



Project Report

Drug, Alcohol and Resilience Education (DARE)
2015 - 2016

DARE is funded by NSW Health and South Western Sydney Local Health District

Report prepared by Youth Solutions
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Please direct any questions you may have about this Project Report to Youth Solutions.

PROJECT LEAD

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YOUTH SOLUTIONS STAFF

DARE was supported by the following Youth Solutions staff members:

- Geraldine Dean, Chief Executive Officer
- Shannon McEwan, Finance and Administration Officer
- Amanda Dillon, Communications Coordinator
- Miriam Deshayes, Health Promotion Officer (April 2016 – current)
- Rachel Kershaw, Program Support Officer (February 2016 – current)
- Lauren Ognenovski, Health Promotion Coordinator (July – December 2015)
- Sue Willoughby, Executive Administration Officer (July 2015 – March 2016)

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PROJECT LEAD'S MESSAGE



In 2015 – 2016, DARE continued to provide the Youth Solutions team with opportunity to be an active part of the school community. Through regular engagement with participating schools, Youth Solutions established meaningful relationships with students and teachers, as well as others who play an important role in the school community.

In the past year, we have had a greater number of young people from alternative education organisations participate in DARE. This has provided the team with opportunities to facilitate DARE to young people who are disengaged from mainstream education and who are more 'at risk' of using alcohol and other drugs.

I would like to say a big thank you to the schools and community organisations who have continued to support DARE during 2015 – 2016.

Thanks for your support!
— Karen

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NSW HEALTH AND SWSLHD

Youth Solutions received core funding from NSW Health and South Western Sydney Local Health District towards the Drug, Alcohol and Resilience Education (DARE) Project.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

Youth Solutions deeply values its connections with the community and extends thanks to the following community supporters for their involvement with DARE in 2015 – 2016:

- ADRA Australia
- Ambarvale High School
- Camden Council – Youth Advisory Council
- Camden High School
- Leumeah High School
- Lomandra School SSP
- Macarthur Adventist College
- Picton High School
- Robert Townson High School
- Whitelion RISE Program
- Core Community Services
- Youth Off The Streets Eden College

VOLUNTEERS

Youth Solutions deeply values the support of volunteers, and would especially like to thank the following students for their support of DARE during their placement at Youth Solutions:

- Angelina Panos
- Chisato Nakashima
- Gopi Subramaniam
- Kirsty Fitzgerald
- Natalie Giunta
- Taylor Pearce

PROJECT RATIONALE

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG USE

The 2016 Youth Development Index (Youth Action, 2016) identifies alcohol and illicit drugs as the biggest health risk factor for youth in Australia. According to the most recent National Drug Strategy Household Survey, 29% of Australians aged 12 - 17 years drink alcohol. Of those who drank alcohol in the past 12 months, 15% drank yearly, 10% drank monthly, and 3% drank weekly (AIHW, 2013).

Although most teenagers do not drink alcohol, those who do tend to drink at risky levels. 75% of young people are more likely to drink specifically with the aim of becoming intoxicated and are hence more likely to experience acute alcohol-related injuries (University of Wollongong, 2013). This has resulted in 1 in 8 deaths and 1 in 5 hospitalisations of people aged under 25 being due to alcohol (Mower, 2013).

Two-thirds of 12 to 17 year old drinkers have experienced at least one negative consequence as a result of their drinking, and almost one-third have experienced three or more negative consequences (University of Wollongong, 2013).

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE

In 2015, almost one in seven (13.9%) 14 - 17 year-olds were assessed as having mental disorders in the previous 12 months. Smoking was higher for young people with major depressive disorder, with one quarter (24.4%) having smoked in the last 30 days. Alcohol consumption was higher among young people with major depressive disorder based on self-report, with 27.6% having drunk more than four drinks in a row in the last 30 days.

RESILIENCE

In 2015, young people rated coping with stress as their top issue of concern (Mission Australia, 2014). Mental health issues and drugs and alcohol have also become increasingly important issues affecting young people (Youth Action, 2016). This indicates the importance of building resilience and ability to cope with life changes and stresses. Research has shown that participation in groups and in the greater community is linked to enhancing young people's feelings of control, bonding and meaning. Positive peer groups can serve as protective factors against substance use, school disengagement and contact with the justice system.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

Youth Solutions' Health Promotion Program aims to stop the onset of substance use, delay the onset of substance use and reduce risky/high risk substance use among young people.

HARM MINIMISATION

Harm minimisation is a framework acknowledging that alcohol and other drug use will always be a part of society and, therefore, it incorporates policies and strategies which aim to prevent or reduce alcohol and other drug related harms.

Harm minimisation has three components:

- supply reduction
- demand reduction
- harm reduction

HEALTH PROMOTION

Health promotion is a framework that enables people to increase control over their health by:

- building healthy public policy
- creating supportive environments
- developing personal skills
- reorienting health services
- strengthening community action

SOCIAL MARKETING

Social marketing is a framework that involves the application of marketing alongside other concepts to achieve specific behavioural goals.

Youth Solutions implements social marketing alongside harm minimisation and health promotion to achieve widespread behaviour change in the community.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Youth participation is the process of building partnerships with young people to promote their role providing input on common issues faced by young people and possible solutions. Youth participation places value on the ideas of young people to develop relevant services and programs for young people.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

GOAL

Through DARE, Youth Solutions aimed to decrease alcohol and other drug use and increase resilience levels for young people aged 14 – 16 years by delivering a series of workshops that cover:

- alcohol and other drugs and related harms
- mental health, resilience and positive coping strategies
- effective communication skills
- help seeking and support services

STRATEGY 1: SCHOOL BASED WORKSHOPS

The school environment is a great tool for engaging with young people whom Youth Solutions may not reach once they leave school.

DARE consists of four to six workshops delivered over four to six weeks. The workshops aim to:

- increase knowledge of alcohol, drugs and related harms
- increase resilience skills and healthy behaviours
- improve communication, stress management, decision making and help seeking skills

STRATEGY 2: INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

DARE creates opportunities for information, referrals and follow-up support to be provided to young people after the completion of the school-based workshops.

Tailored information and referral is provided to service users and stakeholders, dependent on their individual needs.

School staff, as well as parents and carers, are engaged throughout DARE to provide ongoing support to participants in their school and home environments after the completion of DARE.

Where possible, Youth Solutions also engages with youth services in the Macarthur and Wingecarribee regions to complement DARE workshop material.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Term 3, 2015

- Robert Townson High School

Term 4, 2015

- Ambarvale High School

Term 1, 2016

- Ambarvale High School
- Core Community Services
- Leumeah High School
- Robert Townson High School
- Whitelion RISE Program

Term 2, 2016

- ADRA Australia / Macarthur Adventist College
- Camden Council Youth Advisory Council
- Camden High School
- Lomandra School SSP
- Robert Townson High School
- Youth Off The Streets Eden College



FINDINGS



225 YOUNG PEOPLE | 18 GROUPS

15 STAKEHOLDERS | 6 PEER EDUCATORS
7 SCHOOLS IN SOUTH WESTERN SYDNEY
5 COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

9.55% ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS
36.08% CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE

93%

Reported increased knowledge about being safe around alcohol and other drugs

95%

Reported increased knowledge and skills about what to do in an emergency

91%

Reported increased knowledge and skills about positive coping strategies

94%

Reported increased knowledge and skills to access support services

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to be flexible and responsive to the needs of different groups of young people, educational institutions and community organisations.
- Continue to include new research, activities and resources in the DARE program.
- Explore further options for stakeholder engagement and follow-up support and capacity building, including the distribution of information and resources to support workers, parents and carers.
- Change program name to distance program from American-based program sharing the same name.

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