

Drugs Awareness Programme CROSSCARE
The Red House
Clonliffe College
Dublin 3
Ireland



Six-week School Programme

Prevention of Drug Misuse for Sixth Class
(Primary School)
District A North Dublin suburb

BACKGROUND NOTES:

- ◆ The Programme was initiated by Home School Community Liaison (H.S.C.L) teacher.
- ◆ The Boys' and Girls' schools are separate, with one 6th class in each.
- ◆ The pupils had "Smokebusters" programme in 5th class last year.
- ◆ The sixth class teacher remained in the class, during the programme.
- Two parents participated in this year's programme. One of these has Youth and Community work experience. The purpose of having teacher and parents' participate is to empower them to carry out the programme themselves in future years.
- ◆ This year the programme was conducted by Chris Murphy (Crosscare Drug Awareness Programme).
- ◆ Two "pre-visits" for planning meetings were held, the first between Chris Murphy and HSCL teacher, the second with these and the two parents as well.

The school is not availing of SMPP (Substance Misuse Prevention Project). If it were, this six-week module could be integrated into the SMPP.

45 to 60 minutes were allotted to each session of the course.



AIMS OF THE SIX-WEEK PROGRAMME:

To assist pupils to acquire or to improve their knowledge attitudes and skills, so that they will be motivated and able to avoid drug misuse during the next six months.

This programme should be set in a wider context of Health Promotion and Health Education, which in turn should include:

- ◆ Self Esteem.
- ◆ Decision Making.
- ◆ Coping with feeling.
- ◆ Positive Attitudes to health.
- ◆ Taking responsibility for one's own well being.

This programme may also be set in a context of Confirmation preparation. The pupils in the present programme have already made their Confirmation but the "pledge" will not be made until after completion of the course.

PRELIMINARY SESSION:

A preliminary session in the classroom is desirable for three purposes:

- (1) To introduce presenters and class, if they are not already known to each other.
- (2) To conduct survey which helps in preparation of subsequent sessions and in evaluation of the whole programme.
- (3) By getting the survey done in advance, to ensure that there is enough time on day 1 for the subject of smoking.

CONTENT OF THE PROGRAMME:

Preliminary Session

- Topics: (1) Introduce the presenters.
(2) Surveys
- Purpose: (1) Create suitable environment.
(2) Evaluation
- (1) Introductions: Presenter, if not already know to the class, should introduce themselves and briefly describe the programme,**
- (2) Surveys**
- (a) The Bag 5-7 minutes
- Purpose: For Presenter / Teachers to find out the pupils' level of knowledge about drugs.
- Method: "The Bag" activity page is distributed, explained, filled in by pupils, collected by presenters.
- Note: We explained that it is not a test, especially not a spelling test, and that it is for us to find out what they know. We asked them not to consult their 'neighbour'.
- Requirements: Handouts, pen/pencil per pupil.
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- (b) The Survey 5 minutes
- Purpose: To inform the presenters about pupils' attitudes and intentions, and to provide a basis for comparison of "Before and After" for evaluation.
- Method: The page is distributed, explained, completed by pupils, collected by presenters.

- Note: We appealed for honesty and emphasised the anonymity of the survey. We asked them to turn it upside-down before we collected the page.
- Requirements: Handout, pen/pencil per pupil.
- Processing: After the class we produced a summary page for The Bag and The Survey. This can be very informative. We found both boys' and girls' to be keen on not-smoking. Attitudes to alcohol were different, especially among the boys. 47% of the boys said they would "drink and get drunk" when over 18, while not one of the girls ticked this answer.
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DAY 1

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Topic | Smoking |
| Purpose | Reinforce appropriate knowledge, attitudes, skills. |
| (c) Smoking: | The Body Outline (15-25 minutes) |
| Purpose: | Revision, in interesting fashion, of knowledge about smoking, including short-term effects as well as long term risks. |
| Method: | Class divided into three groups. A presenter stayed with each group, when the class was divided; the presenter explained the activity. One pupil lies on large sheet of paper. Others draw an outline of the pupil, who then gets up. A fictional name can be given to the outline. The pupils "brainstorm" and draw in parts of the body which might be affected by cigarette smoking. They may be prompted to include skin (wrinkled/brown) hair (smelly) etc as well as more obvious parts. Passive smoking may be included. |

Processing: There are various ways in which this activity can be “processed”. The class re-assembles. The body-outlines are displayed. Affected parts of the body are listed on the board, being called out by a pupil from one the groups, written on board by a presenter, then added to by pupils from other groups.

The question might be asked “Why do people smoke?” or “Are there any advantages in smoking?” Answers could also be written on the Board, If answers emerge such as “Smoking looks cool” or “Smoking keeps you skinny”, it makes sense to ask whether there are ways to look “cool” or “skinny” which avoid the harmful effects of smoking. Discussion may be invited.

Notes: The Body Outline provides a good buzz of activity, an opportunity for learning or revision and for a participative interaction between pupils and presenter. Good discipline is needed to prevent accidental or deliberate marking of floor surface or the lying-down pupil’s clothes. Also: anticipate how you will deal with possible inclusion (whether mischievous or well-motivated) of private parts on the body outline. There was little need for Teaching Points when we carried this out. The pupils had said all that was needed. A summing-up was sufficient.

Materials: Large sheets of paper, crayons or markers, chalk and board. Space for groups.

(d) Smoking Attitudes: 5-10 minutes

- Purpose: To encourage each student to state their opinion in a way which encourages healthy attitudes.
- Method:
- (i) Pupils fill out activity page “Smoking and my opinions”. On this occasion we allowed them to discuss with a neighbour, though few did so.
 - (ii) With page in hand, pupils form a line (single or double file) in middle of the room. One side of the room is identified as “Agree”, the other as “Disagree”.

Question 1 is read out. Pupils are asked to take 2 steps to the “Agree” or “Disagree” side. One or two from each side are invited to say why they chose that side. Changes are permitted. Pupils go back to the centre and the process is repeated for each suggestion.
- Processing: The processing of this activity is in the discussion that follows each question. The presenter may add comments, but for the most part it is the dialogue between students on either side of the room which is important here. This dialogue is the testing-ground where personal opinions are formed.
- Notes: The presenter can help “peer-pressure” to be constructive. For instance the question “Who has never smoked a cigarette?” is much more constructive than “Who has ever turned down the offer of a cigarette?” and “How could you say no without losing face or losing friends?”
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(e) Skills - Role-play

If time does not permit this section to be included, it may be deferred, to be incorporated in role-plays about other drugs.

- Purpose: To prepare the pupils for the day when they may be offered a cigarette to smoke, by providing them with a strategy for saying “No’ without losing dignity or friends.
- Method:
- (1) A demonstration role-play could be prepared by presenter.
 - (2) The class are invited to create role-plays in groups of four. Rules;
 - (a) Choose a time and place in which the role-play is set.
 - (b) Two people (A and B) offer the other two (X and Y) an invitation to join them later to smoke some cigarettes, X and Y decline, doing so with heads held high, supporting each other. They do not have to fall out with A and B over this; but in the role-play they do not give in to the invitation.
 - (c) The role-play should have a definite end-point (after perhaps on or two minutes).
 - (3) The presenters observe some of these role-plays in rehearsal and some are demonstrated to the rest of the class.
- Processing: Discussion should focus on effective ways to decline the invitation assertively, with dignity and firmness, not apologetically, neither losing face nor losing friends. Pupils may be invited to say if they have ever successfully declined such an invitation and how they did this. A word of praise from the presenter to those who have been successful in saying No, should help to reinforce this success, which in turn should act as a positive form of peer-influence within the class.

Notes: The pupils could be asked to rehearse role-plays outside class time for the next session.

(f) Homework

If desired, a home activity could be given to pupils. We did this only on day 2 (second week).

DAY 2

Topic: Drinking alcohol

Purpose: To teach and to reinforce appropriate knowledge attitudes, skills.

1. *Review:* Discussion: What do you remember from last week? Review any salient leaving points

2. *Drinking Styles*

Purpose: To teach or to draw attention to the fact that there are several “drinking styles” regarding alcohol.

Methods: (a) Write the styles on the board.

Non-drinker

Social drinker

Problem drinker

Alcoholic

(b) Describe each briefly, adding words on the board;

Non-drinker

Social drinker Causes no problems

Problem drinker Causes problems

Alcoholic Causes problems and can't or won't give it up

[May explain that “addicted” and “dependent” mean the same as “alcoholic”]

(c) Distribute the Drinking Styles activity page. Ask pupils to match one of the drinking styles with each person, writing the drinking styles on the page. [There is one of each style]

(d) Ask for answers and write up names on Board.

Paul: Non-drinker

James: Social Drinker

Avril: Problem Drinker

Anna: Alcoholic

Discussion: Why did they choose each answer?

3. *Who wants to be an alcoholic?*

Purpose: Following from the previous activity, to focus sensitively on the difficulties caused by misuse of alcohol.

Method: (a) Ask simply: “Who wants to be an alcoholic”. You are unlikely to get any show of hands.

(b) Ask “what is it like to be an alcoholic?”

Note: This must be dealt with sensitively, as the statistical chances are that some of the pupils have an alcohol dependent parent. Perhaps the school has some alcohol dependent staff too.

Listen to answers, acknowledging them and correcting them if necessary, perhaps writing them on the board?

Typical examples:

- ◆ You waste money.
- ◆ You spend too much time in the pub.
- ◆ You have rows at home.
- ◆ You lose your job.

Note: If necessary, steer the pupils' concept of an alcoholic away from the stereotypical "wino" idea, explaining that there are many alcohol dependent persons who are not jobless or homeless, but who have major problems in their lives.

4. *An Alcoholic Parents*

Purpose: Following on from the previous activity, to offer constructive ideas to anyone in the class who may have an alcoholic parent, for this pupil is more at risk than the others, of future drug misuse.

Method: (a) Prefix your question with remarks similar to the following:
"I'm going to ask what would it be like for someone of your age to have a mother or father who has a drink problem. But we must remember that there could be someone or more than one in the class who is in that situation, and I am not asking them to talk about it here because they might not want to".

(b) Ask the Question:
"So, what would it be like if you had a mother or father who was a problem drinker or an alcoholic?" Again, sensitively listen to the answers, correct any misconceptions, and perhaps write some on the board.

Typical answer:

- ◆ You'd be embarrassed to meet him / her on the street.
- ◆ You wouldn't like to bring friends home.
- ◆ You'd have rows at home.

(c) Ask: "What could such a person do?" The pupils may come up with rather unrealistic suggestions. Such as "phone the AA" The presenter may suggest (if it doesn't come from the class):

- ◆ Talk to an adult whom you trust (don't keep it a secret).
- ◆ Remember that some people don't understand what it's like to have an alcoholic parent, so don't tell everyone.
- ◆ It's a good idea to tell your teacher after class in privacy, so that your teacher would know what you're going through. Sometimes it might be hard to get homework done, and it's good that the teacher would understand why.
- ◆ When you become a teenager you could go to Al Ateen.
- ◆ If you can talk about it to the other parent that's good, but sometimes they are so busy trying to cope that they're not the best person to talk to.
- ◆ Be careful, if and when you do start to drink alcohol, so that you don't become dependent on alcohol yourself.

5. *How could you make yourself an alcoholic?*

Purpose: Reverse psychology, preparing for the next section.

- Method: (a) Ask each person to write down one way, one thing I could do if for some strange reason I wanted to become an alcoholic.
- (b) Listen to and note their suggestions.

Examples: Drink a crate of lager.

Drink when you're young.

Drink every day.

6. How to avoid becoming an alcoholic.

Purpose: To focus on healthy behaviours regarding alcohol.

- Method:
- (a) Ask each person to write down at least one way to avoid becoming an alcoholic. [The were asked to write one item in section 4; now they are asked for more than one? To put greater emphasis on the healthy options].
 - (b) Listen to their suggestions and write each different idea on the Board, until the class are satisfied that the list on the board covers all their recommendations. If you like, summarise these. Typical examples:
 - ◆ Don't drink too much.
 - ◆ Don't start drinking (alcohol) too young.
 - ◆ Don't drink too often.
 - ◆ Make you own mind up - don't be pressured by others.
 - ◆ Support you friend/ask for support.

(c) Discuss

Young people may ask “What is too much / too young / too often?” or the converse “What is acceptable?”. Guidelines exist for adult drinking (over 18's), for example “low risk”

amounts: 21 units per week for adult man.

 14 units per week for a women.

Notes: On average, 50% of those who drink before age 18, have taken their first drink by age 13.

It is NOT illegal for a young person to drink alcohol at home or in another house where they have permission to be.

Options: (a) Alcohol Units

Explain about units and “low risk” limits. Give examples of an over-18's weekly intake. Invite the class to calculate whether or not it falls into “low risk” or not. A young

(under 18) person cannot drink the same amount without risking accidents or other problems in the future.

(b) Alcohol and the Law

Offer handout about the legal position and discuss,

(c) Attitudes activity

Write out alcohol-related statements on cards, and invite class to sort these into “agree” or “disagree” in groups of 3 or 4 (See day 3 for an example).

(d) Case histories

Examples from Newspapers of accidents arising from alcohol misuse,

(e) Life-line activity

(See day 5)

7. Role-play

(In the six-week programme we deferred this role-play to day 3)

Method: As role-play on Day 1, substituting “a few cans of lager” for “cigarettes”.

8. *Homework*

Invite the young people to compose an advertisement aimed at over-18’s encouraging them to drink sensibly (if they drink alcohol at all) so that they can enjoy alcohol all their lives, with out its causing any harm.

One pupil made a collage with the slogan “Drink as much as you like”. On closer inspection, the bottle in the picture proved to be mineral water. Clever.

DAY 3

Topic: Drugs legal and illegal.

Purpose:

1. *Review*

Method: Review last day's work, collect 'homework' and perhaps comment on work done.

2. *Things that happen slowly*

Method: Seek examples of things that happen slowly: Examples:

- ◆ Growing up.
- ◆ Losing or gaining weight.
- ◆ Getting good at a musical instrument.
- ◆ Learning a sport.

Explain that drug problems also happen slowly. Indeed, drug users often think at first that nothing bad will happen to them.

3. *Harm (caused by drugs)*

Purpose: To draw attention to the fact that death is not the only harmful outcome from using drug use.

Method: Invite class to write down some of the harmful things that might arise from drug use.

Ask for examples and write them up on board.

Examples:

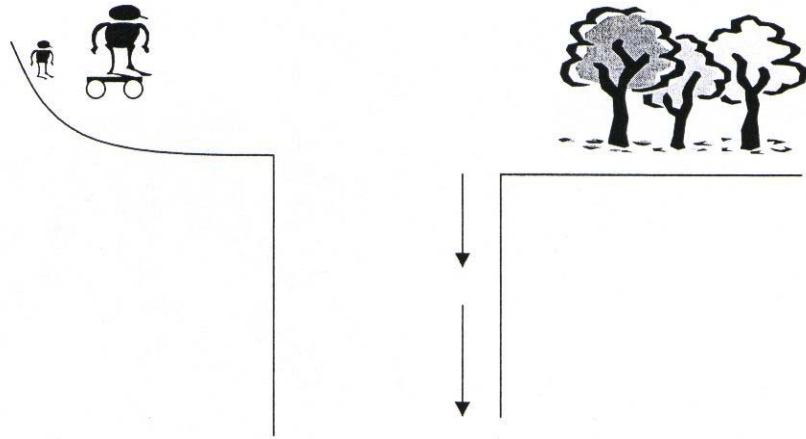
- ◆ Die
- ◆ Become crazy
- ◆ Get addicted
- ◆ Steal
- ◆ Rows at home
- ◆ Fail exams

4. *What Goes Up Must Come Down*

Purpose:

Method:

Aim:



- (a) We used the topical illustration of Homer Simpson's ill-fated attempt to jump the canyon on Bart's skate-board. Homer's aim was to jump the canyon. The drop was when he failed and again when the ambulance crashed and fell down again.
- (b) On the Board draw a chart

| <i>Drug</i> | <i>Aim</i> | <i>Drop</i> |
|-------------|------------|-------------|
| | | |

We invited the pupils to copy the diagram on to paper.

- (c) Name a drug. Ask if the pupils know what is the aim of a user taking it. Ask if they know what is the drop if a person takes too much or in the case of medicines, against a doctor's advice. Examples:

| DRUG | AIM | DROP |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| Valium | Relax/avoid depression | If too many: “Stomach-pumped” in hospital |
| Alcohol (a little) | Socialise, celebrate | none |
| Alcohol (a lot) | Socialise | Drunk, sick, possible addiction |
| Cannabis | Buzz, relax | Lazy, fail exams, lose job, steal |
| Heroin | Stoned, kill pain | Addiction, “Strung out” stealing |
| E | Dance, energy | High temperature, spasms, hospital, possible death |
| “Phy” (methadone, physeptone) | Stay of heroin | Addiction, strung out, difficult “detox” |

(d) Invite questions and discuss.

5. *Role-play*

Purpose:

Method: Same as the role-play on Day 1, substituting “a few can of lager” and / or a bit of “hash”

It is best to be specific about what drug is being offered, and to confine it to one of these “gateway” drugs; in order to create a plausible scenario.

DAY 4

Topic: Drugs in general

Purpose:

1. Review of previous day
2. Video “My Best Friend”

Purpose:

- Method:
- (a) Show the video
 - (b) Discuss, using some of the questions from the booklet which accompanies the video.

- (c) Invite question.

Notes: We found the boys more realistic in composing role-plays about saying no to an invitation to drink alcohol or smoke cannabis. We found the girls more searching in their discussion about drugs. For instance, the girls asked “Is it only drugs which change your mood that “get you addicted?”

3. Attitude Activity

Purpose:

Method: (a) Divide class into groups of three. Distribute a set of statements on cards to each trio. Give each group three envelopes marked “True”, “False”, and “Different Opinions”.

- (b) Ask them to sort the statements into “the envelopes”. All three must agree for a statement to be assigned to the “true” or “false” envelope. Where their opinions diverge, the statement goes into “Different opinions”.

This allows them to disagree without hassle.

- (c) Write a summary of each statement on the board. (This can be prepared on a large sheet of paper in advance).
- (d) Ask one group to say how they rated each statement. Tick (►) each statement appropriately. Ask a few other groups about their ratings.
- (e) Discuss

Examples of statements which must be written on a page, copied x times (x = number of pupils ÷ 3) and distributed in sets:

1. Everyone should learn how to enjoy life without drugs or alcohol.

2. I would back up my friends if someone offered them a drug and they wanted to say no.
 3. Young people expect each other to say that drugs are “cool”.
 4. Parents should let a 13 year old take a drink (of alcohol) at home.
 5. I think it is ok for a 14-year-old girl to get drunk.
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DAY 5

Topic:

Purpose:

1. *Review*
2. *Peer Leaders*

We invited a group of trained peer leaders to conduct this session.

3. *Life Line*

Purpose:

Method: (a) Show one of the four parts of the video “You’re Only goin’ Nowhere if you can’t say NO”. [We usually use part 2].

The part chosen should be appropriate to the pupil group.

- (b) Invite the pupils to name one of the main characters in the video clip.
- (c) Ask them to draw a line on a page, to represent a “life line”, a graph of the character’s life - it can be horizontal, diagonal or meandering, you can give an example on the board.
- (d) Ask pupils to mark a point on the line to represent today. The start of the line is when the person was born; the end is when they die.

- (e) Ask class to estimate the age of the character now. Mark this on the page beside the “today” point.
- (f) Ask pupils, in twos, to speculate about the character’s future. Will the person use a drug? With what consequences? Mark these on the page.
- (g) If they wish, they may choose two alternative courses through life.
- (h) They may also speculate retrospectively, imagining and marking in some events previous to “today”.
- (i) The presenter asks some pupils about the life-line they chose, and points are added to the illustration on the board. Alternative ending may be illustrated.
- (j) Discuss

In the discussion, aim to evoke the progression of well-being or addiction drawing out links between choices and consequences, between early misuse of alcohol / drugs and possible later problems. It is important to emphasise that a person has choices throughout one’s life, but that with most of the familiar drugs they longer one uses them, the harder it is to give them up.

4. *Evaluation*

Purpose: To get some indication of changes in knowledge, attitude and intentions during the course.

Method:

- (a) Re-administer the survey carried out on day 1. Collect the replies for review later.
- (b) Consult the class about what they valued in the course and what changes they would recommend.
- (c) After the session, tabulate the replies on to a summary page as before (Day 1).

Note:

We have carried out a lengthy evaluation with the assistance of a psychology graduate. Because 6th class pupils are already, for the most part, disposed to avoid most drugs, there is limited scope for change during this course, except in knowledge. Attitudes and intentions may show little change, if any. However, one expects to re-inforce and consolidate the pupils' intention to avoid drugs during the coming months as well as to equip them with some skills to do so.