

Develop a Plan B

Young people can get caught up in a social setting that they would prefer not to be in, such as at a party where the behaviour and activity of others is starting to make them feel uncomfortable. How could they get out of such a situation when faced with peer pressure to remain? This is often easier said than done.

It is important for young people to have rehearsed and practiced a fool proof strategy that they can put into practice if confronted with a setting that they would like to remove themselves from. These activities might help.

- a. Start by encouraging student discussion of what a 'Plan B' actually is and why it is a good idea to have one.

Ensure that students realise that a Plan B is a fool proof alternate plan (probably best made up of a number of options, Plan B, C and D etc.) to be followed in scenarios when they might see themselves getting caught up in unsafe situations.

- b. Students to individually create a draft Plan B.

This plan may include phoning a family member (more than one alternative might be required) to come to pick them up (try setting up a contract between parent and child that ensures this under any circumstance), staying over at someone's house close to the party, calling for a taxi or Uber, catching public transport, allocating a responsible peer to be skipper for the night (how might this work? What happens if the designated skipper has been drinking or is no fit state to drive?).

The plan must ensure that they have backup, fool proof, alternatives in place to ensure that they do not ever hop into a vehicle with an unsafe driver.

- c. Involvement of parents/guardians.

Students must be encouraged to discuss their plan with their parents or guardians. Once this is done, and an agreement is reached between the student and parents/guardians, have the student formalise this in a contract. They should get their parents/guardians to sign off on it. Perhaps other people are part of the plan B. If this is the case, they would also need to be parties to the agreement.

- d. Important considerations include:

- » For these plans to be effective they need to be practiced. Discuss alternatives if the plan fails.
- » Students need to be able to find a socially acceptable way out of an unsafe situation. Might they have a code word that they can say to their parent over the phone that peers don't recognise as a plea for help?
- » Peers need to be able to look out for each other and be able to intervene when a friend is in need.