

PARTY SAFE

February - August 2007

Project Description

A process orientated project involving young people of high school age, addressing issues around drugs and alcohol. Using drama as a medium, teenagers devised a series of sketches to perform to their peers and community groups. The young people also planned and hosted a party for their peers, incorporating the principles they had learned.

Host Organisation

Dorset Council in partnership with the North East Cluster of Schools

Funding sources

Gambling Support Levy
Youth Advisory Services

Outcomes

Young people engaged in the issue of safe partying and considerable awareness has been raised; Improvements in participant's self esteem and confidence; Positive impact on family relationships; Stronger relationships between participants and wider community

Highlights

The positive outcomes for the participants, outcomes that *"don't just apply when they are at a party, that's something they carry with them"*.

Project workers

Jen Barron (Youth Health Officer)
& Jane Pickett (Assistant Principal of Scottsdale High School)

Keywords

Performance, Scottsdale, Youth

Party Safe was an initiative of the Dorset Council Youth Health Officer, Jen Barron. The intention of the project was to create change around what was considered 'normal' behaviour for young people, around the issue of drinking and drug taking. 24 young people participated, one third were male.

Party Safe had two principles.

(a) it is possible to have a good time without taking illicit substances, but (b) if young people chose to, they would know how to look after themselves and their friends.

The project began by taking the participants on a camp to Bridport. Here they were provided with information from drug and alcohol counselors from Launceston College, Drug Education Network and Red Cross' Save a Mate, as well as the police and a sexual health worker. In this way, they became the 'experts'. Using role-plays, they were able to explore different scenarios; outcomes that might result from not having this information, and outcomes that might result, with more knowledge of safe partying. This process helped the participants to assimilate the information into the context of their own lives; to understand the importance of self-care, and looking after friends.



Along with the opportunity to plan the party, the camp resulted in the participants devising a series of dramas that have since been performed at school assemblies, community forums, including one on Flinders Island, and the Tasmanian Resilience Conference in Hobart.

The party was held at Scottsdale Performing Arts Centre and was attended by around 200 young people.

There is significant interest from other organisations and groups, to replicate this project. However, it is important to note that Jen believes this project was successful because of the process used –

"Because we engaged the young people in the process at the very beginning, we then had 24 ambassadors for the project who were passionate and really fired up... Now we have so many people wanting to be involved, it's ridiculous!"

Project Contact

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Image

Top: The Party Safe crew in action
Bottom: Some of the Party Safe crew on camp
Photographer: Jen Barron