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## INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS

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**Title:** A comparison of 2-, 4- and 8-lesson versions of Media Smart: An 8-lesson school program that has previously been found to reduce eating disorder risk factors

**Researchers:**

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**Purpose of the study:**

Previous studies have found the 8-lesson *Media Smart* program improves body image and other eating disorder risk factors (e.g., depressive symptoms, weight-based teasing). This project aims to find out if shorter versions (2-lessons and 4-lessons) can

- Also improve body image and other eating disorder risk factors:
- Can be as effective as the full 8-lesson program.

This project is supported by Flinders University School of Psychology.

**What is Media Smart?**

*Media Smart* is an 8-lesson program suitable for girls and boys in early high school. Topics covered include techniques used by the media to manipulate images, ideas for how to analyse and challenge media messages, tips for handling pressure placed on young people and planning for how to move through adolescence and beyond as a skilful and confident person. *Media Smart* targets media internalization which refers to when people believe they must look like the ideal images presented in the media.

The program was created because body image has been found to be the number one concern of Australian girls and boys aged 11-24, affecting approximately 75% girls and 50% of boys. Poor body image can have negative flow-on effects across a young person's life, thus *Media Smart* is designed to address and prevent this.

**What will students be asked to do?**

Year 7 and Year 8 classes at your child's school being randomly allocated to one of 4 groups: *Media Smart* – 2 lessons; *Media Smart* – 4 lessons; *Media Smart* – 8 lessons; or, usual school classes plus a handout providing tips on promoting positive body image. Those in the *Media Smart* classes will receive these lessons from presenters from our research team, with the usual school classroom teacher present, during school lesson time.

All classes will be asked to complete questionnaires on 4 occasions over the next 12 months, for no more than 25 minutes per occasion. Questionnaires ask about body image, mood and media usage. Example questions, “Has your weight affected how you judge yourself as a person?”, “I compare my body to the bodies of TV and movie stars”, “How many hours do you usually spend playing outside?”, and “I’ve been dealing with problems well”. We are seeking your consent to use the results from the questionnaires in our research so we can determine if the mindfulness program helps young people.

The results from the questionnaires will be kept confidential, and at the end of data collection, any information identifying individuals will be destroyed. A list of support options is provided in the information sheet given to all students in the unlikely event that the process of students answering questions about how they feel about themselves raises any concerns.

**What benefit will my child gain from being involved in this study?**

Your child will get to participate in lessons that are designed to improve the way young people feel about themselves. If results from the questionnaires show the program/s are valuable, they may become part of the curriculum in a large number of schools. Please note that your child may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.

**Will my child be identifiable by being involved in this study?**

Questionnaires will be completed during class time thus participation will not be anonymous to teachers or peers. However, all questionnaire answers will remain confidential, and no information that could lead to your child’s identification or their school will be released or published. The class facilitators will audio record a small number of lessons so that the team can assess the quality of programme delivery, but students will not be able to be identified. In accordance with usual practice, study results (de-identified questionnaire data) become the property of the researchers and will be published in scientific journals at a later date.

**Are there any risks or discomforts if my child is involved?**

In the unlikely event that completing the questionnaire should raise any concerns for your child, there are a number of people available to contact: your child’s teacher; another appropriate person at your child’s school (e.g., school teacher/school counsellor); your child’s local GP or Kids Help Line (phone 1800 55 1800). Every child who completes a questionnaire will be given a list of free sources of support should they wish to talk to somebody.

**How does my child agree to participate?**

Participation is voluntary. Your child’s participation in the study is entirely voluntary and they have the right to withdraw consent to use their questionnaire information for research purposes at any time over the duration of data collection without needing to give a reason. A student assent form will be given to your child. They will be asked to read the form and indicate if they agree to participate.

**How will I receive feedback?**

On project completion outcomes of the project will be published in the school newsletter.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and we hope that your child will accept our invitation to be involved.



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*This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project number 7674). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email [human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au](mailto:human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au)*