

'LOVE BiTES' A successful Community Partnership

Community Partnerships

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['LOVE BiTES' A successful Community Partnership]
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Aim

- To develop a Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention program for local High Schools in the Mid North Coast based on best practise standards
- To bring Community partners together to develop and co-facilitate the program on the Mid North Coast

Nature and Extent of the Problem

- There were no specific Domestic Violence or Sexual Assault Prevention programs running on the Mid North Coast.
- High school programs were disorganised, adhoc and ineffective.
- Workers were lacking confidence to run school programs
- Teachers were uncomfortable and under resourced to run programs

Strategic importance

- Mid North Coast High Schools identified an increase in unhealthy relationships in young people in their schools
- Mid North Coast Service providers also identified a gap in appropriate youth focused prevention programs
- A creative youth focused program was required to raise awareness of appropriate and inappropriate behaviours in relationships
- It was imperative that the program would facilitate the introduction of young people to community and health services in informal environment

Planning & Implementing solutions

- 'LOVE BiTES' was written in partnership with community organisations and teaching staff is based on best practise standards
- The program was trialled by Mid North Schools in Kempsey and Coffs Harbour
- A stringent evaluation process facilitated changes and modifications to the program

Planning & Implementing solutions

What is 'LOVE BiTES'?

- A whole day Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention program run in or out of school for Year 10 students (50/day)
- Morning sessions are informal sessions with professional workers on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
- Afternoon sessions are music and art sessions to consolidate the information discussed in the morning

Planning & Implementing solutions

- In the MNC Women's Health and the Sexual Assault Service coordinate a comprehensive implementation strategy
- Training sessions have been held throughout the Mid North Coast for workers and teachers
- Regular meetings are held to coordinate the role out in each area. E-mail networks are established to facilitate communication pathways throughout the year
- Funding was then received by DoCS to develop a 'LOVE BiTES' CD-Rom to distribute state wide.

Outcomes & Evaluation

- In the Mid North Coast over 150 workers and teachers have been trained in the 'LOVE BiTES' program
- 'LOVE BiTES' community partners include Mid North Coast Schools, DoCS Child Protection and Violence Prevention workers, Sexual Assault Services, Drug and Alcohol Services, Mid North Coast Police – School Liaison, Detectives, DVLO and YLO, Women and Children's Refuges, Youth Refuges, JPET services, Child and Family Counselling Teams, YAF Teams, Family Support Services, DV Court Support Services, Local Councils and Aboriginal DV Services, Aboriginal Health Workers and AMS workers.
- Over 6000 students have attended the program on the MNC

Outcomes & Evaluation

LOVE BiTES has been nationally recognised :

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

Sustaining Change

- Port Macquarie and Kempsey Women's Refuges have picked up 'LOVE BiTES' and fund it as their core business.
- Services in other areas share the cost of the program
- Train the trainer program is run regularly in the Mid North Coast (150 workers have been trained)
- The train the trainer program has been taken to Walgett, Wagga Wagga, Lakemba/Burwood and Nimbin. All areas have now also run the program themselves.
- Other areas such as Orange, Dee Why and Grafton have embraced the program and are successfully running the program.

Lessons Learned

- The need for the train the trainer model – workers and teachers need to be trained on the program to maintain the programs standards and to have a cohesive voice.
- A shared partnership approach is essential to sustainability. Every service needs to have ownership of the program to sustain it.
- The need for excellent musicians who can work with young people who can record the students music.
- The need to develop resources for the local community from students art work.

Future Scope

- Train the trainer program is currently being rolled out throughout NSW where funding is available.
- DoCS Violence Against Women Unit have provided NAPCAN funding to develop a sexual assault prevention film for the program.
- NAPCAN are funding an Indigenous training workshop for 6 high needs communities around NSW in November 2007
- NAPCAN are submitting for Federal and International funding to roll the program out Nationally.