

I am Media Smart

<https://mediasmart.flinders.edu.au>

Information for Schools

What is I am Media Smart?

A research trial of two versions of **Media Smart**, a fully online, free and confidential program to help 13-25 year-olds of any gender who wish to feel better about their body.

Is body image a concern in our school?

- Yes, body image has been in the top 3 concerns of young Australians for over a decade (and often #1)
- Poor body image impacts over 75% of adolescent girls and 50% of boys
- Research with 1000 Year 7 and 8s found 45% of boys and 52% of girls had displayed a recent eating disorder behaviour. This study also found strong links between social media use and these behaviours.

What does poor body image impact?

- Many think the only risk of poor body image are eating disorder symptoms
- But it is much broader than this. It is also linked to risk of depressive symptoms, anxiety, poor self-esteem, self-harm behaviours, substance use, sleep problems, unhelpful relationships with food and exercise, reduced academic performance and school attendance and poorer social connections.
- Thus body image has a key impact across psychological, physical, social and academic domains.

What can Media Smart do for young people?

Media Smart has been very effective with 18-25 year-old women, where it: helped those with strong body image concerns and concerning eating symptoms as well as those with mild body image concerns and no eating symptoms; reduced the onset of depressive symptoms; increased quality of life and lowered a further 5 mental health risk factors. The findings were that positive that a Rotary Mental Health Grant was received to expand the program to be suitable for adolescents of any gender, and to reduce social media pressures.

Media Smart does not discuss eating disorders and individuals have no contact with other participants. The program was developed based on our internationally-regarded Media Smart school curriculum.

What does the trial involve?

- Go to <https://mediasmart.flinders.edu.au> and read the study information
- 16-18 year-olds can directly consent to participate, 13-15 year-olds require parental consent (all online)
- Complete the online survey and then be randomly allocated to one of three groups:
 - Media Smart – Weekly: One module per week for 8 weeks
 - Media Smart – Flexible: The user can do the program at the rate they choose
 - Comparison group: A list of 10 tips to help improve body image
- After 8-weeks, participants complete the survey again. The survey is also repeated 6- and 12-months later. This enables us to understand the most effective way to deliver Media Smart
- A \$30 gift voucher will be sent to those who complete all 4 surveys as an appreciation for time
- The research is approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee

What can schools do?

- Please promote the research ASAP to all students aged 13-18 years (Years 7-12) and their parents
- Online is particularly helpful to allow direct access to the weblink (newsletters/Apps/email)
- The research is for young people to do in their own time and thus does not require effort from teachers

You are worthwhile and worth taking care of. Start Now.