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*I wouldn't change
my life; it made me
who I am today*

BEHIND
CLOSED DOORS...

How to use this Training Resource

Who is it for?

The Behind Closed Doors Training Resource is designed to be used by professionals working with small, informal groups of young people who are affected by someone else's substance misuse.

Where should it be used?

We recommend that the group should take place in a comfortable but confidential space, with access to toilets and refreshments. We strongly recommend that you consider eating with the young people every week as part of the fellowship aspect of the evening.

Aims and Objectives

1. To foster a safe, secure and positive learning environment.
2. To facilitate a supportive relationship between peers and professionals.
3. To help young people begin to make sense of their experiences.
4. To provide basic drug awareness and increase understanding of addictive behaviour.
5. To explore family dynamics and appreciate diversity.
6. To share coping strategies and support each other to move forward.
7. To ensure young people are aware of sources of help.
8. To have fun!

'It was good to have specific time to offload... otherwise I wouldn't have spoken to anyone about it'

BEHIND
CLOSED DOORS...

Session 1. Is it just me?

Aim

1. To foster a safe, secure and positive learning environment.
2. To facilitate a supportive relationship between peers and professionals.

Session summary

The purpose of this session is to warmly welcome the young people into the group environment. This is your opportunity to establish a safe, secure and positive setting to foster a supportive group of young people. It is important to introduce safety guidelines and gain a collective understanding of what is and isn't acceptable in this space. This is also a good time to explain the aims and objectives of the programme and most importantly to get to know each other and have fun!

What you will need:

A copy of your confidentiality policy, flipchart and pens, empty glass jars, paper and pens.

Icebreaker

See 'Icebreaker ideas'

Is it safe to talk here?

Confidentiality – what is it?

Discuss your confidentiality policy and ensure that this is understood by everyone.

'Let's Eat!'

This is a good time to share food together, this could be a takeaway, create your own pizza, sandwiches etc. depending on the facilities available. This is also a great opportunity to build relationships.

Group contract

Using a flipchart collect young people's thoughts around how the group may function effectively. This may include making some rules or guidelines such as 'no offensive swearing' or 'don't take pictures on phones' etc. Ensure that all agree with the contract and have this readily available at all sessions.

Introducing the Feelings Jar

Invite young people to write down one word about how they feel during/ after the session and place it in a group jar. Some young people may not feel able to trust the group at this stage and may not wish to do this for some weeks.

Session 2. Understanding My Experiences

Aim

To help young people begin to make sense of their experiences.

Session summary

During this session young people should be given the opportunity and time to explore personal experiences. It's also a time to reflect on the fact that they are not alone in their experiences and that others are also affected by other people's substance misuse. This may be a very emotive experience for young people and no young person should feel under pressure to contribute if they are not ready to do so.

What you will need:

'Behind Closed Doors' questionnaire, The Group Contract, Feelings Jar(s), paper and pens.

Recap Group contract

It's important to refer to the group contract and make amendments if necessary.

Icebreaker

See 'icebreaker ideas'

Feedback from last week's session

Facilitate discussion around last week's session. This is a good opportunity to gain feedback at an early stage.

'Let's Eat!'

'Behind Closed Doors' questionnaire

Introduce the questionnaire as a tool for facilitating discussion. This will need to continue over the course of the programme so don't attempt to complete this in one session.

Statistics

Explore current statistics as a group. See 'statistics'.

The Feelings Jar

See 'Session 1'



'She was slumped in her chair. I had to look after her and call an ambulance'

Session 3. Understanding Addiction – What does it mean?

Aim

To provide basic drug awareness and increase understanding of addictive behaviour.

Session summary

During this session the group will aim to explore the definition of addiction and look at feelings and ideas that occur in relation to certain words. This may involve exploring alcoholism, and the characteristics of addiction. This may also involve a general look at drugs, including alcohol and their effects. The group will need to be aware of emotional connections to some of the information discussed in this session.

What you will need:

Flipchart and pens, The Group Contract, Some printed pictures of drugs, The Feelings Jar(s)

Recap Group contract

Icebreaker

Feedback from last week's session

Exploring The Meaning Of Words

Defining words and what they mean to us.
Addiction, Drugs, substance misuse, alcoholism.

'Let's Eat!'

Introduction to drug awareness

Stimulants/Depressants/Hallucinogens.

Drugs are...

Ask young people what comes to mind when they hear the word 'Drug' or 'Addict'?

The Feelings Jar

BEHIND
CLOSED DOORS...

'Mum said she doesn't love us when she's drunk. I remember running away and hiding up a tree'

Session 4. Understanding my Family

Aim

To explore family dynamics and appreciate diversity.

Session summary

During this session the group will begin to explore the structure of their own family; this will include friendships as well as those that may have passed away. During this session young people can produce a family tree structure which can be added to or changed during the rest of the programme. There should be lots of opportunities for informal conversations around the impact that addiction has on the family.

What you will need:

Empty jar each, green paper, a ball of string, selection of twigs, scissors, pens, craft supplies, group contract, The Feelings Jar(s)

Recap Group contract

Icebreaker

Feedback from last week's session

Introduction to The Family Tree

Provide young people with an empty jar each, green paper, a ball of string and selection of twigs. Ask young people to cut green paper into leaf shapes and write the names of significant people/family members on them. Place the twigs in the jar and hang the leaves by the string on the twigs, forming a 'family tree'.

'Let's Eat!'

The Family Tree (continued)

Encourage discussion around the family trees.

The Feelings Jar

'I got more angry but I learnt to be independent'

BEHIND
CLOSED DOORS...

'We are a close family, despite everything...'

Session 5. This is how I cope

Aim

To share coping strategies and support each other to move forward.

Session summary

During this session the young people will have the opportunity to share coping strategies and ideas for how to cope with difficult moments. This can include looking at some coping models including stages such as denial through to escape and attempts to 'fix' the problems. The group will help each other to form a 'coping toolkit' as well as look at how emotional memories may be triggered by social events and what strategies may help when this happens.

What you will need:

Flipchart and pens, The Group Contract, The Feelings Jar(s)

Recap Group contract

Icebreaker

Feedback from last week's session

'Let's Eat!'

Coping Toolkit

Looking at the 5 stages of coping; denial, fixing, chaos, reorganisation and escape. Referring to the glossary ask young people to consider whether they are or have experienced these stages (these can occur in any order and may vary in intensity).

Letting Go

During this time young people may mention emotional triggers such as annual celebrations etc. This is a good opportunity to talk about coping strategies and share these with each other.

The Feelings Jar

Individuals within the group may choose to open their jar and share their feelings so far. They may not want to and there should not be any pressure for them to do so. It may also be therapeutic to destroy some of the words.

*'I threw myself into school...
gave me something to aim for'*

Session 6. Flourishing

Aim

To ensure young people are aware of sources of help.
To have fun!

Session summary

This final session of the 6 week programme is an opportunity to explore personal safety, to make sure young people are aware of any follow-up support and external agencies as well as celebrating the development of the group and individuals. This session could include a trip out for a meal or an activity.

What you will need:

flipchart and pens, The Group Contract, The Feelings Jar(s), list of contact details for local agencies.

Recap Group contract

Icebreaker

Feedback from last week's session

Crisis Management

Discuss what to do in an emergency. Discuss overdose response such as calling an ambulance and the recovery position. It may also include personal safety too.

'Let's Eat!'

Resilience and Hope

Ask young people to write down positive statements under the headings 'I am...', 'I have...', 'I can...'

Looking after ourselves

Ensure young people are aware of the local agencies that are able to support them. It might be good to provide them with a list of organisations etc.

Let's Celebrate!

Reward the young people for attending the group and celebrate the last session and what has been achieved throughout the programme. Just have fun!

Glossary of terms

Substance Misuse: Intoxication by – or regular excessive consumption and/or dependence on – psychoactive substances.

Drugs: A chemical substance, affecting the way our body functions, physically, emotionally, behaviourally and perceptually.

Addiction: A strong and/or harmful need to regularly have something or do something. This need may be physical or psychological in its nature.

Alcoholism: Addiction to the consumption of alcoholic drink; alcohol dependency.

Stimulants: a drug that excites any bodily function, but more specifically those that stimulate the brain and central nervous system.

Depressants: a drug or other agent that slows the activity of vital organs of the body.

Hallucinogens: A drug that alters perceptions.

Stages of coping:

- **Denial:** The problem does not exist. Not acknowledging the existence of any problem with alcohol or other drugs.
- **Fixing:** Family members become obsessed with drinking or drug use and changing the drinker or drug user. Their own needs are ignored.
- **Disorganisation:** Family balance is disrupted. Episodes of mayhem and chaos are common. “Walking on egg shells” is a common description of how family members live in fear of the next drink or drug binge.
- **Reorganisation:** Roles are created to maintain some sense of normality. Someone may take over making decisions.
- **Escape:** Physically and emotionally, distance is created. Separations and children leaving home can happen. People have had enough.

(Taking the Lid Off, ASCERT 2008)

(Copy and print)

Behind Closed Doors Questionnaire

The following questions have been put together to trigger your thoughts about the subject of parental drug and alcohol use in the home. This information will be used sensitively throughout the period of the programme and then given to you to take care of as you wish to.

Please can you describe your current living situation?

Do you have any brothers/sisters?

Are you living with/ have you lived with parents/carers who have had a substance misuse problem?

Can you remember when and how you first became aware of this?

What are your strongest memories that affected you most?

How did these experiences affect you at the time?

How did your feelings change over time?

How do you feel about this now?

Did you / do you have any particular ways of coping with things?

Do you think that this subject is easy to talk about with people?

Have you found people or organisations who have been able to support you in relation to this?

What is your own personal experience/attitudes towards using drugs/alcohol?

How do you feel about the future?

Icebreaker Ideas

Marshmallow Spaghetti towers

What you will need: 2 packets of dry spaghetti, 2 packets of marshmallows.

Split into teams and see who can build the tallest/strongest tower out of dry spaghetti and marshmallows.

Experience Bingo

What you will need: Pre-prepared cards with grids and statements in each box, felt-tip pens.

Make a bingo card with experiences written in the squares.
For example, 'been to an away match', 'travelled abroad', 'been to the cinema this week', 'eaten chocolate in bed' etc.

Stop the Bus

What you will need: Pre-prepared cards with grids (5x5), pens.

Make a grid on a piece of paper each with 5 randomly chosen letters down the left side and 5 randomly chosen subjects across the top.
For example, items of clothing, girls names, countries etc.
The idea is to complete the grid the fastest. The first to do so shouts 'stop the bus!' Points are awarded for unique answers.

Positive Post its

What you will need: Post-it notes, pens.

Invite young people to write something positive about each member of the group on a post-it note. Young people can stick these on each other's backs for anonymity.

Guess who!

What you will need: Post -it notes, pens

Group members are each allocated a famous name on a post-it note without them knowing. These are stuck on foreheads and the first to guess which famous name they have on their head by asking 'yes/no' questions is the winner!

Lower the Cane

What you will need: A long garden cane, some space.

Group members face each other in two lines and out place their hands out in front of them exposing only their index fingers. A garden cane is rested between them on their outstretched fingers. All participants must have the garden cane touching their fingers at all times whilst attempting to, as a group, steadily lower the garden cane to the ground without tipping it.
It's not as easy as it sounds!

Statistics

- 58% of adults in drug and alcohol treatment are parents to children aged under 18 (22% having a child living with them and 36% with a child living elsewhere).
- 8% of children (5-15 years old) are young carers, and 7% of young carers care because of parental substance misuse – this is around 510 people in Norfolk.
- Having a substance misuse problem can impact negatively on the friends and family around that person- emotionally, financially and physically.
- 3.5% of the population are estimated to be dependent on drugs and 6% on alcohol and therefore a significant number of people in Norfolk are being affected by the substance misuse of another.
- The value of the care and support provided to Opiate and Crack users by family members is estimated to £3935 per family member per annum and therefore the total annual saving to statutory services for Norfolk is estimated to be about £17,314,000.
- Social workers in Norfolk estimate that on average around 50% of the clients they worked with had issues relating to drug and alcohol use.
- In Norfolk 35% of families working with the family intervention project (FIP) have substance misuse issues.

(Key Findings from the N-DAP Friends and Families of People with Substance Misuse Problems Needs Assessment 2013)