

One-day workshops and one-off talks

Introduction

Some Police prevention activities, although provided with good intentions, may actually be ineffective.

Activities that are less effective include:

- unsupported one-off activities that are not linked to students' ongoing learning or the school culture
- isolated fear appeals and scare tactics
- prevention activities without clear goals that target causes of risk behaviour e.g. which only raise awareness.

Activities are more effective if:

- they are applied within a whole school approach
- the learning is explicit, personal and challenging
- they target causes of risk behaviour, rather than just explaining the risks.

Focus on effectiveness over efficiency

One-off activities may appear efficient in terms of Police's logistical planning, or convenient for a school's timetable. However decision-making about prevention activities should emphasise effective activities that are more likely to prevent crime and crash, rather than prevention activities that appear efficient or convenient.

Purpose

One-off sessions or school talks are only useful as a 'means to an end' with a goal of encouraging further or more effective prevention activities that lead to specific behaviour change.

There are three primary methods for Police to ensure that less effective prevention activities are adapted and/or complimented to increase their effectiveness:

1. Support one-off activities through applying a whole school approach.
2. Link scare tactics and fear appeals with specific learning activities that empower students (through knowledge, skills and attitudes) to take action to deal with high risk situations and to prevent themselves getting into high risk situations.
3. Ensure all activities have clear goals that at least target causes of risk behaviour, rather than just explaining the risks.

Procedures to add value to one-day or one-off prevention activities

1. Apply a whole school approach

A whole school approach is described in the [intervention planning tool](#) and summarised in [engaging with schools](#).

A one-day or one-off prevention activity can align with the whole school approach if each of the components of the whole school approach are addressed during the planning. Before inviting a school to participate in a one-day or one-off prevention activity (e.g. road safety expo), or agreeing to participate in a one-day or one-off prevention activity (e.g. assembly talk) Police should ask the following questions and be satisfied with the answers

Consultation

- Is the topic of the one-day or one-off prevention activity (e.g. road safety, drug use, child abuse, relationship abuse) really a problem in the school community?
- Does police information, school information, and student/parent/whānau consultation indicate that the topic is sufficiently a problem that time and resources should be allocated to address this problem?

Policies

- Which policies in the school align to this prevention activity?
- Which procedures are followed by the school when this problem occurs?
- How will this one-day or one-off prevention activity link to or reinforce the schools procedures?

Curriculum teaching and learning

- Is the goal of the one-day or one-off prevention activity primarily to raise awareness?
- If so, how can the learning activities be modified to clearly require students to take action to make things safer for themselves, their friends/family and their community?

Collaboration and Model parents /whānau

- Is this problem seen as only a school problem?
- If it is seen as problem that affects the wider school community (e.g. parents, local residents, local businesses, territorial local authority) how are these other interested parties involved in addressing the problem?
- How will these other interested parties be involved in the one-day or one-off prevention activity itself?

Skilled and model staff

- Do school staff have the knowledge and skills to sustain the desired behaviours that are gained through the one-day or one-off prevention activity?
- If not, how will staff gain the knowledge and skills to sustain the desired behaviours?

Safety focussed environment

- Does the physical environment contribute to the problem?
- If so, what is it about the physical environment that contributes to the problem?
- What can be modified in the physical environment that will reduce the problem occurring?

2. Include explicit, personal and challenging learning

Fear appeals use situations of harm (e.g. crashed cars, victims of sexual abuse, stories of drug abusers) to invoke an emotional response. However, in isolation, they are ineffective at achieving and sustaining positive behaviour change.

Fear appeals can be made more effective by adding learning activities where students:

- explore and explain their emotional response (and that of their peers) to the situation
- can describe empathy for the victim
- plan for and take explicit action to make things safer for themselves, their friends/family and their community.

3. Target causes of risk behaviour

Goals of prevention activities that are based solely on knowledge (e.g. raising awareness) are less effective. Education that imparts knowledge about risky behaviour and the negative effects of risky behaviour tends to impact students who are not likely to partake in those risky behaviours, whereas it has minimal impact on students likely to partake in the risky behaviours.

Goals of prevention activities are more effective when learning intentions include the three questions of 'What?', 'So what?' and 'Now what?':

- What are the risks? What are the effects of the risks?
- So what are the causes of the risks? So in what situations in my life will these risks affect me?
- Now what do I have to do to make things safe for myself, my friends/family and my community?