positive connections. The program also established a connecting platform (links, network) for organisations (learning centres, businesses and local services). This supports young people in their life transitions by raising outside organisation's awareness of local young people and their current issues, including protective and risk factors. (MNC Youth Pathways Project).

Fitness Program

Increasing physical activity, personal hygiene and nutrition education for local young people. The program aims to result in an increase in awareness of a healthy mindset, ability to build cohesive teams, and to understand the significance of social connections that reduce the likelihood of drug and alcohol use. Programs focus on the importance of health and wellbeing, including AOD and respectful relationships. The aim is to support these young people in building positive relationships and trust in a fun environment that encourages wellbeing, fitness and good decision making. (Nanyapura) (Campaspe LDAT).

Build a Bike

This program will teach participants new skills, with attainable outcomes and acknowledgement of success. Participants will build self-confidence and self-worth while providing them with an end result of a motorised bike or opportunity to make their own custom push bike. The relaxed atmosphere will allow our trained mentors to work closely with participants, discussing AOD issues and providing greater awareness to the risks associated with drug use. Potential employment opportunities may be offered to successful program participants. (Maryborough LDAT).

Fun Friday activities

The program will feature monthly Friday night activities that are fun, engaging, inspirational, empowering, challenging and physical, organised and run by trained mentors. Underlying these activities will be drug and alcohol awareness and prevention promotion. These activities will provide a consistent avenue for young people to access information and support around drug and alcohol issues, in a relaxed, safe and social environment, with trained mentors in attendance. (Waroona LDAT).

Street Art

This program is intended to engage young people in learning the skills to create a large-scale street artwork in a supportive environment free of drugs and alcohol. The artists will mentor and teach participants the skills to create the artwork. The project will be launched at an event which the participants will help to plan. The participants will be encouraged to attend RAYS outside the workshop times to work on the project, while also providing opportunities to link participants with broader programs, social support services, such as skills building, employment and educational programs. (Redcliffe LDAT).

She's Game

Working in partnership with previous program recipients and local sporting clubs the program enables individuals to understand what role they can play in community leadership. This program aims to support participants to influence their community to discourage the use of alcohol and other drugs, drive actions that advance gender equality and challenge violence-supportive attitudes, norms and practices. The mentorship programs will acknowledge the important role that sporting clubs can have in increasing female participation, broadening the opportunities for women and girls (including leadership opportunities), and increasingly recognising the contributions of women and girls. (Moorabool DAG).

Turtle Tagging

Multiple preventative activities are delivered to the wider community through this program. Turtle tagging activities, which occur on country, have previously been a successful way to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and connect them with their culture. (Uncle Alfred Men's Group).

<https://community.adf.org.au/run-activities/stories/way-up-whittlesea/>