

2007 NSW Health Awards Entry

Complete under the following headings and use the italics as a guide.

Remove the italics when completed.

Entry Title (50 characters or less)
The LOVE BiTES Program – A successful community partnership
Abstract (120 Words)
<p>This paper demonstrates the NCAHS Women's Health Services successful coordination of the 'LOVE BiTES' program over the past 4 years, and building of partnerships with government departments and NGO's to facilitate the provision of an effective and comprehensive Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Program for High School Students on the Mid North Coast.</p> <p>Women's Health coordinates the recruitment and training of workers from DV and Sexual Assault services on the MNC as 'LOVE BiTES' facilitators to engage and educate young people around the issues, and connect young people with support, counselling and crisis services. Women's Health has coordinated funding from various government departments to ensure sustainability and has engaged whole communities in the prevention of DV and Sexual Assault.</p>
Aim (30 Words)
The coordination of an effective DV and Sexual Assault prevention program for High Schools on the MNC run by the NCAHS and community partners from government departments and non-government services.
<i>Nature of the Problem (100 words)</i>
<p>The need to provide a coordinated and effective approach to the delivery of DV and Sexual Assault Prevention programs in MNC High schools was identified in 2003/4 Women's Health community consultations.</p> <p>In 2003 in the MNC there was no coordination of programs run on Sexual Assault and DV Prevention in High Schools. The programs were ineffective, minimal, and ad-hoc.</p> <p>National Crime Prevention Statistics indicate 1 in 3 young people have witnessed DV in the home and in their relationships and 1 in 3 young women and 1 in 6 young men will be sexually assaulted by the age of 18.</p>
Extent of the problem (150 words)

Women's Health established the extent of the problem through a comprehensive consultation process throughout 2003/2004. This included group consultations with Kempsey Community Services, the Kempsey DV Monitoring Committee, the Hastings DV Committee, the Coffs Harbour DV Committee, service providers in a workshop/forum at the Rural Connections MNC Conference 2003, individual consultations with the DoCS Violence Against women Specialist for the Mid North Coast, with the MNCAHS Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coordinator and consultations with teachers and students MNC High Schools.

The results from consultations indicated that:

- high school education strategies on DV and Sexual Assault were disorganised, ad-hoc and ineffective
- there were no specific DV and Sexual Assault programs running in MNC High Schools,
- workers were in need of a training package to deliver such programs
- workers were lacking confidence to run programs
- teachers were uncomfortable and under skilled to deliver programs

Strategic importance (100 words)

The 'LOVE BiTES' program relates to the NSW Health Strategic Directions through its excellent standard of:

- Community Engagement: Women's Health have worked closely with, and engaged students, communities and service providers on the MNC to ensure that the 'LOVE BiTES' program is relevant and effective.
- Area/strategic planning: A regional strategy for this program ensures a MNC rollout, targeting disadvantaged communities and includes sharing the program with other Schools throughout NSW. 'LOVE BiTES' connects with the Reclaim the Night Strategy and the 16 days of Activism to Stop Violence against Women.
- Collaboration and partnerships with non-government organisations: Women's Health recruits, coordinates and supports over 40 services who facilitate and support the 'LOVE BiTES' program on the MNC.
- Working in partnership with Aboriginal Services, Mental Health Services Women's Health run specific Indigenous "LOVE BiTES" and has recruited Youth Mental Health Workers to facilitate the program.

Planning and implementing solutions (300 words)

The foundation of the 'LOVE BiTES' program is based on community partnership and community engagement principles. The program was written with community partners and facilitated with a stringent evaluation process to facilitate changes as the program progressed. The program has evolved and been modified over the past 4 years to ensure relevance and effectiveness for young people.

The Women's Health team coordinates a comprehensive implementation strategy to ensure

'LOVE BiTES' runs effectively.

The 'LOVE BiTES' CD-Rom was developed in 2005 and distributed to 1000 workers throughout the MNC and NSW. This CD-Rom is a tool that shows how to run the 'LOVE BiTES' program.

Prior to the commencement of the program CD-ROMs are distributed and training or refresher sessions are held to equip workers with the skills and information required to run the program. Teacher training sessions are organised before each school program starts. These sessions are facilitated by Women's Health and the Sexual Assault service to skill teachers up in the areas of DV and Sexual Assault.

A roster of workers is established via email forum before the program starts. The request for facilitators is sent out a month prior to the start of the program. This forum is an ongoing feedback forum for workers and services.

A meeting is held for all participating workers the week prior to the first session of school to finalise last minute arrangements.

Safety strategies are established for clients of services prior to the start of the program and school counsellors are in attendance at each school and inform workers of possible issues with students.

Local media attend the program each year to raise awareness of the issues to the greater community. Women's Health coordinate students art works being turned into posters/billboards/resources for their community to engage local communities around the issues.

Outcomes and Evaluation (200 words)

The 'LOVE BiTES' CD-Rom has been distributed to 1000 workers in NSW and Australia.

Women's Health service has recruited/trained/coordinated 115 government/non-government workers from the MNC including: NCAHS Sexual Assault Services: Drug and Alcohol Service, Kickstart, Child and Family Counselling, CAMHS, NSW Police Force – Detectives, Youth Liaison and DVLO; Kempsey Family Support Services, Hastings Women and Children's Refuge; Centacare Christo House Youth Services; Warrina Women and Children Refuge; DoCS Child Protection Teams; Bunker Youth Services Coffs Harbour; Port Macquarie/Hastings Council; Kempsey Shire Council; Kempsey Women & Children's Refuge; and teachers and school counsellors from all MNC schools.

This has led to Women's Health successfully coordinating and running 'LOVE BiTES' in ALL MNC state high schools in Port Macquarie, Wauchope, Camden Haven/Laurieton, Kempsey, Macksville, Bowraville, Dorrigo, Coffs Harbour and Nambucca Heads. The program has been run for over 6000 students.

The 'LOVE BiTES' program has been nationally recognised with three awards last year that acknowledge this successful partnership program:

- *WINNER* NAPCAN NSW Child Friendly Australia 2006: Kids Can Award for High School program
- *WINNER* NSW Violence Against Women Prevention Award 2006: Prevention Program
- *CERTIFICATE OF MERIT* Australian Crime and Prevention Awards (Australian Institute of Criminology) 2006

Sustaining change (100 words)

Over 100 MNC trained workers, school counsellors and teachers can facilitate/organise/coordinate the 'LOVE BiTES' program. Coffs Harbour services are responsible for the program sharing costs.

'LOVE BiTES' is a permanent annual program in MNC State schools. Ongoing funding has been secured from the NSW Government for the Hastings/Macleay network.

The program has been successful modified for local Indigenous students.

The 'LOVE BiTES' Train the Trainer has successfully been taken to Walgett/Lightening Ridge (2006)& Wagga Wagga (2007). Walgett and Lightening Ridge have run the program successfully this year themselves and Wagga Wagga have their first program scheduled for this school term.

Future Scope (100 words)

NAPCAN Australia are submitting for small and large funding opportunities for the 'train the trainer' model in disadvantaged and culturally diverse areas, for a national roll out and to make the CD-Rom more culturally appropriate for Indigenous and multi-cultural communities.

'LOVE BiTES' had been placed in the Northern Territory Governments package of recommended DV Prevention Programs.

'LOVE BiTES' is establishing a information/resource page on NAPCAN's internet site creating a national feedback/evaluation process, teachers and workers.

NSW DoCS and NSW Police are requesting training for their case workers and Youth Liaison across the state.

Total: 1200 words (including references but excluding reference list and entry title)