

HEPATITIS VICTORIA



WHITELION

supporting youth at risk
celebrating ten years

A picture's worth 1,000 words

Young women's hepatitis c prevention and early intervention project

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Hepatitis C Education & Early Intervention Project

- Project aims
- Key challenges and learning in making a DVD
- Outcomes of the project

- Definition of Peer
 - A young person who has had contact with the youth justice system
 - May or may not be a young person who injects drugs



Project Aim

- To increase young people's knowledge of safer injecting drug use behaviour in order to reduce transmission of hepatitis C.
- To develop a targeted intervention for young people at risk of injecting
 - Alternative schools
 - Youth justice facilities



Background to young people & hepatitis C

1 in 5 new infections aged 15-19

- Most young people begin injecting before seeking professional advice
- Transmission usually occurs with the first 6 months of injecting drug use
- Often not in contact with services
- First injection is often unplanned



Overview of Method

- Partnership approach with Whitelion, Young Women's Support Service
- Whitelion recruited and supported 6 young women for the project to be trained as peer educators. Each of the women had recent contact with the justice system
- Hepatitis C Victoria trained the women using a mentoring and competency based approach
- 2 main stages in the project:
 - train the young women to be peer educators
 - conduct hepatitis C education sessions in the schools



Overcoming the Challenges

- The peer educators at times found it difficult to attend the training sessions due to personal issues
- Timelines were altered significantly and the training time was extended to build the peer educator's skills and confidence
- Lack of confidence amongst the peer educators to present "medical information" in a 30 minute presentation



Considerations with making the DVD

- Established an agreement on content
 - Signed a consent form
 - Edited out personal information that could identify close friends and family
 - Shared agreement on where the DVD could be used
- Young women took the lead in developing the script and approving the final cut of the DVD
- Young women got to use and develop their creative skills during the filming process



Summary of Key Outcomes

- 2/6 young female peer educators successfully trained
- Hepatitis C education sessions delivered to 3 alternative schools
- Multiple sessions to 75 students and 15 education staff
- 1 session delivered to 12 staff based at Whitelion
- Health promotion DVD developed by the peer educators for young people



Feedback from “peer participants”

“ I find when young people speak to young people, those people take more in”

“I was more aware because I heard it from young people like myself”

“ never to share stuff with other people...always get fresh water”

“ always use your own equipment, never use someone else's”

“it will make me more aware of what can happen if we don't care about our actions”

“don't get hep C cause I won't be able to drink”



Positive Reflections

- Schools were extremely receptive and positive about the project
- Dedication and passion shown by the peer educators
- Excellent feedback from the students who attended the hepatitis C education sessions
 - Majority rated the content of the workshop as “very useful”
 - Majority commented they preferred for this kind of information to be presented by young people
- DVD is health promotion tool that can be used in diverse settings



Unanswered Questions

- Value for money?
- Did it reduce the transmission of hepatitis C amongst young people?
- How will the information given impact on the young people in the long term?



Future Directions

- Maintain our connection with the young women
 - Identify traineeship options
 - Identify ways to integrate the peer education intervention into our existing work with schools
- Transfer the model to other areas
 - Support other agencies to undertake the program
 - Train current peers in schools



Further information

- Please contact on 9380 4644 or emily@hepcvic.org.au
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