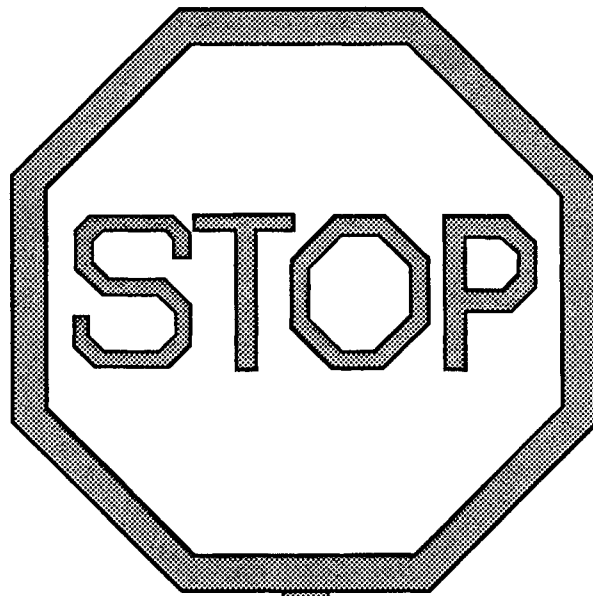


Section 5

Preventing



**the
use
of
drugs**

An overview

Section 5: Preventing the use of drugs: An overview

The Problem

One approach to reducing the demand for drugs is to prevent people from starting to use drugs at all. But stopping people from doing something they don't yet do can be difficult.

- What turns people off?
 - Knowledge of the risks?
 - Fear of the dangers?
 - Fear of the punishments?
- How can you prevent drug use without raising people's interest at the same time?
- Who should be the target for any drug prevention strategies?—young people? parents? adult role models? teachers?

Number	Title	Purpose	What To Do	Use with Young People
16	Identifying Ways To Prevent Harmful or Hazardous Drug Use	To raise awareness of the links between the reasons why people take drugs and prevention methods	Finish the sentence exercises and group discussion	
17	Four Strategies To Prevent Harmful or Hazardous Drug Use	To increase knowledge of four strategies for preventing harmful or hazardous drug use and methods within each strategy	Talking wall activity in large and small groups	
18	Choosing Priorities for Drug Prevention	To establish the group's priorities for preventing harmful or hazardous drug use and to raise awareness of different attitudes to prevention	Card game to establish priorities in a group	✓
19	Prevention Strategies In Other Countries	To increase knowledge of broad prevention strategies in other countries and compare them to their own situation	Small group discussion of case studies from other countries and large group comparison/analysis	

Activity 16: Identifying Ways To Prevent Drug Use

Purpose

To raise people's awareness of the links between why people take drugs and ways of preventing harmful or hazardous drug use.

What To Do

1. Write on a flipchart "The reason why people take drugs is because". Ask each member of the group to finish this sentence with four different answers based on their knowledge and experience.

2. Take it in turns for each person to read out one of their sentences and write up what they say on the flipchart. At the end, lead a discussion on the various statements and see if it is possible to identify reasons that can be ground together by putting a mark beside them.

eg A '✓' by those reasons to do with wanting to change how a person feels.

A '*' by those reasons to do with external influence on the individual.

A '○' by those reasons to do with how people are brought up.

A '□' by those reasons to do with the individual's knowledge, skills and attitudes.

3. Divide into four groups (or as many groups as there are 'categories' of reasons for taking drugs). Ask each group to.
 - (a) Re-write the list of reasons for taking drugs they are working on.
 - (b) Produce a list of methods for preventing drug use that relates directly to those reasons.
4. Each group report back to the whole group and discuss and add to their ideas.

Activity 17: Four Strategies To Prevent Harmful Drug Use

Purpose

To increase people's knowledge of four different strategies for preventing harmful or hazardous drug use and identifying specific methods that might be relevant to their situation.

What To Do

1. Place four flipchart sheets around the room headed:

(A) **People Take Drugs Because They Want To Change How They Feel** eg. to get greater feelings of self-esteem through the drugs 'high'.

(B) **People Take Drugs Because Of External Influences** eg. adverts for beer.

(C) **People Take Drugs Because Of The Way They Were Brought Up** eg. family problems.

(D) **People Take Drugs Because Of Their Personality** eg. to rebel against authority.

2. Ask the group to go round the room and write examples of these under each heading. You might like to start this by going round and putting up an example yourself in front of the group to show what is meant. (Handout 25 gives a longer list of examples).

3. Discuss each flipchart in turn and the different opinions that people have. Add any new ideas that emerge from discussion. If necessary write additional charts for broad categories of reasons for taking drugs which have not been covered above.

4. Now put up a blank flipchart beside each of these with the headings.

(A) **Harmful Drug Use Can Be Prevented By Providing Alternative Experiences That Change How People Feel.**

(B) **Harmful Drug Use Can Be Prevented By Tackling The External Influences That Promote Drug Use.**

(C) **Harmful Drug Use Can Be Prevented By Improving The Way Families Bring Up Their Children.**

(D) **Harmful Drug Use Can Be Prevented By Changing People's Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes To Drug Use.**

Carry out a brainstorm of activities and actions that could be undertaken for each of the four charts. Try to get as many different ideas as possible and relate the ideas suggested directly to the first list of causes of drug use.

5. Discuss and debate which of these strategies for preventing harmful drug use should have the greatest priority, and why. A list of possible strategies is given in Handout 25. You could use this handout by referring to it yourself or by asking the group to compare their ideas with those on the handout.

Drug Prevention Strategies

**PREVENTING
DRUG USE**

Ways of Preventing Drug Use

Reasons for Taking Drugs:— (A) To Change How They Feel

Change how people feel without using drugs:

- Hypnosis
- Relaxation therapy
- Physical exercise
- Dangerous sports
- Being given responsibility

Reasons for Taking Drugs:— (B) Because Of External Influences

Tackle the external influences:

- Control advertising
- Control mass media
- Reduce availability of drugs
- Improve people's living conditions and job prospects
- Increase the price of drugs
- Provide leisure facilities
- Work on underlying issues of concern to drug users
- Raise public awareness of risks
- Provide better information
- Peer support programmes

Reasons for Taking Drugs:— (C) Because Of How They Were Brought Up

Provide services to support families and people in non- traditional types of settings:

- Financial support to families
- Good Parenting Education Programmes
- Counselling services for single parents
- Suitable alternative family systems e.g. refuges, foster parents, group homes, etc.

Reasons for Taking Drugs:— (D) Because Of Their Personality

Provide personal support to individuals:

- Counselling
- Drug-free alternatives
- Reduce their marginalisation and isolation
- Change people's attitudes to people who are rebellious



Activity 18:

Choosing priorities for drug prevention

Purpose

To establish the group's priorities for preventing harmful or hazardous drug use and in doing so to explore people's attitudes and ideas.

What To Do

1. Ask each person to write down on four cards four ways of preventing people from taking drugs.
2. Work in small groups (4-6). Place all the cards on the floor or a table so everyone can see them.

(a) Tell each member of the group to read the cards and to turn over any card they don't understand or would disagree with as being a way of preventing drug use.

(b) Now explain that all the cards that people can see are strategies for preventing drug use that everyone agrees with. Check whether anyone wants to turn any more over.

Now pick up and discuss each of the turned-over cards, asking the person who wrote it to explain their thinking and reasons for putting it there. If there is agreement or amendment and then agreement, leave it showing. If not, put it to one side. Repeat this for each card.

(c) Now ask each member of the group to pick up two cards from those showing that they think are the main ways of preventing drug use that should be focussed on. Place the rest to one side. Each person put the ones that have been picked up into two categories—first priority and second priority. Write them up as two lists on flipcharts and discuss them.

Activity 19: Prevention strategies in other countries

Purpose

To increase people's knowledge of harmful or hazardous drug use prevention strategies in other countries and to relate them to their own situation.

What To Do

1. Ask people to work in small groups. Each group is given copies of a summary description of a country's prevention programmes to read (Handouts 26-29).
2. Arrange people to work in small groups (4-5). Each group should have a set of the summary of prevention programmes in Malaysia, Zambia, Canada and Australia. The task is to:
 - Read each of the descriptions.
 - Identify similarities and differences.
 - Identify elements of particular interest relevant to your situation.
3. In a large group discuss the elements that were of particular interest and relevance.
 - What might a prevention strategy be for us?
 - What would its aims and methods be?
 - How would it be developed?

Reference 5

Handout 26

Drug abuse prevention— Malaysia

**PREVENTING
DRUG USE**

In 1983, the Government of Malaysia declared drug abuse as a threat to national security and the implementation and co-ordination machinery for drug prevention work was re-organised. A year or so later the Anti-Narcotics Committee of the National Security Council approved a National Anti-Narcotics Action Plan. Its re-prioritised strategies are.

- Prevention
- Rehabilitation
- Manpower, Research and Evaluation
- International Collaboration
- Co-ordination of implementing machinery at federal, state and district levels.

Prevention activities focussing on strategies to keep young people away from drugs is the major emphasis of the Government of Malaysia's initiatives to combat its drugs problem.

Primary prevention initiatives concentrate on preventing the involvement of younger members of the community in drug abuse through curriculum and teacher training programmes in schools, school-based community-oriented programmes, and community-based programmes.

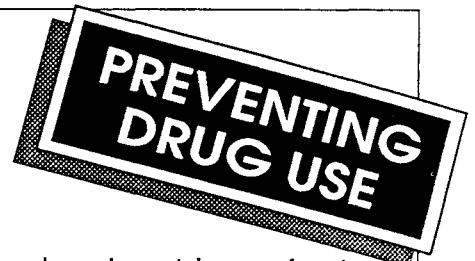
Several programmes are being undertaken in the primary prevention sphere:

- Peer counselling programmes—using peers to influence high risk youths to stay away from drugs;
- Holiday camps for young people, emphasising the psycho-motor domain of participants to enable them to withstand the pressures of life;
- Colloquia for developing self-resilience using inter-personal skills development techniques and discussion among young people on how, as individuals and members of a family and community, they can stay free from negative behaviour such as delinquency;
- Anti-Drug Badge Scheme for young people in uniformed organisations.



Handout 27

Drug abuse prevention— Zambia



'Young People For Young People: A Hope For All' is a drugs education project run by the Rotaract Club, set up in Lusaka, Zambia, a couple of years ago at the Chainama College Of Health Sciences, by Francis Phiri, a voluntary drugs worker. A charitable organisation and part of Rotary International, the Club's main purpose is to develop leadership and responsible citizenship through service to the community.

One of the Club's major goals is "to emphasise acceptance of individual responsibility as the basis of personal success, community improvement and group achievement". As a step towards achieving this, its members, who are also health workers, decided to take some action to help prevent the dependent use of drugs by young people in the community. An earlier survey had indicated that local boys and girls as young as 12 or 13 had started drinking by stealing "chibuku", a local brew, which they fetched for their parents, that younger children had experimented with sniffing petrol and that four out of ten boys and one in ten girls had tried smoking cannabis.

They found that the most effective way of reaching the whole community was through the schools, informing children, their parents and teachers of the problems associated with drinking and through them, community leaders, who could put pressure on the 'chibuku' sellers. A rotaracter/teacher working group was then formed to involve teachers and a few senior pupils from each school.

The project's aim is to develop a model for community action on problems related to the dysfunctional, hazardous, habitual and dependent use of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, by young people. Its main objectives are to educate, discourage the tendency to drug usage, and to encourage the practice and adherence to less harmful alternatives.

Working in collaboration with local schools—teachers, pupils and parents—it develops educational activities related to drug abuse and involves other members of the community. It provides resources for educational activities in other parts of the country and support to members of the parent rotaract group wanting to set up satellite projects in other communities.

A number of initiatives have been taken so far at local level including:

- a workshop on drug abuse for school staff and community leaders;
- a survey of alcohol and drug use amongst younger children in schools;
- a rally involving the police band and the local Member of Parliament with competitions for church and school groups on activities related to intervention education.

At national level the project has.

- held an essay competition;
- provided resource persons for other youth projects;
- participated in the World Health Day celebrations through exhibitions and anti-drugs activities.

The Rotaract Club Project is having a far-reaching effect, with assistance being requested from other parts of Zambia. Members of the original community project are formulating new programmes and working on producing resource materials, including video tapes. A resource library has been set up for use by members and a T.V. and video recorder are available for use in the community and in schools.

Initial funding for the Project was provided by the Commonwealth Youth Programme. The Rotary Club of Chainama College of Health Sciences offers guidance and support. Other valuable advice has been provided by Professor Alan Haworth, University of Zambia, and the Ministries of Youth and Sport, and Health, Zambia.

(Further information from Francis Phiri, Patron, Rotaract Club of Chainama College of Health Sciences, P.O. Box 33991, Lusaka, Zambia).



Handout 28

Drug abuse prevention— Canada

PREVENTING DRUG USE

The Education and Prevention component of the National Drug Strategy aims to provide Canadians with the information needed to make informed choices and achieve a productive drug-free lifestyle. Key elements of this strategic component, developed by Health and Welfare Canada in collaboration with the provinces and territories, include a national information and public awareness campaign, support for community-based action programmes and better training for addiction counsellors and prevention workers.

Spreading the news

The information and public awareness campaign of Health and Welfare Canada uses television, radio, interior and exterior posters in public transportation, and print media to sensitize Canadians to the dangers of drug abuse. The campaign pays particular attention to youths aged 11-13 and their parents.

Tips for travellers

The National Drug Strategy's public awareness campaign devotes special attention to Canadian travellers. External Affairs Canada has established an Anti-Drug Information Programme designed to deter Canadians from using or transporting drugs abroad. Here are a few programme highlights:

- Anti-drug posters
- Anti-drug passport brochure
- Adverts in magazines
- Video on air flights
- Radio clip
- Media kits.

Police for prevention

Police forces have traditionally played a central role in curbing the availability of illicit drugs (supply reduction). Recognising, however, the importance of prevention in the long-term battle against drug abuse, Canada's national, provincial and municipal police forces are becoming increasingly involved in efforts to reduce the demand for drugs. Working

closely with health workers, schools and community groups, police bring to bear their credibility and their experience in combating drug-related street crime to the task of educating Canadians about the hazards of drug use.

A diverse range of programmes has been designed to provide young people, their parents, teachers and others, with factual information about the drug abuse problem, alternatives to drug use and drug-free role models with whom they can identify.

Grass Roots Defences: The Community Action Programme

Helping community groups act on their concern about substance abuse problems is a key objective of the National Drug Strategy. To enable individuals, community groups and provincial organisations to establish new prevention, drug awareness and treatment programmes at the community level, the National Drug Strategy has created a five-year Community Action Programme. There are now projects in each Canadian province and territory. Examples of innovative, grass-roots initiatives include:

- Drug awareness and referral manual
- Promotional tours
- Theatre project
- Symposium

Services for special groups

From the earliest planning stages of the National Drug Strategy, it was realised that, to be effective, the Strategy would have to reflect the linguistic, cultural and social diversity of Canadians. It was also clear that, although the problem of substance abuse cuts across all segments of Canadian society, not all groups are equally affected, nor are they affected in the same way. The National Drug Strategy, therefore, includes a number of initiatives targetted at special groups. Four groups were identified for particular attention: youth, Natives, inmates of correctional institutions and health professionals.

Handout 29

Drug abuse prevention— Australia

**PREVENTING
DRUG USE**

Australia's National Campaign Against Drug Abuse has as its primary objective reducing the demand for drugs in the Australian community. Education is one of the seven main elements of the overall campaign and includes:

- Projects that work through written materials, lectures, videos, the mass media and workshops.
- Programmes designed for specific target groups such as school students, teachers and journalists.
- Broadly based drug programmes.
- Specific drug programmes (eg. alcohol, tobacco).
- Special interest group project (eg. Aboriginal people, women and youth).
- National media campaigns (eg. drug offence booklet, National Drug Information Line, advertising, pop concerts, sports initiatives).
- Other nationally funded initiatives such as the Skylark Puppet Theatre aimed at children.

Community Development/Consultancy projects are another major strand Australian prevention work. These are projects where a neighbourhood or local community attempts to improve its social and economic situation through its own effort.

