



DRUG SAFETY PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DSP is an ever-evolving project that has been revised and improved over the years to meet the changing needs of the community and the target audience. It is to be recognised that both the school based and community based models recruited young people attending local secondary schools but using a different process.

“Survivor Challenge” DSP 2006 is funded by the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation (AER) Foundation.

Therefore, DSP 2004 utilised a community based model and recruited young people through school, TAFE, and community settings. The target group were identified as young people at high risk of drug and/or alcohol related harm. The peer education model was given an innovative “edge” this year by utilising the reality TV concept “Survivor Challenge”. This was particularly relevant to the target group, and built an analogy between fun, experimentation, at risk behaviour, and experimentation with drugs and/or alcohol.

Evaluation of this project highlighted a range of positive outcomes – critical relationships were formed with TAFE and a local secondary school and strengthened partnerships with the partner youth agency.

Young people completed their DSP “Survivor Challenge” training program, ongoing education sessions, CPR overdose training, and provided peer education at youth events within their local community. Formal events gave the peer educators the opportunity to formally survey the myths and misconceptions that young people believe about drugs and alcohol. It also ensured that key messages were targeted to dispel these myths.

The project was highlighted at the Network of Alcohol and Drug Agencies (NADA) Best Practice and Innovation for drug and alcohol NGOs Conference 2004, where the peer educators were selected to present their innovative project.

Key outcomes of the evaluation of DSP “Survivor Challenge” 2004 were that the peer educator’s drug knowledge was increased and retained, their levels of confidence were increased (pre survey = 21%, 20 wk survey = 58%), and they reported an increase in their perception of value to society (pre survey = 57%, 20 wk survey = 84%), and self-esteem (pre survey = 21%, 20 wk survey 63%).

The pre and post test results were profound in that they showed not only a retention in drug knowledge, but an increase in drug knowledge at the 20 week survey. This is highly significant in that these results challenge the argument against peer education that young people do not retain the information they have learnt.

Evaluation also consistently highlighted the credibility of the training program delivery, the supportive and safe environment that was created to allow young people to explore the underlying drug education philosophy within a harm minimisation framework. This is supported by the fact that there was 100% retention of peer educators in the project.

In summary, DSP “Survivor Challenge” 2004 met all of its stated aims and objectives. The project developed a sustainable and credible peer education program, and developed a capacity within TAFE, a local secondary school and the community to better address drug and alcohol prevention. The program was successful in that it encouraged young people to become responsible, involved, and empowered within a safe and confidential environment that fostered trust and confidence.