



'Where are your choices taking you?' session outline

This session outline has been developed as a facilitation tool for the video "Where Are Your Choices Taking You?" It is suitable for year 10, 11 and 12 students. By demonstrating the negative consequences of unsafe road behaviours, it is hoped young people will avoid getting themselves into risky situations. It is recommended that this session outline be used as part of a comprehensive approach to road safety.

- 1) Introduce the video "Where Are Your Choices Taking You?" as a short video that features six young West Australians who have sustained spinal cord injuries through road trauma as a result of the choices they made.
 - Play the video
- 2) De-brief the video.
 - Ask the group if they have any comments and/or thoughts about the video (e.g. How did it make them feel/did they learn any new information?).
 - Ask the students what were the main factors which lead to the road crashes (take notes on the board). Look for speeding, alcohol, not wearing a seatbelt, overcrowding, inexperience, fatigue or a combination of these factors.
 - Reinforce that there are life changing and serious consequences of dangerous driving practices and that every choice has a consequence.
- 3) Discuss details of the spine and spinal cord injury.
 - Explain to the students the role of the spinal cord within the body.
 - i.e. relays feeling and movement messages from the brain to other parts of the body. It helps us to move and feel, and if it becomes damaged, the body can lose those sensations. If someone does injure their spinal cord, they could become quadriplegic or paraplegic and they may need to use a wheelchair for the rest of their lives, just like the people in the video.
 - **Paraplegia** – Loss of sensation and/or movement in the lower body, i.e. affects only two limbs and lower trunk. Motor and sensory function is lost from injury site down.
 - **Quadriplegia** – Loss of sensation and/or movement in four limbs, i.e. affects arms, legs and trunk. This does not mean that there is complete loss of both arms and legs, for example someone with quadriplegia may still have movement of their arms. Motor and sensory function is altered from injury site down, usually in the neck region.
- 4) Demonstrate with some toothpaste the consistency of the spinal cord (the spinal cord is very similar to toothpaste and it is a great demonstration for the students to understand how fragile the spinal cord is).
 - Squeeze out a line of toothpaste onto a piece of paper and then ask a student to put their finger through it.
 - Encourage another student to try and put the toothpaste back into its original cylindrical form.

- The outcome is that students will find that the toothpaste cannot be put back together.
 - Explain that the same thing happens to the spinal cord when it becomes damaged – it cannot be repaired.
- 5) Ask students if they know anyone with paraplegia/quadriplegia or anyone that uses a wheelchair.
- Discuss who, why, where and how
- 6) Ask the students to identify road behaviours which increase chances of a crash.
- Write these up on the board. Look for fatigue, alcohol, drugs, driving in dangerous conditions, under developed driving skills and risk taking behaviour.
 - Highlight the high level risk groups (younger people (17-24), inexperienced drivers and males). People aged 15-24 make up 15% of the Australian population, but account for 31% of road crash fatalities.
- 7) Student Activity:
- Present scenarios to the class showing situations that involve different risks and the consequences (e.g. alcohol, drugs, speeding, fatigue, over-crowded car, etc). Two real life scenarios are available on the **PBFPREVENTION – road** website under the 'Your Choice' section.
 - Divide the class into groups.
 - Give each group a different scenario.
 - The groups then need to identify the risk factors involved and the choices/alternatives that could have been made to prevent the situation.
 - Have each group present back to the class about their scenario, the risk factors that were involved and the alternatives available.

Resources required:

- 'Where are your choices taking you?' video.
- Tube of toothpaste.
- Butcher paper and pens for scenario exercise.