



VOLATILE SUBSTANCE ABUSE

A guide for media reporting

Introduction

Volatile substance abuse 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 abuse should aim to tell the story in a way that avoids inadvertently encouraging copycat behaviour.

Volatile substance abuse in the media

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

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

What to avoid

When reporting on volatile substance abuse 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 abuse it is recommended that:

- reports articulate the highly dangerous and potentially deadly nature of volatile substance abuse
- 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 abuse” and “inhalant use” rather than detailing the products used
- For contact details of service providers in your region to support people struggling with substance abuse please contact The Association of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies NT (AADANT) on (08) 8943 0608 (admin@aadant.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: ***For free and confidential advice about alcohol and other drugs, call the National Alcohol and Other Drug hotline on 1800 250 015. If someone is in need of urgent medical help Call 000.***

For more information

For further guidance on the reporting of volatile substance abuse please contact the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet media team on 02 6271 6039 or media@pmc.gov.au.

Further information about the effects of volatile substance abuse can be found on the [Department of Health website](#).