



# NEDDC e-Bulletin

Issue Nine | March 2013

# NEDC e-Bulletin

Issue Nine | March 2013

## Editor's Note:

Welcome to the March issue of the NEDC e-Bulletin. This month we are focusing on issues, research and resources of relevance to educational professionals who play an essential role in delivering key messages and raising awareness of eating disorders to young people. In this issue we're also highlighting opportunities for members of the eating disorders sector to get involved.

We hope you enjoy this edition and if you would like to suggest topics or events to be featured in future editions of the e-bulletin, please contact us at [nedc@thebutterflyfoundation.org.au](mailto:nedc@thebutterflyfoundation.org.au).

## Contents

Prevention across the spectrum.....	3
Latest research: school-based prevention programs.....	5
Education professionals guide to the NEDC website.....	7
Opportunities to get involved.....	9

## Prevention across the spectrum

### Australian school-based prevention programs



Researchers from Flinders University, La Trobe University and University of Western Australia are working on a novel strategy to simultaneously reduce the risk of both eating disorders and obesity among young people.

Believed to be the first attempt in Australia to take a combined prevention approach to eating disorders and obesity, the study has involved a trial of three school-based programs with 2,000 Year 7 and Year

8 students across SA, Victoria and WA over the past two years.

As part of the study, students have been allocated to one of three separate prevention programs consisting of eight lessons in areas such as media representation, body image and self-esteem. The programs are Media Smart, Life Smart and The HELPP Initiative. Students allocated to one of these programs are being compared to a control group of students who did not receive a program and followed for 12-months with the final questionnaire data currently being collected and findings likely to be released in the second half of the year.

Chief investigator Dr Simon Wilksch, a Postdoctoral Research Fellow based in the School of Psychology at Flinders University, said the aim of the project was to see whether one or more of the programs could reduce risk factors for eating disorders and obesity at the same time.

“Prevention programs usually focus on only one of the problems. This has raised concerns with some people suggesting that obesity prevention efforts could worsen young peoples’ body image while others suggest that eating disorder prevention might not focus enough on the importance of healthy weight,” Dr Wilksch said.

“But we now know there are common risk factors for both problems, such as body dissatisfaction and strict dieting, so theoretically a program that can reduce these collective risk factors should reduce the risk of both problems,” he said.

“In my view, a combined approach to preventing these important problems is important in order to ensure we’re not running the risk of sending confusing messages to young people.”

If the findings did show that one or more of the programs could prevent the two issues simultaneously, Dr Wilksch said it was hoped the programs would be made widely available throughout Australian schools “to help as many young people as possible”.

“Body image concerns and eating disorders are problems that affect thousands of young Australians.

“Research tells us that body image is consistently in the top three concerns of adolescent girls and boys, while disordered eating is experienced by nearly a quarter of young Australian women.

“We’re also well aware that obesity conveys a range of negative physical, psychological and economic consequences so it’s really important that we do all we can to prevent these problems and taking a combined approach, we believe, could have more positive results.”

To find out more about this prevention program visit the [Media Smart website](#).

## Latest research: school-based prevention programs



*The National Eating Disorders Collaboration collects and provides the latest evidence based research and information available on eating disorders from Australia and around the world. The topics included in our [Knowledge Hub](#) are wide ranging and recognise the physical, social and emotional aspects and the broad spectrum of eating disorders.*

*Each month in the e-Bulletin we highlight some of the research and information uploaded regularly on our website. This month we are focusing on research related to school based prevention programs.*

### ***What do young people think about eating disorders and prevention programmes? Implications for partnerships between health, education and informal youth agencies.***

This study explores young people's perceptions of eating disorders, the risks and consequences of developing an eating disorder, and the effectiveness of education and prevention programmes. Eating disorder prevention programmes are predominantly school-based, target young women, and are delivered in weekly sessions for a six or eight-week period. There is evidence that programmes can increase short-term knowledge but less evidence for their impact on attitudes and behaviours. [Read more](#)

### ***Evaluation of a school-based programme of universal eating disorders prevention: Is it more effective in girls at risk?***

There is currently controversy surrounding the effectiveness of universal versus selective prevention in eating disorders (ED). The present study aims at evaluating the effectiveness of universal school-based ED prevention administered to female secondary school students. [Read more](#)

### ***Assessing the Landscape: Body Image Values and Attitudes Among Middle School Boys and Girls.***

The present study investigated several attributes associated with body image among male and female middle school students in a diverse suburban middle school. Discussion: learning modules that review typical development of middle school children's bodies, how to become advertising savvy, types of dieting (e.g., binge eating), and how to recognize “at risk” groups should be developed to keep pace with the evolving societal definitions of body image and how students can take a defensive position in controlling their own definitions of a healthy body image. [Read more](#)

### ***Effects of an Internet-based Prevention Programme for Eating Disorders in the USA and Germany — A Meta-analytic Review.***

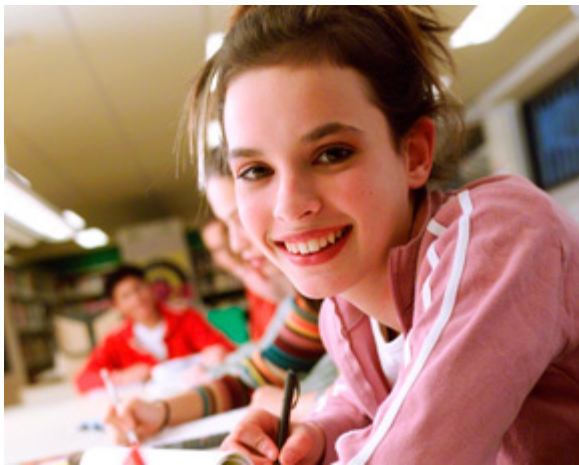
A cross-cultural comparison of a cognitive–behavioural, Internet-based, 8-week prevention programme for eating disorders (StudentBodies™) evaluated in the USA and in Germany was performed. Six US and four German randomized controlled trials with a total (N) of 990 female high school and college students were included in the review. [Read more](#)

### ***Disordered Eating Prevention Programme in Schools: A 30-Month Follow-up.***

This study aims to evaluate the long-term effects of a school-based prevention programme administered to adolescents; the purpose of the said programme was to reduce disordered eating attitudes and sociocultural influences on the internalisation of the aesthetical body ideal. [Read more](#)

Find other research on [Health Promotion and Prevention](#) in our Knowledge Hub.

## Education professionals guide to the NEDC website



*The NEDC website has a large number of online resources designed to meet the needs of different audiences. We have created this guide to help **education professionals** find appropriate resources and relevant website content.*

Education professionals can play a crucial role in the prevention of eating disorders and are also often in positions where they can support recovery in people with eating disorders.

Research shows that adolescents are confused about eating disorders. Young people recognise that eating disorders are potentially harmful; however they also accept body ‘obsession’ and dieting as normal parts of growing up. Educational institutions play a large and ongoing role in the influence of young people and are therefore instrumental in delivering positive messaging about body image, healthy eating and exercise behaviours.

### ***Eating disorders awareness for educators***

In order to raise awareness of the devastating impact of eating disorders on our society, education around the promotion, prevention, early intervention and management of eating disorders is vital, especially in the education sector. You can find information about improving eating disorders health literacy in the following sections of the NEDC website.

For schools

How to communicate about eating disorders

Key messages

Target audiences

Breaking down barriers

Mental health literacy

Increasing professional skills

Preventing eating disorders  
Primary prevention  
Secondary prevention  
How to make prevention programs effective

Eating disorders and obesity  
The Boomerang effect

### ***Resources and professional development***

The NEDC website also provides information on a number of programs and resources to improve knowledge and professional skills for educators in a school environment.

School programs  
Guidelines  
Professional development

### ***How to help***

For early intervention to occur, young people and those in their circle of support need to be able to recognise and respond to warning signs. The following pages of the NEDC website provide information on what to say and do.

How to help  
Recognise the warning signs  
What to say and do

### ***Get informed***

Being as informed as possible about eating disorders will help you identify the warning signs in someone you are concerned about and help you understand what they are going through. Our [Eating disorders explained](#) section contains essential information about eating disorders.

You can also download our evidence based [Fact Sheets](#) and check what you have heard about eating disorders on our [myths page](#).



## Opportunities to get involved

*As a collaboration the NEDC depends on the experience and expertise of all the people involved in the prevention and management of eating disorders. This month we would like to invite you to provide us with assistance in the NEDC evaluation and your feedback on the resources required by schools. Kind thanks for your assistance in making the work of the NEDC possible.*

### Tell us what you need to support eating disorders prevention in schools



The NEDC currently provides an **e-network for clinicians** but we are considering further networking and professional development opportunities for NEDC's other stakeholder groups. This planning includes consideration of an e-Network for teachers and we would love to get your feedback on this.

Do you believe this would be a useful resource for school staff? If not, what other resources or support do you believe would be helpful? Please vote in our poll and for other comments and suggestions please send us an email at [nedc@thebutterflyfoundation.org.au](mailto:nedc@thebutterflyfoundation.org.au).

### Evaluation survey: we need your feedback



As we approach the end of the second phase of the NEDC, we are participating in an evaluation of the past three years of the project.

The **evaluation survey** is intended to help us understand what is working in the NEDC and where there are opportunities for improvement. The information will be collated and used to report to the NEDC Steering Committee and the federal Department of Health and Aging, as well as to plan future collaboration activities in the eating disorders sector.

As members, we need your feedback! Your feedback will help gain a full, accurate picture of the work of the NEDC and improve experience for members and the eating disorders sector in the future.

Please take a few moments to complete the [online survey by 2nd April](#).

If you have difficulties completing the survey online, but would like to provide feedback on your experience as a member of the NEDC, you can participate in an interview with the project evaluator via phone or Skype. Please contact Amy Fallon on 02 84563903 or [oramy@thebutterflyfoundation.org.au](mailto:oramy@thebutterflyfoundation.org.au) and we will arrange an interview time for you.

Participation in the evaluation is confidential.

Thanks in advance for playing an important part in the ongoing development of the NEDC and the eating disorders sector

