



VOLATILE SUBSTANCE USE

A guide for media reporting

Introduction

Volatile substance use is the deliberate inhalation of substances for their intoxicating effects. It is also referred to as inhalant use, solvent use, sniffing or chroming.

Products commonly used are easily accessible and include petrol, glue, spray, paint, butane gas, aerosol sprays or paint thinner.

Similar to the reporting of topics such as suicide, reporting of volatile substance use should aim to tell the story in a way that avoids inadvertently encouraging copycat behaviour.

Volatile substance use in the media

The media can significantly influence community attitudes to alcohol and other drug issues.

When reporting on volatile substance use, media has an opportunity to educate and deter potential users while respectfully reporting on people experiencing substance use. The following guidelines provide suggestions on how to report on volatile substance use responsibly.

What to avoid

When reporting on volatile substance use try and avoid the following:

- publishing product names
- publishing images of products
- describing how and where products are purchased and the cost
- information depicting methods of use, for example how to inhale.

What to include

When reporting on volatile substance use it is recommended that:

- Reports articulate the highly dangerous and potentially deadly nature of volatile substance use.
- Images of emergency doctors, drug and alcohol specialists, school teachers or other influential community members are used in lieu of images of the practice occurring.
- Where possible use the phrases “volatile substance use” and “inhalant use” rather than detailing the products used.
- For contact details of service providers in your region to support people struggling with substance use please contact Queensland Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies (QNADA) on (07) 3023 5050 or info@qnada.org.au.
- At the end of each report include information where individuals, their family or friends can seek help in their local area. For example: *If you or someone you know requires support in relation to volatile substance use please contact XXX on XXX. If someone is in need of urgent medical help Call 000.*

For more information

For further guidance on the reporting of volatile substance use please contact the National Indigenous Australians Agency media team on media@niaa.gov.au.

Further information about the effects of volatile substance use can be found on the health.gov.au.