
INFORMATION SHEET FOR STUDENTS

Title: A comparison of 2-, 4- and 8-lesson versions of Media Smart: An 8-lesson school program that has previously been found to reduce eating disorder risk factors

Researchers:

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Purpose of the study:

Previous studies have found the 8-lesson *Media Smart* program improves body image and other eating disorder risk factors (e.g., depressive symptoms, weight-based teasing). This project aims to find out if shorter versions (2-lessons and 4-lessons) can

- Also improve body image and other eating disorder risk factors:
- Can be as effective as the full 8-lesson program.

This project is supported by Flinders University School of Psychology.

What is Media Smart?

Media Smart is an 8-lesson program suitable for girls and boys in early high school. Topics covered include techniques used by the media to manipulate images, ideas for how to analyse and challenge media messages, tips for handling pressure placed on young people and planning for how to move through adolescence and beyond as a skilful and confident person. Negative body image is a very common concern for adolescents and thus *Media Smart* is designed to address and prevent this.

What will I be asked to do?

Year 7 and Year 8 students in your school are being asked to take part in a research project to help test out ways to improve body image. Some classes will receive lessons from presenters in our research team while other classes will receive a handout on how to develop positive body image. These lessons come from *Media Smart*– a program that involves learning about the media that has been rated by other adolescent girls and boys as enjoyable and valuable, and which has been found to improve body image. This research seeks to test out if shorter versions of *Media Smart* are as effective as the usual 8-lesson version.

All students will be asked to complete a confidential, online questionnaire, which will take about 25 minutes, during class time with your teacher. The questionnaire will ask about your thoughts about your: body image; mood; and media use. These questionnaires help us to evaluate if the programs were effective. The questionnaires will be completed on 4 occasions: before the program; after the program, and then 6-months; and, 12-months later.

We would like to use the answers from your questionnaires in our research. At the start of the questionnaire, you will be asked to sign a assent form if you are happy for your questionnaire answers to be used in our research.

What benefit will I gain from being involved in this study?

You will either get to participate in lessons that are designed to improve the way young people feel about themselves, or have access to information on developing positive body image. If results from the questionnaires show the program/s are valuable, they may become part of the curriculum in a large number of schools. Please note that you might not directly benefit from taking part in this research.

Will I be identifiable by being involved in this study?

Questionnaires will be completed during class time thus participation will not be anonymous to teachers or peers. However, all questionnaire answers will be confidential. We will assign a special ID number for you so your name can be removed straight away from the information you give us and stored separately and securely by password. When all four rounds of questionnaires over the next 12-months have been matched by ID, the list of names and ID numbers will be permanently destroyed. Thus, your answers cannot be linked back to you by us or anyone else, such as teachers or parents. Please note that for classes who receive a version of *Media Smart*, the class facilitator will audio record a small number of lessons to assess the quality of programme delivery, but students will not be able to be identified.

Are there any risks or discomforts if I am involved?

We think that being part of this project will be fun and interesting for you, but sometimes it can feel a little uncomfortable answering questions about how you feel about yourself. If filling out the questionnaires brings up some troubling thoughts, and you would like to discuss these issues with someone, you can speak to your teacher or parents, or alternatively see your school counsellor, call the Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800, or speak to your family doctor.

How do agree to participate?

Participation is voluntary. Your participation in the study is entirely voluntary and you can refuse to allow us to use your questionnaire answers for research at any time during the 12 months without needing to give a reason. A student assent form will be given to you. You will be asked to read the form and indicate if you agree to participate.

How will I receive feedback?

On project completion outcomes of the project will be published in the school newsletter.

If you have any further questions about this project, you are welcome to ask your teacher, principal, or contact the lead researcher Dr Simon Wilksch, directly by email as at the top of this Information Sheet.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and we hope that you will accept our invitation to be involved.



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This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project number 7674). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au