

EDUCATING your mind using your FUNNY BONE

Research conducted by Kay Carter
National Youth Liaison Officer
November 2005

Re-Solv

Registered Charity Number 326732



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

- Purpose & Aims of Study
- Background
- Method



FINDINGS

- Phase 1 - Young People's Views & Experiences
 - Accuracy & Truth
- Phase 2 - Product Development & Testing
 - Findings from evaluations

DISCUSSION

- Phase 1 - Effective Communication
- Phase 2 - What works?
 - The Use of Humour
 - Benefits of Humour
 - Guidelines to Using

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Practice
- Policy

INTRODUCTION

Purpose and aims of study

In this day and age of media entertainment and fast pace living, young peoples attention spans are a hard factor to compensate for when trying to deliver potentially life saving information. The challenging task is to create memorable and engaging presentations to get the vital message across to young people.

The main objectives for this study were to investigate the most effective forms of communication to relay the volatile substance misuse message (VSA) that would:

- Engage the young people
- Present the prevention message clearly and concisely
- Ensure the young people retain the information

The main aim is to equip young people with the knowledge about VSA, so they can make informed choices at the appropriate time with the ultimate aim of reducing the number of deaths.

Background

With VSA still killing more young people than all illegal drugs put together and many on their very first experiment, it is vital to inform young people about these dangers.

The National Youth Liaison Officer's (NYLO) initial role at Re-Solv was to identify the key areas that are lacking in the prevention education on VSA around the UK and young people's knowledge or lack of knowledge on this subject.

Method

The main bulk of the study was carried out during prevention sessions:

- Questionnaires
 - Consultations
 - One to ones
 - Piloting activities (trial and error)
 - Evaluation
-
- **Phase 1 – Young People's Views and Experiences**

Over 2000 anonymous questionnaires were filled out at the beginning of prevention sessions over a two-year period by young people aged between 11 and 16 years of age. The young people attending the prevention sessions were from diverse backgrounds and from a variety of differing organisations i.e. secondary schools, pupil referral units, secure units, youth clubs, etc.



INTRODUCTION



Method (cont)

- **Phase 2 – Product Development and Testing**

A variety of activities were piloted during prevention sessions including TV quiz shows, group work, fun demonstrations, etc. to ascertain which style was the most effective way to get the message across and why.

Each session was broken down into sections and new activities were interspersed within an existing successful framework. This was to ensure that if the new activity failed to be successful, the main message from the session would still be delivered appropriately.

Evaluation

Young people filled out evaluation questionnaires after every session to identify the most effective activities. Sometimes it was necessary to conduct discussions with young people at the end of a session instead of an evaluation form, due to the dynamics of the group or issues with bad literacy. This enabled the NYLO to ascertain in more detail which of the activities they enjoyed, didn't enjoy, found beneficial or put the message across in a way they could relate to.

To discover the effectiveness of the activities and demonstrations used in the sessions the NYLO gave a number of questionnaires to a school who had received the VSA prevention session the year before. The teachers were asked to give out the questionnaires for the pupils to fill out without reminding them about the session or prompting the pupils about what to write.

It is clear from the questionnaires that the teachers adhered to the request not to prompt the pupils before completing the questionnaires, as a small number of the questionnaires talked about a completely different lesson on internet safety.

The pupils were asked simple questions about the VSA session attended in the previous year. The questions included:

- Which activities did you enjoy the most?
- Why did you enjoy them?
- Can you remember what the teacher said about the activity?
- What did you learn?
- What did you think about the whole lesson?

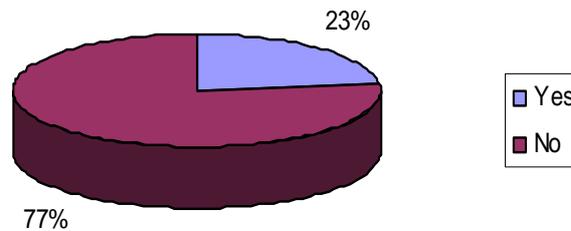


FINDINGS

Phase 1 – Young People’s Views and Experiences

The anonymous questionnaires and consultations with young people showed, that of those who had misused volatile substances, or were currently misusing, 77% were totally unaware about the dangers involved with this activity.

Were you aware of the dangers?



A pattern has been emerging through the questionnaires, revealing that if a young person is introduced to VSA via school education or by a member of their family they are a lot less likely to misuse. Where as if they are introduced to VSA from their friends, they are twice as likely to have a go. In fact, out of the total number of young people consulted, 41% of those who first heard about solvents from their friends had a go.

- *“The mates who have done it say it’s really good and seem happy after”*
- *“I tried it because my friend recommended it”*

This is in comparison to the young people who had received drug education, or had heard about it via the media, i.e. TV, magazines, radio, etc. which was considerably lower.

These results reveal that if the correct information is given to the young people in a truthful and accurate way, they are more attentive and are more able to make correct informed choices when substances like these are offered to them. This requires further investigation.

Out of the young people who had first heard about solvents from their friends 39% had sniffed. This compares with 17% who had tried sniffing after first hearing about it via drug education, showing a considerable decrease and supporting the premise of the importance of prevention programmes at an early age. Please note at this point that there is an uncertainty as to the type of education received by the young people. Whether the drug education received included solvent abuse, and if so, how accurate the information conveyed was. However, results show that 77% of those who had received education did not misuse solvents.

We also see from this data that out of those who first heard about solvent abuse from the media only 15% sniffed, indicating the large influence media has on young peoples’ lives. Further investigations into the effectiveness of different types of media would be beneficial to assess the best vehicle to use in media prevention.

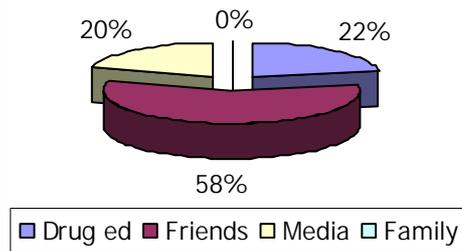


FINDINGS

Phase 1 – Young People’s Views and Experiences (cont)

Another interesting observation from these findings is that out of those who first heard about it from their family, and although the quantity was diminutive, the results showed that 0% of the young people sniffed. This is an area which could do with further investigations, to identify the level of influence parents or guardians truly have on their children and to consider whether informing/training parents to teach and equip their children is an effective form of prevention.

Where they had heard from and percentage who had misused



These results concur with young peoples' comments about what would prevent them from ever using solvents; *"Because of the side effects and going against my parents"*.

In total out of the young people consulted a quarter of them were offered solvents. Out of this group 81% of the young people were offered them by their friends and out of that number, 61% said yes and had a go at 'sniffing'. This highlights the huge impact peer influence has on young people.

Accuracy and truth

Young people surveyed stated that they wanted accurate, truthful information about solvent and volatile substance abuse (VSA).

- *"Tell us how bad it could harm us. So to tell us the truth about it"*
- *"Be more accurate"*
- *"Tell me the dangers about solvent misuse"*
- *"I think education about sniffing should be truthful"*

Young people want to know the truth and the facts. They want to be told the reasons why they shouldn't do it; what the long-term consequences are and the health risks involved.

Below are some of the reasons why young people feel they should have education on this subject and why:

- *"I think education about solvents misuse should be widely spread to prevent it and let people know the consequences"*
- *"I think education about sniffing should show people what it can do to you 'cause if you don't show them they will think you are lying to stop them doing it"*
- *"I think education about sniffing should point out that it can kill you"*
- *"I think education about sniffing should name lots more bad things about it so less people will do it"*
- *"I think education about sniffing should talk about peoples' story about solvent misuse and people can learn from other peoples' mistakes."*
- *"I think education about sniffing should help people and also make them think what is the point"*
- *"I think education about sniffing should be more realistic"*

FINDINGS

Phase 1 – Young People’s Views and Experiences (cont)

Many of those surveyed reported that they felt that being shocked about what can happen to people would stop them and others from misusing:

- *“I think education about sniffing should shock people”*
- *“It should scare you so you don’t use them”*
- *“Show the true dangers of it no matter how shocking they may be and start at an early age”*
- *“Real life stuff would be good, that shocks people and is dead gross”*

Young people stated that they are looking for straightforward, truthful information, put across in an interesting, entertaining way.

Our research shows that young people take more notice of real life stories told in a short and precise manner. This is backed by the Drug Education Forum’s consultations with children and young people about drug education and support November 2000 which states:

“Children and young people want honest and realistic drug education.....they want to know how drugs really can affect their lives.”

Phase 2 – Product Development and Testing

Early pilot activities such as “who wants to be a millionaire, Blankety Blank, etc.” demonstrated that humour was something that young people related to in the activities and was potentially an important aspect in communication with young people.

The NYLO also incorporated visuals on OHP or PowerPoint to talk about the facts regarding VSA. The NYLO discovered through the evaluation of these activities that although they listened, the information didn’t stay with them and sometimes it was clear that they didn’t recognise the full extent of the message being delivered. It was also a challenge to keep their full attention, especially when teaching a group with short attention spans.

The evaluations at the end of the sessions revealed that the young people didn’t like writing and during the study the NYLO discovered that if they had paper and pen in front of them they were more likely to switch off or doodle, therefore losing their full attention.

- *“I least enjoyed all the writing”*
- *“I least enjoyed the talking”*
- *“I least enjoyed all the writing like the questionnaire at the start and the letter”*



FINDINGS

Phase 2 – Product Development and Testing (cont)

The NYLO observed during sessions that the activities and demonstrations that made them laugh:

- Grabbed their attention and kept it
- Defused the fear element of the message without losing the impact
- Demonstrated the message in a visual and dynamic way, having an impact and bringing clarity, so they could fully understand and relate to the outcomes
- Made them eager to learn
- Helped them retain the information

One example of these is an activity used to help young people explore ideas about assessing risk. The activity is a form of Russian roulette but with eggs, which not only gets egg stuck in their hair, it also gets the message stuck in their head!



Although the message 'solvents can kill instantly at anytime' is a serious, hard-hitting message, the egg roulette demonstrates the risk in a visual and dynamic way, showing how it could happen at anytime but having fun at the same time. This way the message is put across so they understand solvents can kill but in a way that makes them laugh, not scared.

The evaluations filled out by the young people revealed how they clearly understood the seriousness of the message, while at the same time enjoying the learning experience – who said learning had to be boring!

- *"I liked the Egg experiment because it shows solvent abuse could be your first and your last "*
- *"I liked it when Kay showed how instantly we could die if we used solvents. She used an egg."*
- *"The egg demonstration was informative but also a fun way to get across the info"*
- *"The egg demonstration because it was fun as well as being educational."*
- *"What I liked most was the egg game. It was very good. It really demonstrated how you could die on your first time."*



FINDINGS

Phase 2 – Product Development and Testing (cont)

Does it work? - Findings from the evaluations

Evaluations were carried out after every session to identify the most effective activities but more research was needed to find out if using humour in this way actually makes a difference and does the job.

The questionnaires revealed that one-year after the session:

- 63% of the pupils had remembered the Egg Roulette
- 52% had remembered the Food Challenge
- 78% had understood the message and remembered it!

Below are some quotes from the questionnaires:

- *"When Steve and Brent had to smash eggs against their heads. It was Russian Roulette, its like risking your life at anytime."*

This quote shows that not only had the pupil remembered the activity but they had also remembered their fellow pupils who took part in the demonstration a year later! But instead of this detracting from the message it had actually helped them remember it.

- *"The teacher said that the one with the egg was to represent that you could either die on your first sniff or your seventh."*
- *"I thought that it was a good activity and the people got across to us the importance of solvent abuse in a fun way."*
- *"It was fun and at the same time it had a meaning behind it"*
- *"I enjoyed them because they let us take part in them."*

Why did you enjoy these activities?

- *"Because it was fun, and at the same time, it had a moral and a meaning behind it all."*

The main purpose of this research was to find ways in which to teach young people about the dangers of VSA they would listen to, understand and remember. The quotes on the evaluations showed clearly that this had been achieved via the humorous activities, as they were the only ones mentioned in the questionnaires. Here are some more of the quotes from the questionnaires:

Can you remember what the activity was about?

- *"That it was Russian roulette its like risking your life at any time."*
- *"Solvent abuse can kill you at anytime."*
- *"That it showed that you never know when you take solvents when it will kill you."*

What did you think about the whole lesson?

- *"I thought that it was a really good activity, and the people got across to us the importance of solvent abuse in a fun way."*
- *"It was good, it taught me a lot and it was fun at the same time – cool!"*
- *"Informative and funny."*



DISCUSSION



Phase 1 - Effective Communication

Phase 1 of the NYLO's work identified that current guidance about VSA education did not fit with young people's perceptions about what they felt would be effective.

In the UK there has been anxiety about scare mongering and sensationalising death because of evidence that educational approaches designed to raise fear in young people don't work.

The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) states in its 1998 report 'Protecting Young People' that:
"Fear arousal – such approaches involve shock/scare tactics and moral exhortations. Research shows that such techniques are rarely effective in influencing behaviour."

The DfEE makes a clear distinction between education and propaganda and emphasises the necessity for drug education to be firmly based on educational principles, which focuses on the provision of accurate and balanced information.

The Welsh Drug and Alcohol Unit report states that the *'shock-horror' and 'just say no' tactics, "should play no part in school or youth centre drug education"*.

The research found by Welsh Drug and Alcohol Unit shows that 'shock tactics' are not credible to young people as they feel the message about death (which many feel young people don't understand) and injury is not true and can be counter-productive emphasising the dramatic and seductive nature of drug use. This research also states that there is no long-term change in behaviour.

But this still leaves us with the question what do they mean by shock-horror? What do they mean by 'shock'? What they think is shocking may be completely different to how adults perceive it. Would 'shocking' stories and facts really make a difference and stop them from sniffing?

What do the government bodies say is good practice, which should be taken into consideration?

The home office "Guidance on good practice" states: *"Young people will tend to accept a message delivered by credible figures, through a medium with which they identify."*

The Drug Education Forum summarised in their report on consultations with children and young people about drug education and support that: *"Children and young people want honest and realistic drug education. The young people's preferences for ex-users and people who have experience of drugs suggest that they want to know how drugs really can affect their lives. Boys in particular, wanted to know about what drugs can do to the body. Children and young people need to be able to relate to the drug education they receive and understand how it will prepare them for situations that they might face."*

So how can the truthful information about the dangers of VSA be taught to young people without causing fear arousal, causing shock or sensationalising death?



DISCUSSION

Phase 2 - What Works? - Effective Communication

"In the light of the early age of first use and concern about sudden death at first use, all schools may wish to consider the place of education about the dangers of volatile substance misuse within their drug and health education programmes."
DFES Circular 4/95

The DFES recognises that we must talk about sudden death when teaching about VSA, but how do we get the message across without arousing fear or sensationalising death?

HEBS (Health Education Board for Scotland) conducted a survey, which investigated people's response to different approaches to health education campaigns. The main objective of the original study was to find out whether the respondents preferred a fear-inducing campaign or a positive image advertising. Two anti-smoking advertisements produced by the Health Education Board for Scotland (HEBS), one using a fear appeal and the other, using a positive image were examined. A sample of 394 subjects in three groups took part in the study and they were interviewed by means of a questionnaire. A high proportion in each group, including smokers, indicated that they preferred the fear-inducing campaign. To investigate why people prefer this type of image, respondents were asked to explain their reasons. It was found that effective communication requires:

1. *Reality*
2. *Clear cut message*
3. *Simplicity*
4. *Thought provoking nature and impact of the message*

In addition, with regard to the advertising appeals it was found that both positive image and negative image campaigns could be used to attract attention and consequently communicate with the target population.

Effective communication: perception of two anti-smoking advertisements.

Ali Montazeri and James McEwen

So this research discovered that both positive imagery and negative imagery campaigns could be used to attract attention and consequently communicate with the target population.

Another review published evidence around fear arousal campaigns by Donovan and Henly concluded that: *"...findings about whether campaigns using 'scare tactics' or 'fear arousal' work are contradictory. They argued that there is a lack of a clarity about the meaning of 'shock tactics'. They believe that approaches that highlight a threat could be effective, whereas approaches that aim to generate fear have unpredictable outcomes. In fear raising approaches the message can be lost and the persuasive element is neglected."*

In the context of VSA it appears that they would endorse approaches that clearly and unambiguously show how using volatile substances is associated with the risk of death. They would not endorse approaches that that set out to scare or shock a young person.

So taking this research into consideration, one of the main keys is to grab their attention so the message can be communicated effectively. The next challenge once the message has been delivered is how to get them to remember it!

DISCUSSION

The Use of Humour

The consultations and evaluations of the variety of activities revealed that the most effective form of communication was the use of humour.

Humour is communication (written, verbal, drawn or otherwise displayed) including teasing, jokes, witticisms, satire, sarcasm, cartoons, puns, clowning, which induces (or is intended to induce) amusement, with or without laughing or smiling."

Ziegler 1998

Humour is said to be good for you and mere fact that you feel better after a good laugh proves this. Not only can a sense of humour enrich your life, it can also promote physical, mental and spiritual health.

Humour has terrific physical and mental benefits.

- It lowers levels of stress hormones – cortisol, adrenaline and noradrenalin.
- It lowers blood pressure
- Induces muscle relaxation ("I peed my pants")
- Improves respiration
- It massages internal organs like the heart and lungs
- It boosts the immune system
- Reduces pain – releases endorphins which also helps mood
- Calms the nervous system
- Improves digestion
- It speeds up the healing process
- Improves circulation
- Increases blood oxygenation
- Releases the pleasure chemical dopamine
- Relieves anxiety and depression

Some refer to laughter as "internal jogging" as laughter makes the heart race, remaining elevated for 3-5 minutes, thus giving a mini work out.

The NYLO observed how a hard-hitting fact put across in a humorous way, could have a big impact on young people. Obviously using humour to deliver this type of message has to be approached with sensitivity but the overall opinion is that young people want to laugh and are attracted to fun images in whatever form they take. They like to laugh and have a good time, and by being relaxed and enjoying themselves it breaks down defences, makes them more receptive for learning and helps them retain the information.

An article by James Atherton states:

"The best kind of humour is not the discrete joke, but humour integrated into the main substance of the material, so that it is not merely a contribution to the maintenance needs of the group, but aids memory and understanding."

*"A clown is like an aspirin, only he works
twice as fast"*

Groucho Marx

DISCUSSION

Benefits of using Humour

There are many benefits of using humour. Listed below are the ways in which humour can enhance teaching and the ways it has found to be effective:



- Grabs their attention and keeps it!
- Humour leads to increased attentiveness (great for young people with low attention spans)
- Creates a positive classroom environment
- Reduces anxiety and creates a relaxed classroom environment (research has proved that the brain works better when in a state of relaxed alertness)
- Increases group cohesion (unity allows the shy or timid student to participate with the group)
- Engages the young people (increases participation)
- Builds interaction and increases cooperation
- Motivates - makes them eager to learn because fun, and having fun, encourages them to participate fuller and enthusiastic to learn
- Communicates the message – It can put across the message clearly and effectively and has a huge impact!
- Aids memory, understanding and helps them retain the information
- It's enjoyable for the teacher and the young people



Alan Peat in his paper 'Using humour as a classroom tool' says the following:

"When emotional climate is 'correct' there will be a resultant rise in pupil performance. Humour, therefore, is an essential element of classroom climate – control!"

...We can conclude that humour, in an educational context, serves two key purposes:

- 1. It is an indispensable teaching tool and aid to learning*
- 2. It is a life skill which helps pupils to deal with change (and its attendant anxiety)*

...in conclusion, if we are to seriously consider methods of making learning more effective then we need to take seriously the benefits of applying humour in the classroom."

*"Classrooms in which laughter is welcome
help bring learning to life."*

DISCUSSION

Guidelines to using Humour

Although humour has been found to be very beneficial in the classroom, it is important humour does not dominate the session but is an integral part of conveying the message. As with all prevention work it is necessary to have a healthy balance to ensure the best result.

"Maintain balance: schools need to develop a credible approach which does not exaggerate but clearly explains the dangers of the drug abuse in a way which avoids glamorising or creating interest in drug experimentation."

It is therefore vital that we are careful in the use of humour and the information given, ensuring the main message is put across in such away that the activity or demonstration does not detract from the seriousness of the message but at the same time does not sensationalise the facts.

Hence the following guidelines should be taken into consideration when using humour in this way:

- Humour needs preparation and a clear objective
- Have specific goals or objectives in mind, it mustn't be random
- Humour must be related to what you are doing in the classroom
- It must be an integral part of your class, rather than something special
- Assess the needs of the group and vary use accordingly
- Do what fits your personality (never force it; it won't work)
- You don't have to be a comedian to use humour
- Don't ridicule or use negative connotations or sarcasm (humour must never be demeaning)
- Don't over use humour or it could distract from the seriousness of the message

"Humour is an important spice to use in teaching – but like any spice, you don't want too much of it."

dmu.ac.uk jamesa

Humour when used correctly and as an integral part of the session to demonstrate the message can enable the young people to digest the information and retain it for future use if needed.



"The job of the teacher is to get students laughing, and when their mouths are open, to give them something on which to chew."

A quote by Tom Davis (1997)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Practice

This study concludes that humour is an excellent tool, not only to grab their attention and keep it, but also to communicate a hard-hitting message of the severity of solvent misuse in a non-threatening or aggressive way.

When teaching about VSA it is imperative that the young people are given the clear facts and the truth about the dangers involved, without causing fear arousal.

This can be achieved by teaching the facts in bite-sized chunks; interspersing demonstrations, quizzes and activities were appropriate.

Magazine style teaching technique

It is clear from the evaluations and consultations with young people that this magazine style teaching technique is the preferred format to adopt to convey this message. This is due to its fast moving activities and demonstrations, which engage young people, hold their attention and help them retain the information.

Use Activities and Demonstrations that:

- **Demonstrate the point/message you are trying to get across**
this can include demonstrations, quizzes, role-plays, videos, etc.
- **Have a clear objective and are an integral part of the session**
that promote and support the message but don't distract
- **Use humorous ones where possible**
as this will aid memory, understanding and helps them retain the information
- **Young people can relate to**
The activities devised by the NYLO convey the important facts and demonstrate the key messages

Ensure the humour does not distract from the seriousness of the message

Use humour sparingly in the session so not to detract from the serious message or make sure it is followed by a serious section that makes the young people contemplate the true impact of the message.

Follow the fun demonstration immediately with the facts or serious message

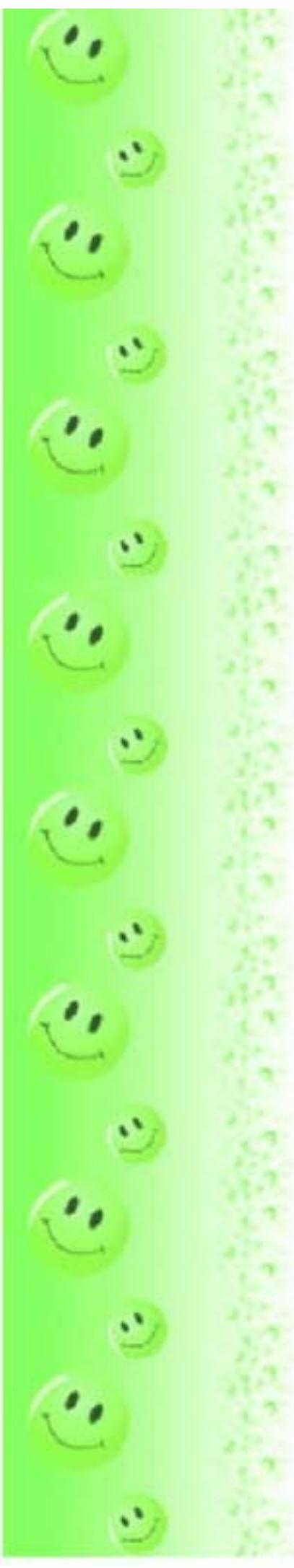
Humour used in this way is like opening a window, it grabs their attention and at the same time demonstrates the point being put across, but this window is only open for a while and it is imperative that while you have their full attention you get the message or fact across quickly and concisely to ensure the full impact.

Method:

1. Conduct the game/demonstration
2. Follow up with the key message
3. Move quickly onto the next activity

Tailoring the session to the young people's requirements

The activities can be mixed and matched and adapted as necessary to ensure that the session is tailored specifically for each individual group of young people. Each group needs to be analysed prior to preparation so that the most effective activities can be chosen, i.e. age, size, knowledge and previous experience, etc.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Practice (cont)

Allow the young people to express their views and experiences

It is vital the young people are given the opportunity to speak out about what they know and by allowing this you can discover their level of knowledge and experience. It also allows them to tell you what products they know can be misused so their misconceptions can be corrected and you can discern if there are product trends in their area.

Their views and opinions can also be utilised during the session to instigate discussion and with guidance can learn from each other.

Avoid discussing methods of use if possible

It is imperative that the information we deliver to the young people is truthful and informative but without telling the young people how to do it i.e. methods of use – spraying through sleeves, bags, etc. This is due to the easy accessibility of these products and the risk of death on the first experiment.

Encourage participation

If young people are actively involved in the learning process they are more alert and are more likely to retain the information.

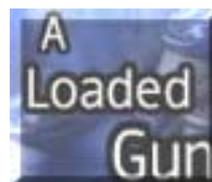
Use real life facts and stories

Where possible insert real life stories from newspaper clippings or conversations with exmisusers / misusers, as this emphasises and re-enforces the message and can also bring credibility to the session.

Current Resources

'A Loaded Gun' video and teachers manual

A pack for secondary schools including a video and a work book for teachers. The work book links the video into a lesson plan and a range of additional activities. It also includes background information about VSA policy and other reference sources. Appropriate for key stages 3&4



'Safe is Sound' video with parents booklet

For use with 11-16 yr olds. Explains the dangers of abusing freely available domestic products containing solvent and volatile chemicals. It encourages young people to use products for which they were designed.

'Chicken' video with workbook

This presents a story of how volatile substance misuse (VSA) affects the life of a young person and all the members of the family. The video is for 11-14 yr olds. A great tool to instigate discussion.



'Hazard Crew'

These bright attractive leaflets use humour to get across a serious message. Targeted at 10- 14 yr olds, the characters are sponsored by Aardman Animations, creators of Wallace and Gromit. The attractive pack includes a set of trump cards, poster, leaflet and ruler/bookmark.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy

Unfortunately there is very little information out there for teachers and professionals regarding VSA and the delivery of prevention sessions. It is imperative that the information about the real dangers is put across to the young people in a real and relevant way, ensuring that the message is delivered correctly.

In so many cases the teacher does not feel confident enough to teach this subject and feel that they lack the knowledge and direction to tackle this subject efficiently.

This highlights the real need to provide training and guidance resources to equip teachers and professionals with the information needed to successfully teach this message to young people.

Currently, although Re-Solv provides the teachers pack 'A Loaded Gun', which contains mix and match lesson plans and facts, it does not have resources to address the practical support and advice needed in this area. Therefore, there is a need to produce a teacher-training package that equips the teachers with the necessary tools to complete the job. This could be delivered via teacher training days or training resources such as interactive DVD's.

It is vitally important to ascertain the young people's views and opinions regarding this subject to identify the most effective form of prevention work and the areas in which we need to concentrate our work. It is imperative that at all times the young people are consulted regarding resources, the current climate, their experiences, views and concerns. Not only is this beneficial for producing materials, having a deeper understanding where young people are coming from in the UK today, it improves how effectively we communicate with young people and sets the direction needed for the prevention work, but it also is their right.

It is also a young persons right to receive truthful information regarding VSA, so they are able to make an informed choice. In order for this to happen teachers and professionals across the UK need to be confident and able to give out the current and accurate information about VSA with the support of Re-Solv and Re-Solv's resources.

Further research is necessary into the use of humour in the delivery of VSA prevention, and the benefits and negatives of this type of teaching technique. At the same time new and innovative activities and demonstrations will continue to be developed and evaluated to ensure the message about VSA is delivered successfully to every young person in the UK.

For further information regarding this document or current publications available please contact Kay Carter, National Youth Liaison Officer at:

Re-Solv Head Office
30a High Street
Stone
Staffordshire
ST15 8AW



Tel: 01785 817885
Fax: 01785 813205

Email : youth@re-solv.org

Website: www.re-solv.org



© **Re-Solv** 2005

Re-Solv is a non-profit-making company, limited by guarantee.
Company Registered No. 1859082 Registered Charity No. 326732
Head Office: 30a High Street, Stone, Staffordshire ST15 8AW
Tel: 01785 817885 Fax: 01785 312205
www.re-solv.org

