

StreetTalk
Routes out of drinking, drug use and crime

The
REPORT

JUNE 2012



 **Mentor**
Protecting children from alcohol and drugs

addaction


Home Office

Executive Summary

Street Talk is a pioneering national project completed in March 2012 to help vulnerable young people aged 10 – 19 to reduce or stop alcohol and drug misuse, and to reduce related youth offending. It is aimed at supporting young people who are at risk of, or may already be involved in, substance misuse, but who are not engaged with local specialist services.

The Street Talk project was designed with the overall aim of delivering evaluated interventions to reduce the risks associated with problematic use of drugs and/or alcohol. The use of brief interventions with young people has been evidenced in substance misuse literature for some time.

This short term project has delivered promising results and is able to show that the young people who engaged with Street Talk increased their knowledge and confidence about accessing support and making informed decisions around substance use and overwhelmingly showed an intention to reduce their risk taking behaviours.



Overview

Street Talk was designed specifically to meet the following aims and objectives:

Aims

- Reduce or stop young people's substance misuse by building capacity of voluntary and community sector organisations to deliver effective substance misuse brief interventions
- Reduce or stop young people's involvement in the criminal justice system and anti-social behaviour as a result of their substance misuse
- Disseminate effective practice in reducing substance misuse and offending by young people at the local level

Objectives

- Train non-specialist local practitioners in using substance misuse brief interventions
- Provide practitioners with ongoing advice and support to build capacity and ensure consistency of delivery of interventions
- Embed monitoring and evaluation tools appropriate to local circumstances
- Disseminate the evidence base and learning through policy, practitioner and commissioner networks

Delivery

The project provided local organisations already working with vulnerable young people with the skills and tools required to prevent substance abuse, through the provision of a designated coordinator who specialised in drug and alcohol interventions. The coordinators provided expert training to local organisations on how to deliver an effective brief intervention to young people. This approach was an effective way to reach significant numbers of otherwise hard to reach or vulnerable young people in a very short timescale.

Street Talk used the Project CHAT brief intervention model; a motivational interviewing intervention that takes 15 - 20 minutes to complete. This focuses on assessing a young person's motivation to change, enhancing their motivation for change and then making a plan for future behaviour. Eligibility for the intervention was decided through the use of the CRAFFT screening tool.

Street Talk combined motivational interviewing with web-based, hand-held technology, to engage young people in developing awareness and consider strategies to more effectively manage the social and health risks of substance misuse.

Data collection

Robust data collection systems are fundamental to this project. Equally important is ensuring young people fully participate in providing data and that those working with young people view the collection of data as a critical element.

Street Talk exploited young people's familiarity and enthusiasm for web-based and Smartphone technology to collect data on young people's behaviours and attitudes. The Street Talk trained workers used a specifically designed Smartphone App to securely collect young people's responses; and this data forms the bulk of our outcome findings.

A follow up online questionnaire two weeks after the intervention allowed us to find out in more depth about the impact of the brief intervention on thinking and behaviour.



Street Talk process

Participants:

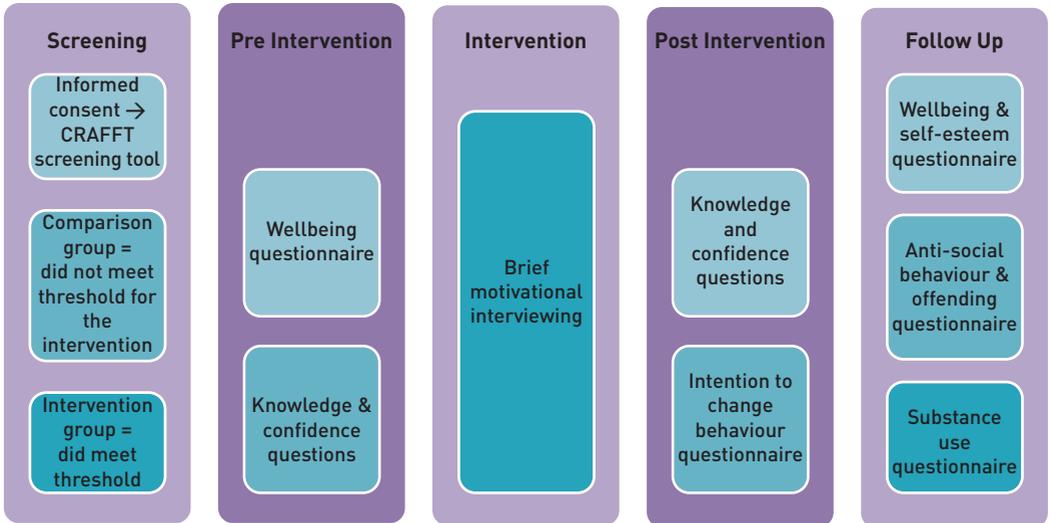
Young people.
10-19 years of age
Identified as being at risk of substance misuse and social vulnerability by grass root organisations.

Evaluation Design:

Pre and post intervention and short term follow up.
Reliable & valid quantitative measures.
Mobile and web-based data collection

Analysis:

Descriptive, parametric and non-parametric analyses to establish:
1. Knowledge & confidence outcomes.
2. Intention to change behaviour outcomes.
3. Wellbeing outcomes.



Results

Screening

Of 2196 young people who were screened, 71% had used alcohol, 39% had smoked cannabis and 9% had used another drug to 'get high' in the last 12 months.

Just over a third (35%) had used more than one substance within the last 12 months.

At Risk

The next step was to identify those eligible to receive the brief intervention. Almost three quarters of these young people were considered to be at some level of risk, and almost two thirds to be at high or severe risk.

Almost half admitted to getting in trouble whilst using substance(s), and 43% disclosed that family and/or friends had expressed a concern that they should cut down on alcohol and/or drug use.

Changes

Of those who received the intervention, more than two thirds said that their knowledge (72%) and confidence (71%) in making informed decisions about safer levels and methods of alcohol and drug use had increased.

Following the intervention, the majority of young people demonstrated a positive intention to change behaviour:

- "I am confident that I know more about drugs and alcohol and can use them more safely in the future"
– 70% agreed, 7% disagreed
- "I know that the decision to take action and use drugs and alcohol more safely is up to me"
– 81% agreed, 5% disagreed
- "If I use, I fully intend to use drugs and alcohol more safely in the future"
– 74% agreed, 8% disagreed



Conclusion

Street Talk has shown that:

- There is a significant proportion of young people who are already taking at least one substance, but who are flying under the radar.
- Brief interventions, in particular Motivational Interviewing, can be used effectively to help young people to reduce risky behaviours.
- Local youth services and organisations that work with vulnerable young people, properly trained, may be a highly effective means of reaching this group.
- Smartphone Apps and web surveys are an effective medium for researching young people's behaviours and evidence change over time.

Mentor and Addaction hope that the learning from Street Talk can be used to increase the effective targeting of resources to help reduce alcohol and drug misuse and related anti-social behaviour by young people. Street Talk has been a short term project to test and validate our belief that early intervention can be an important component in meeting the needs of communities, and have a positive impact in the lives of young people.

We would like to thank all of those who have worked with us to achieve so much in such a short period of time. We are grateful to the Home Office's Choices programme for funding Street Talk. Most of all we want to thank the young people who took part.



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BOURNEMOUTH

Inspire Young Communities CIC
Space Youth Project
Townsend Youth Partnership

BRENT:

Concrete Canvas Arts
Help Somalia Foundation
OK Club
P3

CORNWALL

Cornwall Youth Work Partnership
Treylla
YP Cornwall
White Gold

HALTON

Four Estates
Hallwood Park County Primary School
Kings Cross Project
Power in Partnership

LANCASHIRE

The Engine Room
Street Pastors, Fulwood
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