

NSW SUMMIT ON ALCOHOL ABUSE

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ALCOHOL FORUM

RECOMMENDATIONS

Monday 25 August 2003

RESOLUTIONS FROM THE YOUNG PEOPLE AND ALCOHOL FORUM

INFORMING AND ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

Create an “advisory group” or action team of young people to advise the education system, police, community reps and other young people about ways to reduce alcohol.

Use technology (email/web/internet) to promote safe use of alcohol

Introduce a dollar for dollar program where for every dollar spent on advertising or sponsorship the company has to spend the same amount on harm minimisation.

Use celebrities/role models eg Home and Away and Neighbours stars, to show that not drinking is also ok and that it's also “cool” not to drink.

Implement age appropriate education about alcohol at a younger age such as primary school.

Use programs such as “Health Harold” to show the problems with drinking

Educate young people through using friendship networks, magazines.

Use friendship networks to educate young people on consequences of alcohol eg; ‘did you know you could kill your friends by drink driving? The education should be scary

Preaching about what not to do does not help. Young people want choices

Target excessive drinking rather than trying to stop drinking

PREVENTING ABUSE AND HARM

Focus on changing adults drinking behaviour because kids will do what parents and adults model eg make an advertisement of kids watching adults bad drinking behaviour so that the adults see what bad role models they can be.

Adults should teach young people how to drink responsibly by introducing young people to alcohol gradually and safely.

That the NSW Government should include more shock tactics in advertising campaigns targeted at young people and their families with less technical jargon. The long and short term effects should be shown in graphic and personal ways. (eg: teen pregnancy).

That the NSW government introduce a “role model” system in both public and private education systems in NSW by:

- allowing people who have experienced alcohol abuse issues to enter schools and share their experiences.
- On an informal basis in small “working groups” where discussions can occur.
- note that in the Public Education System a similar program “Crossroads exists”

That the NSW Government lower the target age group of education programs relating to alcohol abuse to occur in primary schools

That the NSW Government revise training strategies of teachers to enable them to recognise alcohol related abuse in the

Need role models for young people and kids to promote safe alcohol use.

Provide alternatives to drinking for young people eg; sport, underage clubs (under 18, alcohol free)

Start alcohol education in primary school as its too late by secondary school.

Get young people who’ve experienced alcohol dependence to go out to school and talk about it.

That the NSW Government provides alternative activities for young people, particularly in rural areas. These may include education in the holidays eg; extending TAFE courses into the holidays.

ALCOHOL DEPENDANCE, DISEASE AND TREATMENT

Have specialist youth staff who know about alcohol eg adolescent mental health workers, not generalist counsellors

Improve young people’s knowledge of services by taking young people on school excursions to local services eg rehab, so they meet the workers face to face and therefore feel more comfortable contacting them.

Reduce the chance of relapse by following up treatment with intensive post discharge support services and activities.

EFFECTIVE HEALTH CARE SERVICE DELIVERY

Health care needs to be holistic not just about physical health nor is it just about alcohol but about all parts of young people’s lives. The system does not adequately respond to young people with dual diagnosis especially in rural areas.

Increase funding that is secure and reliable for charities and youth services dealing with alcohol abuse.

Have a greater connection between youth services and alcohol treatment services and schools.

Develop a specialist youth alcohol free hotline for where to get help, which refers them to local people (specialising in alcohol abuse) – advertise where young people will learn the number and it becomes so common like Kids helpline.

Young people more likely to use services where the workers have met the kids at school and so the kids feel like they know them and will ring them.

Write a protocol for doctors and health clinics to be young people-friendly

Allow young people to have own Medicare card (confidentiality) especially rural areas

Pamphlet on your rights to confidential health consultations and a right to your own Medicare card.

More awareness and training on dual diagnosis (alcohol and mental health problems)

Have places where kids can hang out and talk about stuff before it happens

Make a directory of services for young people with their comments on what it's like – modelled on kids Helpline.

Wholistic approach (emotional, physical, spiritual), (not just alcohol problems)

Free training for workers helping people with alcohol problems

More spaces like today's Forum.

Provide services that are one-stop shops + well-known, staffed by specialists who understand and can relate to young people and have secure funding. This is really needed in rural areas.

ALCOHOL RELATED INJURY AND TRAUMA

Continue to educate young people about date rape and drink spiking (high schools, Crossroads)

Educate young people what to do if things go wrong and how to look after each other

Avoid drink driving by funding night shuttle services.

Increase public transport and extend hours of public transport (so don't need to drive)

Install breathalysers in bars and cars

Have condoms more freely available and put ads on toilet doors in the rural areas as well as the city.

FAMILY HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

That the introduction of supervised drinking spaces for under 18's be explored eg extend youth centres opening hours to night – there are a lot of issues to work through in trialling this. It should be evaluated to see if it works.

Start small working group discussions – advise government on alcohol related issues.

Support services for young people who are alcohol should provide individual approaches and engage the whole family, as they are part of the problem.

Services to adult alcoholics should also be family based as the kids are affected.

Have more support programs for parents to improve their parenting and knowledge about how to help kids become responsible drinkers.

That ways of getting families to discuss alcohol should be developed.

That the NSW Government implement strategies that aim to encourage responsible parental supervision of underage drinking in a safe environment. This can be done through:

- advertising campaigns targeted at encouraging open discussions in family about alcohol abuse.
- Information packages sent out to families about minimizing alcohol abuse. It should be simple to cater for lack of literacy skills particularly in Aboriginal communities.

ALCOHOL- RELATED CRIME AND ANTI – SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Young people see police as important in protecting them and at the same time do not feel Police can be approached or be trusted. Therefore, there need to be more opportunities for police officers and young people to engage with each other - for example Police to come and spend time with them at school. This is particularly important in rural areas.

Provide services and alternatives such as recreation opportunities to deter young people away from crime and anti-social behaviour.

Develop an immediate response to kids who are young and on the streets at night. Aboriginal kids feel that Police ignore them and don't do their job which the kids see as picking them up and taking them somewhere safe.

Police – youth should liaise with them more – more interaction with police (eg; Partyline).

Parents should supervise their kids' parties.

ALCOHOL AND THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

80% of all kids in custody were alcohol affected at the time of their offence.

Have more opportunities for diversionary programs focusing on rehabilitation and youth conferencing programs.

Reduce the justice systems impact on separating children and young people from their families. Focus on maintaining kids' connections to families and friends, not disrupting them.

Develop specific post release programs for young people so that they do not go back to their old ways.

RESPONSIBLE SUPPLY AND CONSUMPTION

Re-evaluate the voluntary alcohol advertising code and make it compulsory. Need to still allow advertising but regulate it more effectively.

Need to stop advertising that appeals to young people eg vodka cruiser ads.

Consider (based on proper research) banning alcohol advertising at sporting events and possibly other public spaces.

Re-evaluate 'responsible service' and find better ways of enforcing it eg increase fines to businesses and other people who illegally supply alcohol to minors.

Make it compulsory for all alcohol products to have a safe warning label on them.

Integrate Crime Stoppers into schools.

Parents should supervise their kids' parties.