Mobilising the community to address youth alcohol issues

Communities That Care Methodology:
Internationally recognised approach to systematic prevention planning
Combines community involvement with…
• Analysis of risk and protective factors in the lives of young people
• Recommended evidence-based approaches
• Long term plan for change
Participation as a foundation for mobilisation

The evidence of need

**Strengthening Generations research:**
- Perceived Risk
- Risky Drinking
- Behaviours

**Supported by:** Turning Point data for 2006:
- 78.5% of young people aged 16—24 used alcohol in a way that puts them at risk
- 43.7% drank to the point where they were no longer able to remember what happened

**Between 2001—2005 period**
- 11 young people aged 15—24 died as a result of an alcohol related incident
Role and function – network goals:

- Education and information role
- Drug Education in Schools program
- Harm Minimisation approach
- An evidence based practice approach where appropriate
- To involve young people and the community in activities and programs

Conference as community mobilisation

Conference process - SSMART ANSWERS
- Conference used as communication tool
- Interschool forums & conference organised with & by young people
- All public and private secondary schools participated
- Evaluation defined forums & conference process key success:
  - ‘The organisers and youth involved did an awesome job’
  - ‘very well done – very youth focused’
  - ‘should become a yearly event’
  - ‘Great to see young people respected’
SSMART ANSWERS CONFERENCE
– skilling up young people:

- Communication
- Binge drinking
- Party substances
- Talking with families
- Talking with friends
- Lives at risk
- Reducing risk
- D & A Questions

SSMART ANSWERS – OUTCOMES

Framework for community action plan defined:

- Communication with Parents
- Local Laws and Policy
- Practical personal safety
- Media & Advertising

Actions to achieve community action plan

- Bi Annual SSMART ANSWERS conference – September 2009
- Plan elements owned across community networks eg SSMART, CitySafe, Licencees, school and parent groups etc
- Local school Ballarat Grammar School adopted conference model - forums and surveys across all year levels students, parents and combined forums

Program elements
Party SAFE tips if you are drinking alcohol...

- Eat food. It slows down the absorption of alcohol into your bloodstream.
- Drink water. Alcohol can make you dehydrated, have a glass of water between every alcoholic drink.
- Don't mix drinks.
- Count your drinks. Stop drinking when you have reached your limit.
- Watch your drink. Beware of drink spiking.
- Watch your mate. Look after your friends.
- Don’t leave alone or go with strangers.
- Be Aware: That mixing alcohol with other substances can have dangerous effects on your body.
Evidence Base Practice

Evaluation

• pre, post and 3 month follow up

2 yearly review process:

• Lesson plans – underpinning evidence base
• Align with school curriculum and Principles
  School Drug ED

Key messages for young people

• You are responsible for your own choices
• Be aware of the risks so you know what to do
• Learn the skills to minimise harm
• Stay safe and survive
• Look after your friends.
Contact Details

Jodie Downey
Strengthening Generations Project Officer
Ph 03 5320 5593
Email jodiedowney@ballarat.vic.gov.au

Website www.ballarat.vic.gov.au