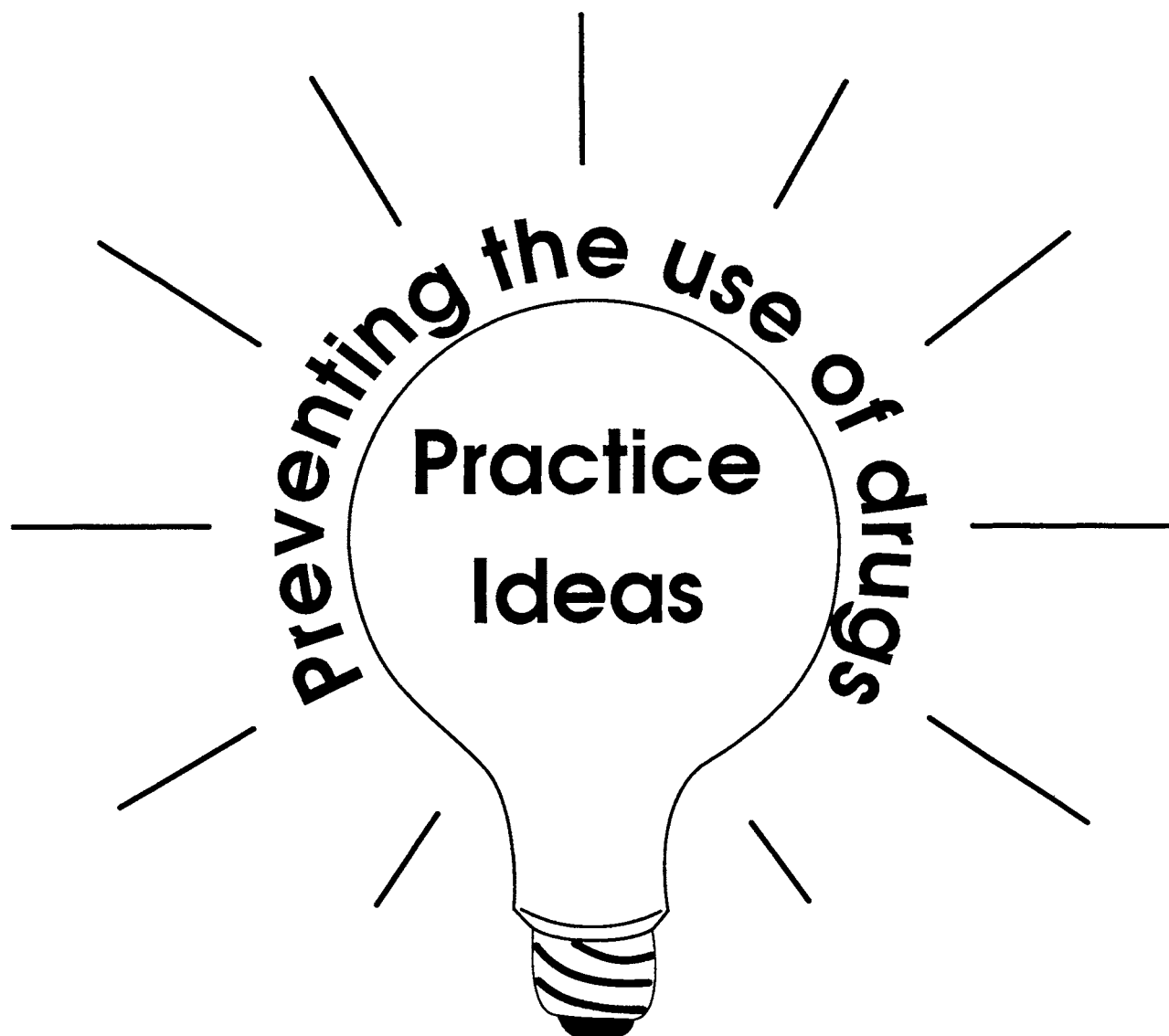


Section 6



Section 6: Preventing the use of drugs: Ideas for Practice

The Problem.

There appear to be four general approaches to preventing the use of drugs.

- 1 Providing experiences that give people the feelings and moods they want that do not involve drugs.
- 2 Tackling external influences that promote greater use of drugs.
- 3 Improving the way people are brought up.
- 4 Working directly with people who are potential drug users.

But what specific, practical action can be taken?

Number	Title	Purpose	What To Do	Use with Young People
20	Alternative Pulse	To understand 'pleasure' as a reason for drug use and to increase knowledge of alternative ways of meeting that need.	Self-analysis of what gives pleasure and group discussion of alternatives to drugs using handout.	✓
21	Adverts and Public Awareness	To increase understanding of the influence of adverts and develop skills in designing public awareness programmes.	Put graffiti on adverts for drugs and use handout to structure discussion on designing public awareness programmes.	✓ (First half only)
22	Pop Culture Influences	To increase understanding of the influence of music and 'pop' culture on drug use.	Produce compilation tapes (audio or video) of pre-recorded music related to drugs and group discussion of positive and negative influences of pop culture on drug use.	✓

Number	Title	Purpose	What To Do	Use with Young People
23	Scare Tactics	To increase knowledge of the arguments for and against scare tactics to prevent harmful/hazardous drug use.	Pairs read pre-prepared dialogue for and against; groups identify advantages and disadvantages; new pairs have real dialogues.	
24	Family Influence on Drug Use	To increase awareness of different views about family influence on drug use and the implications for preventative work.	Small group presentations of three different views about the influence of family life on drug use, group discussion and action planning.	
25	Working with Potential Users	To increase knowledge of the purpose, approaches, methods and issues in direct work with potential drug users and plan a relevant programme of work.	Mini lecture on the key themes using handouts, and small group discussion and planning in trios.	
26	Face to Face Work with Young People	To increase knowledge and understanding of practical activities for use with young people to prevent drug use.	Group discussion of a list of practical activities to use with young people and then choosing and carrying out a selection on each other.	

Activity 20:

Alternative Pulse

Purpose

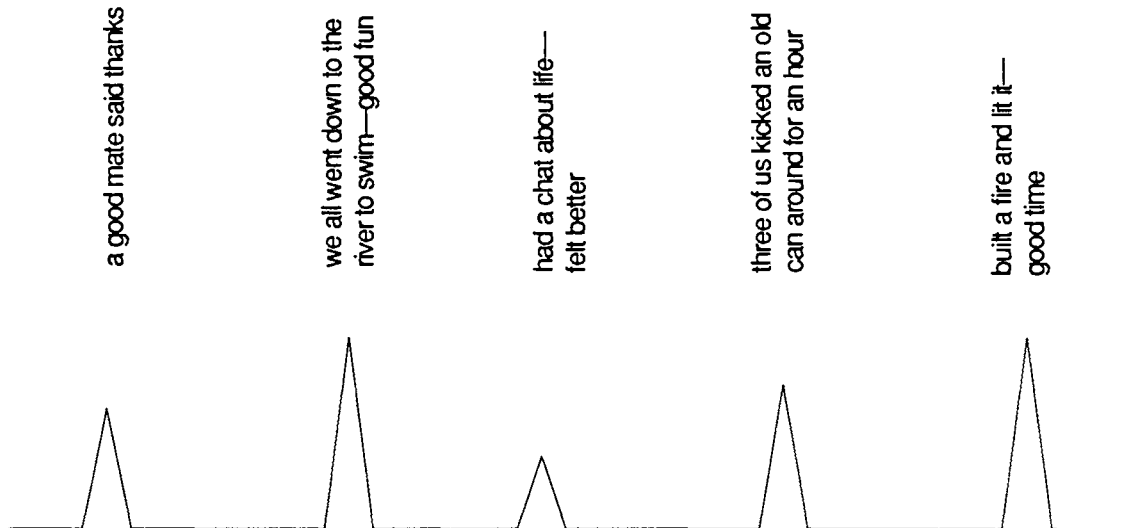
One way in which some people believe that individuals can tackle their own drug problem is to engage in more healthy activities which give the same satisfaction. The purpose of this exercise is to explore what some of these activities might be.

What To Do

1. Outline the fact that many people use drugs because they give them, in the short term, very pleasant experiences. Though many people know the long term changes, they still seek such artificial short term highs.
2. Outside of drug taking, many people gain such feelings in a less artificial manner. The purpose of this exercise is to try to establish what these are for each individual in order that they can be replicated.
3. This is to be done in group form, similar to a person pulse. When people get excited, their pulse rate rises. This exercise will attempt to measure that.
4. Ask people to draw their own excitement pulses over an agreed period, e.g. the last two years. These can be done in general or according to certain categories. Handout 33 provides an example and a list of some of the possible categories.

Handout 30

Alternative Pulse



Other examples could include:

- sporting activities
 - travel
 - games
 - new experiences
 - making craft goods
- etc.

These could be nominated by the participants themselves.



Activity 21: Advertisements and Public Awareness Programme

Purpose

To increase people's understanding of the influence of advertisements; to develop skills in designing public awareness programmes.

What To Do

1. Place around the room a number of advertisements or posters (from news-papers, magazines, etc.) for legal drugs available locally.
2. Ask people in small groups to take an advertisement and alter it using graffiti so as to reverse the message it is putting across.
3. Display the altered posters and discuss the changes.
4. Use the altered advertisements or other advertisements and ask people in pairs to answer the questions in Handout 34 about one of the advertisements.
5. In the whole group talk about each advertisement and what people's views were. Draw out some basic ideas that public awareness programmes should follow. Give out Handout 35 on key steps in designing public awareness materials and ask people in threes to work through the steps to design materials.

Activity 22: Pop Culture Influences

Purpose

To increase understanding of the influence music and pop culture has on drug use.

What To Do

Equipment needed: Double cassette deck, record player. selection of recorded music, blank tapes.

4-8 people is maximum for this.

1. Ask the group to bring to the event a selection of cassette tapes or records relating to drugs. For example 'Purple Haze' by Jimi Hendrix, 'Cocaine' by J. J. Cale.
2. Ask the group to produce an edited compilation of songs, extracts, etc. around the themes.
 - positive images of drugs;
 - negative images of drugs;
 - contradictory statements about drugs.
3. Play the tapes and discuss the influence music and pop culture has on drug use.

Reference 12

Handout 31

Advertisements



Analysing Advertisements

(1) What is the product being advertised?

(2) a. Who do you think this advertisement is aimed at? ie. who are the advertisers trying to make buy it?

b. Why?

(3) What message do you think the advertisement is putting across? That is, what benefits will the product bring about?

Handout 31 (continued)

Advertisements



(4) What images and types of language are used to convey that message?

(5) What assumptions do you think the advertiser had about the people they were trying to sell to?



Handout 32

Public Awareness



Planning a public awareness campaign

1. Be clear about the target group for your public awareness programmes
 - children?
 - young people?
 - young adults?
 - parents?
 - age groups?
2. Know the views and interests of your target group:
 - don't make assumptions about their views and interests;
 - don't pretend **your** views and interests are the same as theirs.
3. Decide what message you want to put across given their views and interests.
For example, you might want to deter young people from taking drugs by making them frightened of the damage it will do to their lives, but this might backfire if what they want out of life is to take risks and rebel against authority.
4. Decide what images and language are appropriate to get the message across.
Eg:
 - what people do the target group respect and follow as role models?
 - is humour appropriate?
 - should 'street' language be used?
 - should you avoid 'preaching' at people?
5. Decide what methods for communication are best—
 - **Posters** —where will they be put so that the target group will read them?
 - **Magazines** —which ones do the target group read?
 - **Television** —which programmes do the target group watch?
 - **Radio** —which programmes do the target group listen to?



Activity 23:

Scare Tactics

Purpose

To increase knowledge of the arguments for and against scare tactics to prevent drug abuse.

A common feature of many public awareness programmes designed to prevent drug use is that of 'scare tactics'. This is where frightening images or pictures of the effect of drug abuse (eg. an emaciated figure or a skull) or the penalties for using drugs (gaol, noose, etc.) are used.

But do they work—in either the short or long term? If you have examples of materials that use scare tactics, have these available for people to look at.

What To Do

1. Ask people in pairs to read out the dialogue in Handout 33 between two people on the use of scare tactics to prevent drug use, each person being A or B.

2. In small groups write up two lists and discuss the points:

Arguments For Scare
Tactics

Arguments Against Scare
Tactics

Tell people they can fill out the key points from the dialogue and add any views of their own.

3. Divide the whole group into pairs A and B and ask person A to argue in favour of scare tactics and person B against.
4. Ask person B to move to a different partner and reverse roles.
5. In a large group ask each person to say where they stand now on the issue of using scare tactics.

Handout 33

Scare Tactics

**PREVENTING
DRUG USE**

What Do You Think About Using Scare Tactics?

"You know, I don't think the use of scare tactics to prevent people from taking drugs is a very good idea?"



"Why not? Drugs do a lot of damage to people and if we can frighten people, particularly kids, about the effects, maybe it will deter them from trying out drugs in the first place."

"Yeah, I appreciate the idea of 'deterrence' but the scary posters and leaflets I've seen really go over the top, they exaggerate what can happen and that doesn't match the reality. I mean, if there were a load of posters saying "Drinking Beer Kills" with a picture of a total alcoholic in the gutter, would it stop you drinking beer? It wouldn't stop me. I'd just think what a stupid poster."



"I disagree. We need strong images that really put the message across that drugs are dangerous—you know, skulls, dead bodies, wrecked lives and all that."

"But I don't think that works. In the first place I think those kinds of images wear off very quickly. If you keep seeing them you end up not seeing them, if you know what I mean. And in the second place I think they can backfire. I know of one poster showing a young man looking terrible from taking heroin which girls use as a pin-up! He became a sort of youth culture hero."



"Those arguments don't stand up in my opinion. I think we must keep pushing the message that drugs are extremely dangerous and that the penalties for drug abuse and drug trafficking are very high. We certainly must deter people by making it clear what the penalties are by showing prisons and things like a noose where the death penalty is used."

"I'm not going to get into the argument about the death penalty now. I know that for some people the fear of being caught and the penalties do act as a deterrent. But for others it is a positive turn-on to know you're breaking the law and taking risks. In fact, for some people that can be the reason for taking drugs—to show their mates that they're tough, independent and aren't scared of the police."



"Alright then, what's your alternative to scare tactics?"

Handout 33 (continued)

Scare Tactics



"Well, I think that any publicity campaign should be part of a much wider set of activities and facilities to prevent drug abuse. It should not be done in isolation. And the emphasis should be educating and informing people—not scaring them. We should give clear messages about the risks and penalties for drug use but accompany that with messages and images of offers of help, advice and support. Instead of simplistic frightening images, we need more sophisticated ways of getting the person to think about what they are doing and why. And to seek advice and information if they want to know more."



"I just can't agree with that. We must create a climate of unacceptability about drugs. I think your approach is unclear—it's saying drugs are bad but we won't tell you off, we'll help you. I think that runs the real risk of encouraging people to experiment who would not otherwise do so. We must not compromise on our clear statements that drug abuse is wrong and dangerous."

"I know what you're saying but it's not the real world for young people. They tend not to see the long-term consequences of their actions whether its punishment or bad health. Many young people can't or won't relate to problems which develop in the future and they focus on the present and on living from day to day."



"I still don't understand why, if that's the case, we shouldn't use scare tactics."

"Because I think it's more appropriate to consider the immediate and actual consequences of drug use which impact on young people. I mean things like embarrassment over behaviour that is 'uncool' or of being independent and not acting as sheep and following someone who's using drugs; and pointing out the immediate and actual negative physical aspects of drug use such as hangovers, missing out on fun 'cos you're drunk, bad breath, smelly clothes and so on."



"I agree with all that but I want to use scare tactics too. I don't think they contradict each other."



Activity 24: Family influence on drug abuse

Purpose

To increase awareness of different views about preventive work with families and their implications for preventive work, and to develop appropriate strategies for your own situation.

What To Do

1. Divide into three groups, A, B and C (4 in each group). Each group is given a copy of Handout 34 on Families and Drug Abuse. Each group is asked to:
 - Think of arguments in favour of your viewpoint;
 - Think of arguments against the other two viewpoints;
 - Think of practical ways of putting this approach into practice;
 - Arrange a presentation of these arguments in a way that actively involves each member of the group and is imaginative.
2. Each group makes its presentation to the whole group.
3. Divide into three mixed groups (each containing people from the previous groups) and discuss:
 - what arguments from each group they found most convincing;
 - where they stand now on the issues;
 - what the implications are for their approach to working with families.
4. Large group discussion on possible action steps on work with families.

Handout 34

Families And Drug Use

**PREVENTING
DRUG USE**

View A:

The breakdown of 'family life' is the reason for increased use of drugs. A return to traditional moral values with the family as a focal point is a core route to achieving long-term prevention of drug use by young people.

View B:

There have always been problems with families. As a unit or a concept the family has been mythologised. Times have changed and young people are now seeking greater degrees of independence. The family can have a claustrophobic concept. So, if you base your drugs strategy on the family, as many people seem to want to, you could be compounding the problem. Difficulties in the family might be one of the causes of the problem. Anyway, the reasons why people take drugs are complex. There isn't any one reason. So a so-called stronger family unit might not work! The only way that families might be a focus for drugs work is where the parents themselves have a drugs problem and need support to cope with pressures that make them resort to drug use.

View C:

Whilst a return to traditional values may not be the solution to drug problems, parents can learn ways of handling children that might reduce the likelihood of drug use. Parent education programmes can be provided that will develop parent communication skills, problem-solving skills and understanding of family behaviour.



Activity 25: Working with potential users

Purpose

To increase knowledge of the purpose, general approach, specific techniques and issues/dilemmas about direct work with potential users, and to plan a programme relevant to their situation.

What To Do

1. Provide an overview of the main headings below. (This could be a mini-lecture using flipcharts or overhead transparencies using the ideas/information in the 4 handouts (35-38). Participants, of course, can be given the handouts as well).
 1. The Intended Outcomes of a Prevention Programme
 2. The General Approach of Prevention Programmes
 3. Specific Techniques that can be used
 4. Issues and Dilemmas
2. Through question-and-answer and group discussion, write up key points or ideas that the group might have about prevention programmes.
3. Ask people to work in threes to discuss what a prevention programme in their area of work, their agency or their society, might look like. Do this in a structured way with each person taking it in turn to work through the key questions on Handout 39 and the other two acting as advisers.

Handout 35

Purpose of drug education

**PREVENTING
DRUG USE**

What outcomes are you trying to achieve ?

To scare young people away from ever taking drugs

To reduce the current level of local drug taking

To raise young people's self-esteem

To help young people make decisions about drug taking based on balanced factual information

To help young people minimise the harm associated with the use of their chosen substance(s)

To create an atmosphere where young people feel comfortable discussing their substance use

To encourage young people to examine critically their social and environmental situation and help them to develop skills to effect change within their community

To encourage young people to examine the pressures (eg. social, financial, moral) placed on them to use/not use substances

To develop young people's life skills in order to assist them to better manage situations which might tempt them to experiment with drugs

Handout 36

General approach to face to face work

PREVENTING DRUG USE

- Fitting any drug prevention strategy into broad based personal development, health education and social education programmes including drugs as one element of the programme. Not running specific drug programmes in isolation.
- Pitching the level of emphasis on drugs at the level of awareness that people of different drugs have at different ages. Prevention programmes should begin as the young person becomes aware of the substance.
- Not glamourising drugs in any way in the programme.
- Ensuring participants in the programme are not labelled by others as having a drugs problem by making the drugs work part of a broader education programme.
- Clarifying, because of potential conflicts of interest, the exact role of the police in any prevention work. Recognising that many young people will treat them suspiciously.
- Incorporating some strongly held core principles into any programme. For example, one programme worked to the following principles:
 - * accurate information
 - * personal growth
 - * fun alternatives
 - * power of youth to make the difference
- Using a peer group approach with young people training and working with other young people.
- Emphasising participative approaches that engage young people in discussion and debate.
- Involving young people who have been dependent on drugs as they will be able to relate well to and understand participants in the programme.
- Including the place of peer influence and self-esteem in encouraging drug use.
- Agreeing agency policies on all drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, that are binding on all adults, including staff, as well as the people being worked with.
- Incorporating National Anti-Drugs weeks or Drugs Prevention days as part of an annual calendar of events. These can provide a focus to the general prevention work.
- Developing programmes that are general in their approach to drugs rather than having, for example, one programme for licit drugs and another for illicit drugs. This is because, whether licit or illicit, 'soft' or 'hard', all drugs act as depressants or stimulants to damage people.
- Dealing with drugs in a way that, though focussed and intentional, is almost indifferent and lacking in emphasis in its actual style.



Handout 37

Methods of face to face work



- Group games and exercises to learn about facts (games show, snakes and ladders, Odd One Out).
- Group games and exercises to explore attitudes and responsibilities (Ranking Game, Opinion Game).
- Making presentations on different aspects of drug use.
- Photography activities to examine the environment around them—people, places, adverts—and discuss them.
- Making collages of materials (adverts, photographs, newspaper cuttings) to explore feelings and viewpoints, and to make a statement.
- Using a variety of photography for young people to discuss what they are like now and where they want to be.
- Making edited compilation tapes of recorded music (on audio or video tape) to examine youth culture influences.
- Altering adverts, posters etc. 'Graffiti Style' to explore dilemmas and issues.
- Role plays on different situations young people encounter concerning drugs to explore how they react and to develop personal communication skills.
- Discussing different dilemmas written up on walls: "What would you do if" with 4 alternative reactions given to choose between.
- Role play a scene in court with people playing various roles (judge, prosecution, defence etc.) and with different drugs charges.
- Draw a simple flowchart about decision-making about drugs in a real situation (link to computers if possible) showing options and different pathways.
- Role plays on the effects of drugs on themselves and people around them (friends, family, school, workplace, etc.).



Handout 38

Issues and Dilemmas in face to face work



With what age groups should prevention programmes work?

How can prevention programmes raise awareness of drugs among children and young people in a way that does not encourage use?

Should the content and style of prevention programmes begin at the potential user's starting point or the starting point of the agency?

Should alcohol and tobacco be included in prevention work or should programmes only focus on illegal drugs?

Should drugs issues be included in any religious teaching programmes?

What size of groups should be used in prevention programmes?



Handout 39

Planning a prevention programme



1. What outcomes do you want to achieve?

- Who will change and in what way?

2. What general approach will you take?

- What will be the general style and principles of your approach?

3. What particular techniques will you use?

- What particular outcomes do you want to achieve and what activities will achieve those outcomes in your setting?
- What skills will you use to carry out those activities?

4. Issues and dilemmas

- What issues and dilemmas does this programme present?
- How can they be resolved?

5. Putting it into practice

- What would be the key steps to making this idea a reality?



Activity 26: Face to face work with young people

Purpose

To increase people's knowledge and understanding of practical activities for use with young people to prevent drug abuse and to plan their use in a real situation.

What To Do

1. Ask the group to read Handout 37 describing 13 different ways of working with young people. As an optional extra, the group could also have copies of activities in this pack that could be used with young people (see Table1 on page 7).

2. Discuss which of these activities they would like to try out on each other in order to assess their impact and application.

3. Decide which activities the group will actually do on themselves, taking into account:

- the time available;
- the equipment needed (if any);
- the relevance to their situation at work;
- the number of people in the group.

The group can either break into small groups that each plan and try out an activity on themselves, or break into small groups and plan and try out an activity on another group or the whole group.

4. Plan what approaches are appropriate to implement in the situations they are in.