

NSW Going Viral

First hand experience building hepatitis C education and prevention skills, confidence and capacity of organisations working with young people



Introduction

Young people are a priority for hepatitis C prevention and education due to exposure to activities where blood may be shared such as sharing of injecting drug use equipment and via unsterile tattooing and body piercing.

There is a lack of knowledge about hepatitis C transmission and prevention amongst young people.

Organisations working with young people are ideally placed to address this gap, and increase access and engagement with hepatitis C prevention and education services.

GOING VIRAL
NSW

AMAZING RACE QUOTES

"I used to think "why don't people just go and get sterile equipment every time?"

FWLHD 2014

"... now I am more understanding when expecting youth to 'just go' somewhere without support"

SESLHD 2013

"Understanding that obtaining clean equipment is not as easy as it seems."

NBMLHD 2014

"(The project) has provided me with the knowledge to educate young people who may be at risk, whether through sharing IV equipment or tattoo/piercing."

WSLHD 2013

"Would definitely go along with a young person so that they could have a positive experience of interacting with staff at an NSP."

SLHD 2013

Background

NSW Going Viral is a three staged capacity building project engaging at an organisational level (organisations who work with young people) in order to reach young people who are new to injecting or at risk of hepatitis C:

- 1 Hepatitis C education workshop including access to hear first-hand experience of someone who has lived with hepatitis C.
- 2 First-hand experience for participants to access local hepatitis C prevention services and Needle and Syringe Programs (NSP).
- 3 Grant funding and support to develop, deliver and evaluate a localised hepatitis C activity via the *NSW Going Viral* grants program.

Going Viral was initially run as a local project in South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (LHD) in 2012.

Successful project evaluation led to a statewide scale up of the project: involving a wider network of project partners across the state, an increased time frame of three years, and an increase in project resources.

NSW Going Viral is a partner project with Hepatitis NSW, Far West LHD, Nepean Blue Mountains LHD, South Eastern Sydney LHD, Sydney LHD, and Western Sydney LHD. Hepatitis NSW coordinates the project and communication is maintained through the projects Governance Group, Advisory Group and LHD working groups.



Methods

Throughout 2013-2014, *NSW Going Viral* was delivered five times, once in each participating LHD.

The project targets organisations working with young people at risk of hepatitis C, and the focus of recruitment is therefore not on quantity. At June 2014, however, *NSW Going Viral* has engaged 59 participants from 34 organisations: 8 (SES), 14 (S), 9 (NBM), 13 (WS), 15 (FW).

75% of the overall budget is allocated to local grant funded projects: totalling twenty-nine locally funded grant activities and two state wide grant projects, currently in development.

Grant funded projects range from peer education outreach, youth led resource development, hepatitis C prevention music videos and secondary NSP development.

Results

Evaluation to date highlights:

- Increase in skills and knowledge regarding hepatitis C transmission and prevention
- Increased confidence to talk to young people about hepatitis C
- Strengthened links between organisations working with young people and NSP/hepatitis C prevention services
- Developed understanding of issues of stigma and discrimination facing people who inject drugs and people living with hepatitis C
- Development and delivery of local projects to address hepatitis C education and prevention needs for young people
- Innovative partnership model between LHDs and NGOs increase the ability to meet the needs of our priority populations
- Strengths of delivering a partnership project with a consortium of LHDs via central coordination of an NGO include: better economies of scale, increased flexibility, reduced bureaucratic processes, focus on channelling resources into local/state wide services, strengthened networks across the LHDs, youth and hepatitis C prevention sectors.
- Potential challenges implementing the project across metropolitan, regional and rural LHDs have been overcome via the partnership model approach.

Conclusions

First hand experience of hepatitis C prevention: including exploring stigma surrounding hepatitis C and/or people who inject drugs and access to NSP, is key to developing skills, knowledge and capacity to engage with young people at risk of hepatitis C.

The *NSW Going Viral* statewide partnership model successfully increases the reach and impact of hepatitis C education and prevention efforts statewide, and ensures that project aims are consistency being met, across metropolitan, regional and remote communities across NSW.

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