



Donna Butler


Strengthening Families Programme Manager NW.

NW Alcohol Forum LTD.





Background Information

- NW is a government approved site for community mobilisation on alcohol.
 - Family support is a key commendation within the NW alcohol action plan.
 - Consultation with the community found a real need for structured 'whole family' support programmes.
 - Following an extensive review of family programmes it was agreed to pilot the SFP as a model most suitable for families in NW.
 - The origins of SFP began when the NWA board agreed to pilot the introduction of front line family support in order to ensure a start up for this model of family support in the region
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What is the Strengthening Families Programme (SFP)?

- An evidence-based Family Skills Strengthening Programme developed by Professor Karol Kumper and associates in the University of Utah.
- Developers believe that to reduce risk factors in young people one must improve family environment and the parents' abilities to nurture and provide appropriate learning opportunities .
- SFP is for families with children ages 6 to 12 years (SFP6-12) and 12-16 years (SFP12-16) & intervention for the 'whole family'
- SFP most helpful for families experiencing a range of difficulties including behavioural, emotional, academic and social problems.

SFP is dependent on Interagency 'Buy in'.

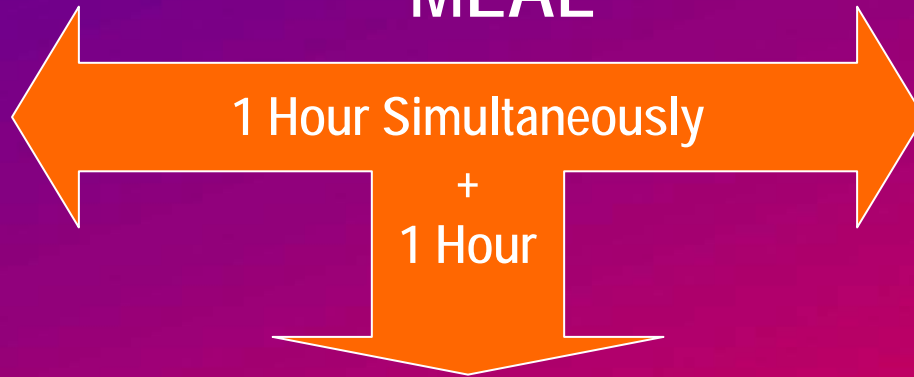
- Fundamental to the delivery of the SFP is the 'In Kind' time that is provided by the interagency partnership that has been developed.
- No less than 10 individuals are required to roll out one Strengthening Families Programme.
- Agencies release staff for attendance at SFP two day Group Leader training.
- Having completed the training individuals will be in a position to refer into the programme (Link Person), Site coordinate and/or as a Group Leader.

Typical Weekly Session x 14 weeks

(Site Coordinator) FAMILY STYLE MEAL



Teen Skills
3 x Group
Leaders



Parent Skills
3 x Group
Leaders



Family Life Skills
1 Parent Group Leader
1 Teen Group Leader

Getting started

- In August 2009 the NWAF was approved funding from NWRDTF and HSE for the recruitment of an SFP Coordinator & programme start up. As a result of this appointment the following actions occurred;
 - ❑ Selling the new SFP Culture & agency commitment.
 - ❑ Briefing workshops.
 - ❑ Adaptation of SFP materials to the Irish context
 - ❑ Development of Recruitment tool
 - ❑ Development of SFP Policies & Protocols. (Child Protection)
 - ❑ Approval from Children Services & subsequent inclusion in SLA's

Continued.....

- ❑ Development of the SFP Advisory Committee.
- ❑ First SFP Group leader training January 2010 for 30 people.
- ❑ Development of referral pathways.
- ❑ Programme Selection Panel Established.
- ❑ Core Programme Group Leaders signed up to support the implementation of the roll out of a pilot programme.
- ❑ Commenced pilot programme in March 2010 with eleven families.

The SFP Journey

1.) Family Complete Referral application with Link Person

2.) SFP Screening Panel

3.) Link Person supports family for 14 weeks.

4.) Link Person attends night one

5.) Family attend for 14 consecutive weeks

6.) Post Programme- De-brief & feedback

7.) Link Person given weekly update

8.) Parents & Children Complete an Evaluation

8.) Session 14: Graduation

9.) Booster Session/Reunion



The Lutra Evaluation Report (2nd march-15th June 2010)

- Parents completed a pre-test and post-test standardized evaluation instrument at the end of the programme.

Outcomes measured Included;

1. Parent immediate Change Objectives
 2. Child Change Objectives
 3. Family Change Objectives
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Lutra Evaluation Results

- 100% retention.
- Change for Donegal Families has been about twice as large when compared with Irish SFP norms.
- Lower rates of protective factors and higher levels of risk factors reported by families at pre-test.
- Family outcomes improved significantly in 5 of 5 (100%). Family organisation, cohesion, communication, conflict and resilience.
- Parenting outcomes improved significantly in 5 of 5 parenting outcomes (100%).

Lutra Evaluation Results continued.....

- Parental Alcohol and Drug Use decreased significantly.
- Statistically significant change also in five of seven of the youth outcomes including decreased depression, Concentration or Reduced Attention Deficit, decreased Overt and Covert Aggression and increased Social Skills.
- Small change in criminal behaviour and hyperactivity.
- Results from an external evaluation concurred with the Lutra evaluation & attributed the impact on; SFP is a 'whole family' approach, it is a skills based programme, it is a time bound intervention & interagency collaboration.



The SFP Milestones since 2010

- Four SFP Group Leader Training sessions have been delivered with over 100 people having received training.
- The SFP now enjoys representation across many statutory & community/voluntary agencies.
- Six Programmes have now commenced in Co. Donegal, 54 Families, made up of 71 young people & 73 adults have attended the programme.
- Secured funding for the continued roll out of SFP for the next two years & also a Youth Advocacy Service.



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