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# **Evaluation of the Peer Education component of the *Young Nungas* *Yarning Together* program**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This report describes the evaluation of the Peer Education component of the “Young Nungas Yarning Together” (YNYT) program.

The report does not report on the entire “Young Nungas Yarning Together” program. Its scope and focus is on the process of developing the Peer Education Resource – *Which Path Will U Take* DVD, which was the product of the Presentation Skills Course.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Young Nungas Yarning Together Program targets young Indigenous people aged between 12-20 years of age. The program is conducted as a partnership between Central Northern Adelaide Health Service (Parks Primary Health Care Service) and the Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Council (ADAC).

The program has successfully sourced funding from the National Illicit Drug Strategy Community Partnership Initiative of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing and from the Youth Empowerment Grants scheme of the Government of South Australia Office for Youth.

The overall aim of the Young Nungas Yarning Together program is to:

- Motivate young Indigenous people to play an active role in drug prevention.
- Provide young Indigenous people with the knowledge and skills necessary to avoid drug use and inform them of harm minimisation principles
- Develop the skills of young Indigenous people as ‘peer educators’ with ability to actively support other young people
- Provide young Indigenous people with access to appropriate and up to date information, resources and support.
- Access to accredited training, pathways for future training

As part of this program, a 16 week peer education program for young Indigenous people was designed to enable up to 20 participants to receive information, discuss issues, develop strategies in the prevention of drug use, learn and practise new skills, develop positive peer relationships and develop resources that can help other young Indigenous people with information around alcohol and other drugs.

The Young Nungas Yarning Together Peer Education sessions are listed in Appendix I. The resulting Peer Education Resource DVD – *Which Path Will U Take* – comprises 8 stories:

1. Look out for your sista's
2. Drink Driving
3. Beach Party
4. Dance Party
5. Impacts on Family
6. Dealing With Addiction
7. RAP – The Blood that Runs through me runs through U
8. Which Path Will U Take?

## **METHODS**

SACHRU used the following methods for data collection:

- Planning, familiarization and ethics:
  - Meeting with Project Officer to plan evaluation, meet peer educators, obtain ethics approval
- Document Analysis:
  - Review planning documents, existing evaluation documents, project reports, peer educational materials
- One focus group with Peer Educators
- Two face to face interviews:
  - 1 with the Project Officer, 1 with the Aboriginal Male Youth Worker

Ethics approval was obtained from the Social and Behavioural Ethics Committee at Flinders University and Aboriginal Health Research Ethics Committee at the Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia.

A focus group with young Indigenous people from the program was conducted at the Parks Primary Health Care Service. The Program Manager and Project Officer were subsequently interviewed. The Program Manager undertook the task of recruiting the peer educators for the focus group. However, due to the significant lapse of time since the conduct of the course, only four of the young Indigenous people involved in the project participated in the focus group. All four were from Woodville High School.

The focus group and interview schedules are shown in Appendices 2 and 3. The Information Sheet for the Focus Group is shown in Appendix 4.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Conduct of the Program**

#### *Continuity*

Though funding for the program commenced in 2004, a break in continuity of project staff meant that the program needed to start again from scratch in late 2005. The current project officer used her contacts and networking to start with a range of activities – e.g. aerosol art, family swimming day, a five week learn to surf course a camp, as well as established youth expos. Through this process, a group of young Indigenous people that demonstrated leadership potential was identified.

#### *Staff*

Experience in working with Aboriginal youth is important for the proper conduct of the program. Role models are seen as a vital part of the process. The staff involved in the project brought their own experiences to the process. Their ages (from 20s to 50s) provided different perspectives for the peer educators.

#### *Steering Group*

The “Young Nungas Yarning Together” program reports to a Steering Group that meets monthly (with representatives from MAYFS- Families SA, SAPOL, ADAC, Parks PHC Service, TAFESA). The meeting are seen as useful and supportive, particularly as the program is constantly looking for funding and grant opportunities.

#### *Links with other programs*

However, a single project with limited resources and operating in isolation will have a limited impact. Young Nungas Yarning Together is linked to part of a larger program through the partnership between Aboriginal Drug & Alcohol Council SA inc. and the Parks Primary Health Care Service (Ambulatory and Primary Health Care Directorate - CNAHS). However, the program is basically a one-person show – it will need support of others, in particular Aboriginal staff. The program could benefit from being linked to part of a larger program, and being able to utilise resources and staff from there. For instance, in the past the program was run out of the Nunga IT at the Parks Primary Health Care Service; this enabled Young Nungas Yarning Together to utilise their resources. However, the restructuring and staff changes within the Regional Aboriginal Health Team have impacted on the continuity of YNYT at times.

## **The Course**

### *Outcome*

The Peer Education component of the “Young Nungas Yarning Together” program accomplished a skills presentation course, resulting in an educational resource DVD – *Which Path Will U Take*. Fifteen young Indigenous people (10 male, 5 female) completed the course. In doing so, they completed four modules in Certificate II in Community Services Work (CHC20202) at TAFESA.

### *Accreditation*

One of the strengths (and challenges) of the project is achieving accredited training status with TAFESA. Accredited training was identified in the early stages of the program. The project officer designed the course, and submitted it to TAFESA. The DVD initiative uses a project-based learning approach, which offers a way of achieving some SACE units (50 hours of TAFE is equivalent to one SACE unit). This was seen as important as half the participants are not at school or don't attend school. Continued work is needed to ensure that the program helps lead to a qualification while at the same time being relevant to the younger people. Participants completed 4 units in Cert 2 Community Services and received an academic statement.

## **The DVD**

### *The Stories*

The DVD stories cover a wide range of drug and alcohol stories. In getting the harm minimisation message across, the stories also emphasise the strengths of peer support and friendship – ‘look out for your sistas’, ‘good mates try and keep each other safe’, ‘friends are more important than drugs’, ‘don't blow your friendship up in smoke’ – as well as the consequences of drug and alcohol misuse – ‘Drugs and Alcohol can make u crazy’, ‘Ecstasy: u don't know wat it will do 2 u’, ‘every high has a low’, ‘coming down can mean Depression, ‘drugs hurt people who are closest to you’.

### *Youth involvement*

Part of the appeal of being involved in the program was the opportunity to participate in a DVD project, in particular the acting and filming aspects. The young Indigenous people brought their own stories and experiences to the project. Many of them have seen firsthand drug and alcohol misuse.

### *Outcome*

The DVD was launched at a ceremony attended by over 100 people, including many service providers who provided positive feedback. The young Indigenous people received awards for their achievement at this ceremony. The group were subsequently invited to go to four different youth services to show and present the DVD.

In 2008, the program is developing the educational package to promote the DVD. This project achieved a good product with limited resources. Usually, at least four people with professional skills in theatre, production, camera, and lighting would be needed to work on a project like an educational DVD.

## **Peer Education**

### *Value of Peer Education*

SACHRU recently reviewed the literature on peer education (Johns 2007) and found that peer education was emerging as a potential approach for working collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The National Drug Strategy (2006) has proposed peer education as a potential approach in the area of drug and alcohol prevention. Peer education has been successfully implemented in the fields of Indigenous sexual health (Mikhailovich & Arabena 2005) and violence prevention (Mulronev 2003). Youth drug peer action has had some success with small numbers of young people (Baum, Jolley & Kyriacou 2003).

### *The Group*

The range of ages in the group has been beneficial. One of the challenges for the project was to maintain the interest of the group in some of the more mundane aspects of the production of the DVD. Within the peer group, older members acted as mentors and helped to keep younger members focussed on the project.

### *Outcome*

This program has successfully engaged a group of young Indigenous people in a peer education process. The process of being involved in a creative project has helped build confidence in the young Indigenous people. Since completing the course, participants have taken a number of paths. Some are still in school, others have jobs, and some are involved in other arts projects (e.g. culture and dance, acting). Some participants have developed the confidence and skills to obtain a driving licence.

## **SUMMARY**

The process of process of developing a Peer Education Resource with a group of young Indigenous people has been successful within the constraints of limited resources. The appointment of a project officer with experience in working with young Indigenous people and the involvement of other Aboriginal staff contributed to this achievement. Fifteen young Indigenous people successfully participated in the process.

The Young Nungas Yarning Together program has achieved a product (an educational resource DVD – *Which Path Will U Take*) which can be further utilised and developed in peer education programs. All participants completed accredited training linked to TAFESA and SACE.

Though Young Nungas Yarning Together is linked to part of a larger program through the partnership between Aboriginal Drug & Alcohol Council SA inc. and the Parks Primary Health Care Service (Ambulatory and Primary Health Care Directorate - CNAHS), the continuity of the program is contingent on continually attracting funding support and constrained by having just the one project officer.

The YNYT Peer Education Program could benefit from employment of an Aboriginal trainee. This would have the dual outcome of not only supporting the Project Officer of YNYT in the engagement, supervision and training of the Peer Educators but also providing an employment and professional development pathway for an Aboriginal worker. This would then assure the continuity of the program.

## REFERENCES

Fran Baum, Gwyn Jolley and Megan Kyriacou (2003) *Process Evaluation of the Youth Drug Peer Action Project*. Community Report No. 3. Adelaide: South Australian Community Health Research Unit.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SACHRU would like to thank the young Indigenous people who participated in this evaluation as well as Katie Perry, Project Officer for the Young Nungas Yarning Together program and Karl Telfer, who was the Aboriginal Male Youth Worker and Director of Photography and Editor of the *Which Path Will U Take* DVD.

## APPENDICES

### **APPENDIX I: YOUNG NUNGAS YARNING TOGETHER: CERTIFICATE II in COMMUNITY SERVICES WORK**

#### **TERM 4 2006/TERM 1 & 2 2007**

<b>Orientation</b>	Thursday	19/10/06	9:30am – 11:00am
<b>Communicated with people accessing the services of the organization</b>	Thursday	19/10/06	11:00am – 2:30pm
	Thursday	26/10/06	9:30am – 2:30pm
<b>Introduction to Alcohol &amp; Other Drugs Work Part 1.</b>	Thursday	2/11/06 – 9/11/06	9:30am – 2:30pm
<b>Work with others</b>	Thursday	16/11/06 – 23/11/06	9:30am – 2:30pm
<b>Follow the Organisation's Policies, Procedures &amp; Programs</b> <hr/> <b>Follow OHS Procedures</b>	Thursday	30/11/06 – 7/12/06	9:30 – 2:30pm
<b>Project Based Learning DVD Resource</b>	Thursday	8/2/07 – 5/4/07 17/5/07 – 31/5/07	9:30am – 2:30pm 9:30am – 2:30pm

## **APPENDIX 2 – INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

### Questions for Project Officer/Health Worker

1. What has your involvement with the Peer Education Program of the Young Nungas Yarning Together Project been?
2. How did you come to be involved in the program?
3. How have you found the reference group meetings?
4. What is your view on the training of the peer educators?
5. What are the strengths of the peer education program from your point of view?
6. What if any concerns do you have about the peer education model?
7. Is there anything that could be improved or done differently?
8. Any other comments?

## **APPENDIX 3 – FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE**

### **Focus Group questions- Peer workers**

- 1) How did you come to be a peer educator?
- 2) What was it about the role that appealed to you?
- 3) How have you found being a peer educator?
- 4) What have been the best things about being a peer educator?
- 5) Has anything been difficult or negative in your role as peer educator?
- 6) What support have you received from the project?
- 7) What have you learnt from being involved in the program?
- 8) What new skills has the program given you?
- 9) Any suggested changes or improvements?
- 10) What has participation in the program meant for your future?
- 11) Any other comments

## **APPENDIX 4 – FOCUS GROUP INFORMATION SHEET**

**Young Nungas Yarning Together  
Peer Education Program Evaluation**

**INFORMATION SHEET FOR  
YOUNG PEOPLE**

The Young Nungas Yarning Together workers and people who make decisions about the Young Nungas Yarning Together project (the Young Nungas Yarning Together Advisory Group) want to find out how the Indigenous Youth Peer Education program is working and what people involved in the program think about it. To do that, they have asked some researchers from Flinders University to do a study and write a report on the Indigenous Youth Peer Education program.

Michael Bentley is the researcher involved. He works at the South Australian Community Health Research Unit (SACHRU), Department of Public Health, Flinders University. (You can find out more about him at [http://som.flinders.edu.au/FUSA/SACHRU/staff\\_members.htm](http://som.flinders.edu.au/FUSA/SACHRU/staff_members.htm))

As part of the study, Michael will also talk to other people involved in the Indigenous Youth Peer Education program. An important part of the study is to find out what young people think about the Indigenous Youth Peer Education program. He wants to hear directly from young people not just have other people tell him what the young people think. Michael is hoping that you will help him by taking part in the study.

This Information Sheet has the answers to many of the questions that you and your parent(s) may have about the study. There is a lot of information in here so don't worry if it is too much for one read. Just read through a bit at a time if you want. If you or your parents have other questions you can ask Katie Perry, the Indigenous Youth Peer Education worker, or you can ring Michael.

Michael Bentley: 8204 5981

## 1) What is the study for and why is it being done?



We hope that by doing this study we will learn more about the Indigenous Youth Peer Education program, how it works, what people think about the program, what things work well and what can be done to improve it. The study will help the people who plan and work in the program to do things better. It can give information to the people who provide funding for the program. It can also let people who are in other areas know about the program and decide if it would be a good idea to do something similar.

## 2) What would I be asked to do if I took part in the study?

We want to talk to young people about their experiences of the Indigenous Youth Peer Education program, so we would talk to you, in a group, about what being involved in the Indigenous Youth Peer Education program has been like for you. Although we call this a 'focus group', it is really more like talks or conversations.



This 'focus group' is not like an exam or test where there are right and wrong answers. It could even be that different people tell us different things in the focus group and that's OK.

## 3) What will happen in the Focus Group?

You will talk to Michael about the Indigenous Youth Peer Education program. You don't have to answer questions you don't want to, or talk about anything that you don't want to. We are interested in your opinions.

## 4) When and where would the focus group take place?

We will arrange a suitable meeting place at the Parks Community Centre.



## 5) Will I be paid for participating in this research study?

Sadly no, we can't pay people to take part in research as it has to be voluntary.



## 6) What information will the researchers want me to tell them?

We want you to tell us about your views and ideas about the Indigenous Youth Peer Education program. We want you to tell us about things that YOU think are important.

## 7) Why do you need to tape-record what I tell you?

We think what you say is important and if we didn't tape it we could forget a lot of the really important stuff that we'd heard. It is too hard to take lots of notes in a focus group, because then you can't concentrate on what the person is saying to you.



Most people that we've interviewed before say that they hate the sound of their voices on tape, but they don't mind the tape-recorder being there. In fact, the microphone is so small that after a while you hardly notice it.



## 8) Who will be told about any information that I give?

What's said at the focus group is strictly confidential. This means only the people in the research team get to hear it or read it. We do not tell anyone else what you said – not the Indigenous Youth Peer Education workers, not your parents. We do tell people about your views and ideas but in a way that doesn't let people know who said what. None of what you tell us will become part of any health or school records or notes.

The only time we would pass on information you tell us to others is if you told us something that made us seriously worried about your safety or if you make known some criminal activity. We would think about this very carefully before we did so. Under search and seizure laws we cannot necessarily keep knowledge of criminal activity confidential.

## 9) What will be done with this information that I give?

First, only people who are working on the study will hear the tape. The focus group will be typed out so we can read what was said in the interview. We make sure that no-one's real names are used when we label the tape or the typed out version. This makes sure that nobody reading it can tell who has said what at the interview, and so what you say stays confidential.

Then, the researchers read through the focus group and their notes very carefully, trying to pick out all of the most interesting and important things that the participants have been telling us. We are looking for things that will help us

Evaluation of the Peer Education component of the Young Nungas Yarning Together program and other people understand more about children's and others' experiences of the Indigenous Youth Peer Education program.

The researchers will write a report at the end of the study so that we can share the information from this study with the people who have participated in the study, with people who make decisions about the Indigenous Youth Peer Education program.



We also try to write articles about the study and publish these and talk about the study at meetings and conferences so that what we have found out actually gets to people who might be able to use the information to help. If we didn't do this, then the people who helped us by telling their story might feel that they had done this for nothing.

Remember again though, that in any of the articles or reports, your name will not appear as what you tell us is confidential and private. What we would do is perhaps say that "A 12 year old girl said that..." or write that "John (not his real name), said that he thinks....."

## 10) Do I have to take part in this study?



Not at all. You should only take part if you want to and are happy to do it. We will also ask your parents if they want you to take part.

## 11) What will happen if I don't want to take part?

Nothing at all. You have every right to say that you would rather not take part.

## 12) Can I change my mind if I decide to participate?

Yes. Participants can choose to leave the study at any time and nothing at all will be said, apart from 'Thank you very much for thinking about taking part'. You can also choose to discuss or not discuss any aspect of your experience - whatever you feel most comfy with.

## 13) Will the study benefit me in any way?

We can't promise that you will get any benefit from taking part. We will let the people who make decisions about the Indigenous Youth Peer Education program know about young people's views and ideas about the program. They might decide to make some changes to the program to make it better for the other

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young people who may become involved. Even if changes aren't made you might feel that by describing your experiences you are helping readers of the study's reports to get a better understanding of what the Indigenous Youth Peer Education program is all about and what Indigenous young people's experience of the program is like.

#### **14) Have you got permission to do this study?**

Yes. We have permission from the Ethics Committees at the Aboriginal Health Council and at Flinders University. The members of the Committee have looked carefully at this study and have 'passed' it. You can contact the Secretary of the Flinders University Ethics Committee on 8201 5962, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email [sandy.huxtable@flinders.edu.au](mailto:sandy.huxtable@flinders.edu.au).

#### **15) What if I have other questions about the study?**

Please contact Michael Bentley: 8204 5981. If he is not in the office you can leave a message that you want to speak to him and he will call you back.

#### **16) What if I feel that I would like to talk to someone after the focus group about any thoughts, feelings or problems that I have?**

You can talk to Katie Perry, the Young Nungas Yarning Together Project Officer. Here number is 8243 5578.

The Parks Community Health Service has a Counselling Service that you could talk to. Their number is 8243 5611. Or, you can try the 24 hour Kids Helpline on 1800 551 800.

Please keep this information sheet as you might want to discuss it with friends, family or relatives. Thanks a lot for taking the time to read this and for any help that you are able to give us with this study.

