

Epton, T., Norman, P., Sheeran, P., Webb, T., & Harris, P. (2013). Development of a theory- and empirically-based health behaviour intervention for new university students. *EHPS 2013 Abstracts, Psychology & Health*, 28 (Sup 1), 91. doi: 10.1080/08870446.2013.810851

Abstract

Background: In order to maximise the effect of a health behaviour intervention for new university students, extensive formative research was conducted to construct theoretically- and empirically-based health messages. **Methods/Design:** Three questionnaire studies were conducted with prospective/new undergraduates to identify the key behavioral, normative and control beliefs (from the theory of planned behaviour) associated with fruit and vegetable intake. Parallel studies were also conducted for binge drinking, smoking and exercise. **Results:** Study 1 (N=21) elicited eight modal salient beliefs associated with fruit and vegetable intake. Study 2 (N=702) examined correlations between these beliefs and intentions two weeks before university and behaviour at university (at one-month). Study 3 (N=117) developed supporting messages for six belief correlates based on students' reasons for the beliefs. **Discussion:** This novel approach enables the development of health messages that have a strong theoretical and empirical base, and also ensures the relevance of the health messages.