

What is the Drugs.ie 'Let's Talk About Drugs' National Youth Media Awards Competition?

The Drugs.ie 'Let's Talk about Drugs' National Youth Media Awards is an annual competition which encourages the discussion of drug-related issues by inviting young people to produce a piece of original content relating to drugs and/or alcohol.

The competition encourages young people between the ages of 12-25 to get creative and make either an audio, poster, article or video entry about drugs or alcohol that can be used to educate their peers. Each year two themes are chosen by the organisers based on drug and alcohol related issues. The themes for the 2017 competition are:

1. Why do some young people use drugs?
2. What is the impact of alcohol on relationships?

The Drugs.ie Media Awards is based on a constructivist education model. This means that the teacher is not expected to be a 'drug expert' and is not expected to provide content on the competition themes to the class. Instead, students are urged to be actively involved in their own process of learning. Students are encouraged to look at their own beliefs and the ideas of the class and compare them to available research and evidence. This means that conversations about drug and alcohol use take place among students, guided by a teacher in a school environment. It is anticipated that by engaging in the competition young people will become familiar with sourcing valid information on drugs and alcohol so that they can make informed decisions for themselves.

The media awards allows students to:

- Express their current beliefs about drugs and alcohol among their peers in a school environment
- Research facts and dispel myths that might have been believed among their peer group.
- Reflect their feelings and express themselves creatively
- Create drug education resources that can be used to educate their peers

Students are recommended to research the themes before creating their entry, however, personal stories and experiences will also be accepted.

Implementing the competition in schools.

The competition coincides with existing modules delivered through the S.P.H.E curriculum. The competition also allows a unique opportunity for the topic of drugs and alcohol to be explored in Art, English and Media class.

Suggestions for creating entries

- The competition can be facilitated in class as individual or group projects
- The competition can be assigned as part of additional homework
- Teachers can include the competition as part of existing drug education delivered through the S.P.H.E curriculum

- Competition themes can be included as part of creative writing lessons
- Posters can be created as projects as part of art lessons
- Students can enter projects external to school in their personal time, among friends, in youth clubs or with groups that they attend
- Schools can run drug awareness initiatives with the entries internally before submitting the entries to the competition

Tips on themes

Why do some young people use drugs?

There are a number of reasons why young people might use drugs, below are a few suggestions.

- Popular culture
- Easy access to drugs
- Friends using/peer pressure
- Family issues or drug use in family
- Curiosity – ‘for a buzz’
- Poverty
- Mental health issues – the use of drugs to self-medicate symptoms
- For pleasure and fun
- Lack of confidence and self-esteem
- Boredom

What is the impact of alcohol on relationships?

Alcohol can impact on relationships in a number of ways, below are some aspects to consider:

- Violence
- Fall out with friends or family
- Parents’ separation
- Child neglect
- Money problems
- Disinhibition – doing things you wouldn’t otherwise do
- Sexual Health
- Sexual assault
- Unimpaired decision making

Messaging

The media awards competition is unique, in that it allows young people to create drug education resources that can be used to inform other young people. When creating entries, students should be encouraged to use messaging that they feel will appeal to their peer group.

Recommended Research

There is a lot of information available about drugs and alcohol online, some of which can be incorrect. Drugs.ie recommend the below websites for sourcing valid information on drugs, alcohol and related issues.

Drugs.ie: <http://drugs.ie/>

Alcohol Action Ireland: <http://alcoholireland.ie/>

Health Research Board, National Drugs Library: <http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/>

European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction: <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/>

The World Health Organisation: <http://www.who.int/en/>

SpunOut.ie: <http://spunout.ie/>

Talk to Frank (UK) : <http://www.talktofrank.com/>

Mental Drinking.ie: <http://mentaldrinking.ie/mental-drinking/>

The Department of Health: <http://health.gov.ie/healthy-ireland/>

Cosc, The National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence: <http://www.cosc.ie/>

The Dublin Rape Crisis Center: <http://www.drcc.ie/>

Reachout.com: <http://ie.reachout.com/>

Recommended pages on the Drugs.ie site

Drugs.ie is Ireland's national drug and alcohol information and support website. It provides information on drugs and alcohol that is relevant to young people, parents and professionals.

The below pages on the Drugs.ie sites are relevant to the 2017 competition themes.

Why some young people take drugs and others don't:

http://www.drugs.ie/drugs_info/for_parents_carers/risks_resilience/

About Drugs Section: http://www.drugs.ie/drugs_info/about_drugs/

Drug Types Section: <http://www.drugs.ie/drugtypes/>

For Teens Section: http://www.drugs.ie/drugs_info/for_teens/

Alcohol information Section: http://drugs.ie/alcohol_info/

The effects of alcohol and drugs on the family:

http://www.drugs.ie/drugs_info/for_parents_carers/effects_on_the_family/

Other useful pages on Drugs.ie site:

Drugs.ie News Section: <http://www.drugs.ie/news/>

Guidelines and Support Booklets:

http://www.drugs.ie/resources/publications/guides_and_support_booklets/

Media Awards Competition, Previous Winners:

http://www.drugs.ie/resources/awards/twentythirteen_winners/

Recommended pages on the European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction website

Drugs and Young People: <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/topics/young-people>

Ireland Country Overview: <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/countries/ireland>

European Drug Report 2016: <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/edr2016>

Recommended reports

North Inner City Drug and Alcohol Task Force. (2015) Just saying... the views of young people about drugs and alcohol. Dublin: North Inner City Drug and Alcohol Task Force.

Link: <http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/24680/1/Just%20Saying%20final.pdf>

TNS Political & Social. (2014) Flash Eurobarometer 401. Young people and drugs. Luxembourg: European Commission.

Link: <http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/22196/13/Eurobarometer%20401%20Young%20people%20and%20drugs%20-%20full%20report.pdf>

Blanchardstown Local Drug and Alcohol Task Force. (2016) Drug and Alcohol Trends Monitoring System (DATMS) 2016. Dublin: Blanchardstown Local Drug and Alcohol Task Force.

Link: <http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/25281/1/BLDATF%202016%20Drug%20and%20Alcohol%20Trends%20Monitoring%20System%20Report.pdf>

