

Healthy Young People

How to Use Healthy Young People

Healthy Young People is an inquiry-based program, where young people are supported to take the lead in making healthy choices easier at school.

Rather than telling young people what they need to do to be healthy, HYP aims to empower young people by giving them the authority to create change. By giving young people a voice and engaging them as partners for creating change, HYP aims to increase young people's agency and create positive life-long health and learning habits.

The HYP Missions

Running the complete program involves working with groups of young people to complete one of seven Missions. We recommend that young people work in a team of four or five to complete the Mission steps. If you are working with more than one group, decide whether all teams are going to work towards the same Mission or if each team will complete a different Mission. If more than one group is focussing on the same Mission, they can focus on different strategies to make healthy choices easier.

The seven Missions are:

Make Water the Main Drink

This mission is about making it easy for people to choose water as the main drink at school and helping people recognise the many benefits of drinking water.

We Respect Every Body

This mission is about how people think and feel about themselves. How we think and feel about our bodies is strongly influenced by what's going on around us.

This mission is about making it easy and normal for people at school to accept the physical differences between people, so that people feel good about their bodies and respect differences in other people's bodies.

Make healthy food the main food

This mission is about making it easy for people to choose healthy food as the main food at school, and helping people recognise the benefits of making healthy food the main food.

We log enough sleep

This mission is about making it easier for people to log enough sleep every night, and helping people recognise the many benefits of getting enough sleep.

Stand Up, Sit Less, Screens Down

The mission is about making it easier for people to limit recreational screen time, limit sitting time and break up long periods of sitting at school.

We work our hearts

This mission is about making it easy for people to be physically active at school and helping people recognise the many benefits of physical activity.

Choose your own Mission

This mission is about identifying a different health and wellbeing need in your school community. If you choose your own mission you will need to identify the problem and what you want people to learn, recognise, value or change.

The HYP Mission Steps

To complete the chosen Mission, there are five steps that students access via the [HYP homepage](#)¹

- Choose your HYP mission
- What are the facts?
- What needs to change?
- Your mission action plan
- Reflect and celebrate

Each step contains three activities to help young people investigate their Mission. See [The HYP Mission Steps and Activities](#) (page 4).

[All HYP Resources are available to download here.](#)²

Here are some suggestions on how to run the mission steps with young people.

Option 1 – Independent learning

HYP participants work through the activities at their own pace via the website and downloadable thinking tools. We recommend this option only for students working at an A or B level.

Option 2 – Teacher/worker led

Use the activities as lesson plans to guide young people through the activities, discussions and thinking tools,

Option 3 – A combination

Use a combination of independent and teacher led learning.

- There may be some activities that young people can do at their own pace, while you may prefer to lead others and/or
- There may be some young people with the capacity to work independently while other students may need intensive support.

Option 4 – Integrate with your own curriculum

Use the structure of the Mission steps but use your own strategies or activities to achieve the goals or use some of the HYP activities as part of your existing program.

¹ www.health.tas.gov.au/healthyyoungpeople

² www.health.tas.gov.au/healthyyoungpeople/hyp_resources

Healthy Young People

The HYP Mission Steps



General Advice for Running HYP

Adapt HYP to your needs

The HYP activities are flexible and can be adapted depending on the young people you are working with. Before running HYP, complete the Audit Tool to look at what other programs, processes are already happening and how they could complement each other.

Here are some ways HYP can be adapted:

- If time is limited, it is possible to omit some of the activities while still achieving the five Mission steps.
- Substitute different strategies to achieve the same outcome. See some of our suggested Additional Strategies.
- Incorporate content or learning strategies from your existing program or curriculum into the 5 mission steps OR use HYP activities within your existing programs or curriculum.

Get commitment

Commitment from leadership and staff is essential. To genuinely consult and empower young people it is important to value their input and commit to implementing their suggestions and projects.

Aim for sustainability

HYP will have the most impact on young people if the program is run regularly with multiple groups:

- Creates a continuous inquiry cycle to achieve the HYP missions.
- The program will become recognised by young people, families, staff and community
- More changes can be made to make healthy choices easier,
- Young People, families, staff and community see the value.

Provide support

Use the HYP Missions to support young people to initiate changes that make healthy choices easier:

- Support student learning and develop health literacy skills
- Support students to refine their visions and plans
- Assist students to implement strategies that help make the healthy choice the easy choice
- Not all ideas or projects will be successful. Encourage students to regard failure as an opportunity for learning and part of innovation.

Get staff involved

Don't leave everything up to young people. Also consider what can be progressed by staff. Reynolds (2004) argued that successful school change is created when it is approached as both a top-down and bottom-up process; where the top-down processes provide strategic direction and goal setting whilst the bottom-up processes involve diagnosis and action.³ Consider what staff could do to implement a whole-school approach. For example, are there policies that can be developed to support student activities?

³ Reynolds, D (2004). *School Effectiveness, School Improvement*. London & New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Running HYP in Your School

Adapt HYP to your needs

HYP recognises all schools operate differently. How your school incorporates the HYP Missions and which students you work with to achieve them, will be very dependent on the needs of your school.

There are several ways that you can use the HYP resources in your school

- Work with existing class(es) to complete all 5 Mission Steps within the HPE curriculum
- Work with existing class(es) to complete all 5 Mission Steps as an integrated curriculum unit.
- Incorporate HYP activities and resources into an existing program.
- Incorporate your existing learning strategies into the HYP Mission Steps
- Create a specific HYP class or group as an elective or lunchtime activity
- Run HYP with existing group such as student leaders or peer support program

Try using the **10-week Planning Template** to plan your program ([available on the HYP Resources webpage](#)).⁴

Health and Physical Education Curriculum Outcomes

Use HYP to achieve student learning goals related to the strand of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education. See The Australian Curriculum for more detail and cross-curricular opportunities.

Personal, social and community health sub-strands and threads	HYP learning outcomes
Being healthy, safe and active <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identities• Changes and transitions• Help-seeking• Making healthy and safe choice	Young people will understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behaviours that promote health and wellbeing.• How to access information and support for health and wellbeing
Communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interacting with others• Understanding emotions• Health literacy	Young people will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop group work skills• Understand how to maintain health and wellbeing• Develop health literacy skills and knowledge
Contributing to healthy and active communities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community health promotion• Connecting to the environment• Valuing diversity	Young people will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand how the environment can encourage or discourage healthy choices.• Develop local strategies to make healthy choices easier.

⁴ www.health.tas.gov.au/healthyyoungpeople/hyp_resources

Running HYP with Young Leaders

Schools may choose to run HYP with a smaller group of student leaders. The HYP mission steps and activities can also be used by services who work with young people.

There may be an existing student leadership group, peer support leaders, youth reference group or working group or you could choose to develop a group of student or youth leaders specifically for HYP.

For schools, the student leaders may be senior students or students from across the grades. Using students from different grades may be a good strategy for building sustainability for achieving the HYP Missions within your school community.

Some suggestions to ensure student or youth leadership works effectively:

- A key adult/teacher needs to be provided with time to support the young people and coordinate the group. Required support may include time, guidance and assistance in implementing actions.
- The school or organisation must have a commitment to listening to young people's voices including an intention to implement the group's Mission Action Plan.
- Spend time developing group relationships.
- Develop clear expectations. Ensure the young people have a clear understanding of what their task is and what are the expectations and limitations of their role. You could write a "job description", a HYP leader's charter or even a letter to the student. It's particularly useful if the young people themselves help to define what their role is.

Find out more about consulting with young people with resources from the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT) and the State-wide Youth Collaborative (SYC):

[Top Ten Tips: SYC's Guide for Consulting with Young People⁵](#)

[SYC's Consultation: A Guide for Young People⁶](#)

[Youth Network of Tasmania's Youth Participation and Leadership Organisation Resource⁷](#)

⁵ www.ynot.org.au/submissions/syc-top-ten-tips-consulting-young-people

⁶ www.ynot.org.au/youth-sector/sector-resources

⁷ <https://bit.ly/2IUNYfT>

Keeping Students Safe and Promoting Health and Wellbeing

The phrase ‘first, do no harm’ is commonly used by health professionals. It is a fundamental principle of health-care that reminds health-care providers to consider the possible harm any health intervention might do.

The phrase is also relevant to working with young people to achieve the HYP Missions. When working with young people, it is important to consider the impact that information and language can have: positive and negative; intended and unintended.

Here are some strategies for keeping young people safe and promoting health and wellbeing.

Group Agreement

When running HYP Missions and activities, it is a good idea to set up a group agreement to guide respectful discussions. Discussing health and wellbeing can be a sensitive topic for many young people.

It is helpful for the young people you are working with to create or contribute to the agreement. Encourage them to consider the following:

- Respect – what is it and how do you show respect?
- How is the group going to work together?
- Confidentiality – what is it and what should remain confidential?

Supporting positive body image

Several of the HYP Missions cover content that is related to body image. When discussing body image with young people, it is particularly important to understand and use safe practices. Be aware that some discussions and strategies can be harmful or triggering to some young people who may be vulnerable to developing disordered eating.

If you are concerned about a young person, help them access support. Eating disorders are a serious mental illness, not a lifestyle choice. Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of all mental illnesses and early intervention is important.

Tips for supporting positive body image:

- Be a body positive role model. Use body friendly language when talking about your own body and the bodies of others. Be inclusive and demonstrate that bodies of all shapes, sizes, colours and abilities deserve respect.
- Use a positive approach to talk about eating, with a focus on balance, variety and eating according to appetite. Use the neutral terms ‘everyday’ and ‘sometimes’ when discussing food. Negative terms like ‘bad’, ‘fattening’ or ‘naughty’ can contribute to feelings of guilt about food choices.
- Encourage students to choose healthy, ‘everyday’ foods most of the time. Avoid focussing on what not to eat. According to the Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013, ‘sometimes’ foods can be included in small amounts as part of a healthy, balanced diet.

- While it's important for students to be able to identify 'sometimes' foods, do not focus solely on the less desirable components of food such as the saturated fat or sugar content. Also consider the positive components such as the vitamin, mineral and fibre content.
- Try to focus on the eating patterns and foods as a whole, rather than getting tied down analysing individual nutrients.
- Focus on exploring and increasing understanding of the things that influence choices – the barriers to, and benefits of, healthy behaviours. For example, when talking about physical activity, explore what discourages young people from participating in sport and recreation activities, and what encourages them. When discussing health goals, focus on what behaviours can be changed or ways the environment can be changed to make healthy choices easier.
- Avoid activities that may harm young people's body image. Don't focus on weight, waist measurement or Body Mass Index as measures of health, or single students out because of their weight or body shape. This can perpetuate the misconception that weight or body shape is the main measure of health.
- Do not do activities or lessons that focus on disordered eating, eating disorders, dieting and/or weight control techniques. For example, don't discuss media reports about people with eating disorders, or use case studies that may inadvertently glamorise disordered eating and eating disorders. There is evidence that focusing on these dangerous behaviours can have the unintended consequence of increasing them.

Other health and safety tips

Safe water consumption

While drinking enough water promotes good health and wellbeing, drinking too much water can be dangerous. Drinking an enormous amount of water can lower the concentration of sodium in the blood and cause cell damage. While extremely rare, it can cause unconsciousness and death if untreated.

It has occurred rarely from:

- Water drinking competitions
- Long bouts of intensive exercise (for example, extreme marathons) if huge amounts of water are consumed without electrolytes being replenished
- Travellers not used to hot climates being determined not to get dehydrated
- 'Rave' parties where illicit drugs are taken.

Practice good ergonomics

It is important to minimise sitting time for young people but take care to ensure safe ergonomic practices in the classroom. For example, it is not appropriate for young people to stand and lean down over sitting-height desks to work.

Increase physical activity safely

For young people who do little physical activity, start with 30 minutes a day of moderated activity, like walking. Over a week or two, build it up to 60 minutes of moderate – vigorous activity a day.