

YOU&I

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Background

Violence Against Women is a significant public health issue which has serious health consequences for women, their families and communities (1). WHO (2013) estimates that violence against women affects approximately one third of the women globally. Although both men and women can be perpetrators of intimate partner violence, women constitute the overwhelming majority of victims (1). Locally, within the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) of Melbourne there has been a steady increase in the number of reported family violence incidents (2). Out of seven local government areas in the EMR, Yarra Ranges had the third highest number of family violence incidents reported to the police during 2011/2012 (3).

Underlying factors in the perpetration of violence against women relate to the unequal distribution of power and resources between men and women, and adherence to rigid or narrow gender roles and stereotypes (1; 4). Addressing these underlying causes is a proven method to prevent violence against women (4). In line with this primary prevention approach, the YOU&I initiative is a social marketing campaign which tackles rigid gender roles and stereotypes through the promotion of gender equality and respectful relationships with young people.

Aim

Goal: To improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people in the Yarra Ranges.

Objectives

1. To improve young people's awareness of equal and respectful relationships within the Yarra Ranges.
2. To increase collaboration and partnership among organisations and young people focusing on equal and respectful relationships in the Yarra Ranges.

Target Groups/s

- Primary: Young people aged 14 to 21 years (students from local schools).
- Secondary: local organisation that have a role in working with young people in the Yarra Ranges.

Strategies

YOU&I is an innovative youth focussed program aimed at preventing male violence against women. This is through social marketing and educational strategies focussed on promoting gender equality and respectful relationships between men and women, boys and girls. YOU&I is a partnership program between Yarra Valley Community Health (Eastern Health) and Inspiro (community health). It is supported by Yarra Ranges Council and a number of other organisations in the EMR.

Engagement in four schools in the Yarra Ranges municipal area resulted in young people developing a key message to prevent violence against women, "Equality and Respect Go Hand in Hand". This message was immersed in each school through a range of artistic and social marketing strategies, including: the adornment of 150 plaster hands, banners, stencils on footpaths, stickers, temporary tattoos and posters. A YOU&I website with additional supporting information was also developed. Students were involved in an interactive educational presentation around gender equality, gender stereotypes, violent social norms and respectful relationships. Students took ownership of the program and implemented key messages in innovative ways within their own schools. This included: presentations to all staff meetings, presentations at year level school Gala events, presentations in each home group, and all school assemblies. In addition, the social marketing displays were strategically placed around the schools to entice student and teacher observation and conversation.



Evaluation Method

Information was gained through a multi-methods design, including both qualitative and quantitative tools.

- Pre and post questionnaires were used to measure a change in awareness of equal and respectful relationships for young people. The information collected from the pre-questionnaire was utilised as base-line data. Pre-questionnaires were administered to all phase one participants (n=30) prior to their involvement in YOU&I in 2012. A post questionnaire was administered to a pseudo-random selected group of young people (n=77) who were exposed to the YOU&I social marketing campaign.
- Feedback questionnaires were given to the participants who were involved in decorating the hand sculptures (n=140), and who also received the additional 1.5 hour education workshop on gender equality and respectful relationships.
- Interviews with school teachers (n=2) were conducted with one teacher from each school involved in the coordinating the project within their school.
- Project worker journaling was undertaken throughout the planning and implementation of the initiative. This provided an avenue to collect and reflect on process evaluation.
- Attendance records were taken for all workshops, meeting and activities and were used as a tool to record the reach of the campaign.
- VicHealth Partnership Analysis Tool was administered to each partnering organisation on the steering committee at the completion of phase one and phase two of the initiative. The results were then compared to identify if there was a change in collaboration between partner organisations.
- Key Informant interviews with stakeholders were conducted with each organisation involved in the YOU&I steering committee.

Results

Evaluation data indicated that the program created a strong awareness of the issue and generated a substantial level of discussion within the educational settings. Participants demonstrated an understanding of the campaign message and demonstrated a high level of enthusiasm to promote the campaign within their school.

Key evaluation findings

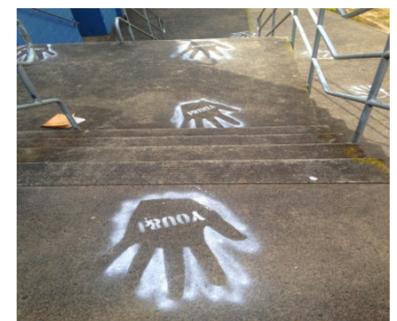
- Post intervention, the participants did not hold traditional views about gender in relationships.
- There was an 20% increase in awareness, post intervention, that violence cannot be excused even if the violent person regrets what they have done.
- Success of the initiative was supported through the strong level of commitment and contribution to the initiative by partners and stakeholders within the community.



Implications for practice

Based on the findings and success factors, a number of recommendations have been developed for future health promotion and prevention of violence against women planning. In particular for the development of social marketing campaigns targeting young people.

1. The engagement and involvement of young people is paramount. This should be applied throughout the planning, implementation and evaluation processes.
2. Schools are a strong setting where a message targeting young people can be saturated. The school environment also enables students to have ownership and lead the campaign.
3. It is important to provide teachers in the school setting with relevant resources to increase the capacity of the teachers to continue the discussion and learnings around the topic, once the campaign has finished in the school.
4. Working in partnership with key organisations is recognised to support the success of the initiative. Clear partnership tools including a *Memorandum of Understanding* and/or *Terms of Reference* are recommended to create a clear partnership structure.



Conclusions

The YOU&I initiative increased awareness of gender equality and respectful relationships among young people in the Yarra Ranges. Through targeted reach and participation, young people were able to gain an understanding of the importance of equality and respect in all relationships. Young people gained a clear understanding of the campaign and shared the importance of gender equality and respectful relationship within their school.

Collaboration and partnership with key organisations is a key enabling factor to the success of the YOU&I initiative.

Further health promotion projects are needed to build on the success of the YOU&I initiative. Especially, projects that actively involve young people in the promotion of equal and respectful relationships.

References

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