INVESTING IN OUR YOUTH: COMMUNITY ACTION
PLAN EVALUATION RESEARCH STRATEGY (CAPERS)

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Investing In Our Youth

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Participating Organisations

Agencies South West Accommodation, Bunbury City Transit, Bunbury Cathedral Grammar School, Bunbury Catholic Youth Services, Bunbury District Safer WA Committee, Bunbury Primary Health Services, Bunbury Crime Prevention, Catholic Education Office, Centre for Regional Development and Research—Edith Cowan University, Centrelink, Chamber of Commerce, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, City of Bunbury, Department of Community Development—Family and Children’s Services, Department of Education, Department of Indigenous Affairs, Department of Justice, Department of Sport and Recreation, Eaton Community College, Eaton Fire Rescue and Cadets, ESCAPE - Youth drop-in Centre- Shire of Harvey, Greater Bunbury Division of General Practice, Department of Housing and Works, Job Futures, Jobs South West JPET, Newton Moore Senior High School, Non Government School Psychology Service, School Based Police Australind Senior High, Shire of Capel, Shire of Dardanup, Shire of Harvey, South West Aboriginal Medical Service, South West Commission of Elders, South West Community Drug Team, South West Development Commission- 2029 Committee, South West Regional Domestic Violence Committee, South West Mental Health, South West Population Health Unit, South West Times, Youth Outreach

Friends of Investing In Our Youth

2nd Bunbury Sea Scouts, Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre, Disability Services Commission, Dynamic Labour Hire, NEEDAC, Department of Community Development- Office for Children & Young People’s Policy, Relationships Australia, South West Area Consultative Committee, South West Family Support Association, South West Regional College,
Investing In Our Youth

Investing In Our Youth is a Communities That Care (CTC) project that operates across four local government areas in regional Western Australia. Communities That Care (CTC) is an evidence-based approach to community wide planning focused on healthy youth development through prevention and early intervention programs and strategies (Toumbourou, 1999, 2000). Investing In Our Youth is the first CTC project in Australia to develop a Community Action Plan (Carlon, 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2002d; Plumb, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c).

The Investing In Our Youth Community Action Plan outlines the prevention and early intervention programs and strategies recommended for implementation in the local community to decrease the priority risk factors and increase the priority protective factors indicated in the Adolescent Health and Wellbeing Survey (Youth Survey) implemented in the local area in 2001 (Robinson, McCaughan, Freeman, Williams, & Toumbourou, 2002). Significant to the implementation of the plan is the approach to evaluation. This paper outlines the framework for evaluation of the Investing In Our Youth Community Action Plan demonstrating a community-based approach to developing an evidence base for local action.

Figure 1. Investing In Our Youth committee structure
Introduction

The concept of evaluation is central to the evidence base of the Communities That Care Approach. Effective implementation of the Investing In Our Youth Community Action Plan relies on a comprehensive and coordinated research based approach to evaluation. Such an approach requires discussion around the concepts and definitions of evaluation.

The National Crime Prevention policy, *Pathways to Prevention* states:

> All stakeholders in community interventions – funding agencies, practitioners, clients, community representatives, politicians, researchers, policy makers – agree that evaluation should be a priority. There the agreement ends (National Crime Prevention, 1998 p.93).

The document states clearly that “controversy rages” about the best way to approach the issues around evaluation. Rather than coming down in any fixed position the authors of *Pathways to Prevention* advocate a balanced approach to the evaluation of community interventions. Such an approach strives to be scientific yet does not ignore the contextual processes that impact on program outcomes (National Crime Prevention, 1998).

The two key theoretical positions outlined in *Pathways to Prevention* relate to a debate around the evaluation of the application of Communities That Care (CTC) in the UK (Farrington, 1997; Pawson & Tilley, 1998) and are centred on evaluation of CTC as an overall strategy. While such debates are clearly relevant to the Investing In Our Youth Community Action Plan the approach taken to evaluation at the community and program level will aim for a balance and will develop within the limitations of the current knowledge base.

The aim of evaluation in the Investing In Our Youth Community Action Plan Evaluation Research Strategy (CAPERS) is to evaluate the ongoing development of the project through monitoring take up of the plan and the specific strategies and programs recommended in the plan. A broader evaluation of the CTC process is beyond the scope of this strategy, however it is anticipated that a comprehensive and coordinated research based approach to evaluation of the Community Action Plan will inform the community and funding bodies of the effectiveness of the CTC framework, in the instance of Investing In Our Youth.

Background

One of the key issues to emerge in the application of the CTC approach in the Investing In Our Youth context has been around the different epistemological views/understandings of knowledge (research) and working with community.

The concept of prevention science that is central to the CTC approach holds a positivist/post positivist epistemological position. Implicit in such a position is the use of evidence and an aspiration to certainty. The application of the CTC approach relies on mobilising and conceptualising community in a particular way. The experience of Investing in Our Youth suggests that community development is central to the successful application of the CTC approach. The Australian community development literature (Ife, 2001) generally sits within a constructionist/subjectivist epistemological framework. There is a significant tension between, and inherent contradiction in, drawing these two positions together. The fluid nature of community, as emphasised by the literature, does not always sit comfortably with the solid and certain nature of the evidence based approach of prevention science.
To facilitate implementation of the Community Action Plan, through a range of participating organisations, it has become apparent that such different epistemological positions will need to be accommodated, and therefore will inform the evaluation strategy of the project. In trying to provide an overview of evaluation to inform the Investing In Our Youth Community Action Plan, the diverse range of perceptions and understandings of evaluation must be acknowledged.

**How was the Community Action Plan Developed?**

The Investing In Our Youth project has been operative in Bunbury for three years. The committee structure of the project was built in 2000, the research carried out in 2001 and the planning process throughout 2002.

The CTC Community Planning Training held in May 2002 was a significant step in formulating the Community Action Plan. This session was run in Bunbury across two days and was open to all community members. A broad range of people participated in the training and key directions for the planning process were set at the training. The anticipated youth development and risk and protective factor outcomes were established. The need for a long-term commitment from project participants was clear and the way forward in the planning process was set.

From these training sessions a number of work groups were formed these groups met on an ongoing basis from May to November 2002 coming together to cross reference work and share information at monthly Community Board meetings. The task of each work group was to develop a proposal for each of the risk or protective factor priorities from the local research.

![Diagram](image-url)

**Figure 2. Investing In Our Youth Community Board Work Groups Planning Phase.**

The work groups were established within the Investing In Our Youth Community Board structure and were open to all interested community members. A broad range of people participated in the planning process. The recommendations to come out of the workgroups were collated to form the Community Action Plan.
The Investing In Our Youth Community Action Plan outlines the prevention and early intervention programs and strategies recommended for implementation in the local community. The emphasis is on programs and strategies that are or can be supported by evidence with a focus on prevention. The basis for action is guided by the link to adequate research. The Community Action Plan is grounded by the local research. The key outcomes of the Community Action Plan are outlined in the context of the research framework and are quantifiable through the research and evaluation processes.

**The Structure of the Plan**

The layout of the plan has been modelled on the National Action Plan for Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention for Mental Health 2000. The recommended programs and strategies to address the identified risk and protective factors for the local area are set out under the following priority groups:

- Whole of Community
- Perinatal and Infants 0-2 years
- Toddlers and Preschoolers 2-4 years
- Children 5-11 years
- Young People 12-17 years
- Health, Education and Social Service Professionals

For each of the priority groups the plan sets out:

- Recommended evidence based programs
- Existing or proposed programs recommended for development through research
- Local action recommended for development through research
- Who will be involved?
- Where will it happen?
- Process indicators

**Recommended Evidence Based Programs**

A list of the programs recommended for local implementation that are currently supported by research. The current research shows these programs to be effective and sets out a structure for evaluation in the local settings.

**Existing or Proposed Programs Recommended for Development Through Research**

A list of current and/or proposed programs and strategies recommended for further development through research. Research will be aimed at gathering evidence of the impact of these programs within the context of the Community Action Plan Evaluation Research Strategy.

**Local Action Recommended for Development Through Research**

A list of local action strategies recommended for further development through research. Research will be aimed at gathering evidence of the impact of these programs within the context of the Community Action Plan Evaluation Research Strategy.

The Community Action Plan Evaluation Research Strategy (CAPERS) links directly into the structure of the Community Action Plan. Community level and program level evaluation samples presented in this paper come directly from the planning work groups proposals developed in 2002 (Investing In Our Youth 2003).
EVALUATION - THE BACKGROUND

This strategy presents key concepts of and guidelines for evaluation from Australian and International research. It provides a starting point to develop a philosophy; rationale and resources list for the Investing In Our Youth Community Action Plan Evaluation Research Strategy (CAPERS). It is anticipated that the Evaluation Research Strategy will provide a framework for research to support the development, implementation and documentation of the multi-level evaluation processes of the Investing In Our Youth Community Action Plan.

What is Evaluation?

There are many and varied ways of defining evaluation and establishing approaches to evaluation. In order to build a comprehensive and co-ordinated research based approach to evaluation it is necessary to be open to using different definitions and approaches to meet different goals within the overall strategy. The Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care Evaluation Guide to good practice states:

Evaluation is a continuous process of asking questions, reflecting on the answers to these questions and reviewing your ongoing strategy and action. These evaluation processes occur within an agreed framework and plan (Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, 2001 p.6).

CTC as it has developed in the United States places a strong emphasis on the evidence base of the approach and maintains that using scientific research knowledge to measure youth development and risk and protective factor outcomes at a population level will provide the most effective use of resources in establishing prevention programs.

There is nothing more gratifying than being able to demonstrate that your program has had a positive impact on the young people in your community. One way to achieve that is with regular administration of the Communities That Care Survey. Over time, improvements in risk and protective factors will become evident, indicating a successful prevention effort in your community.(www.channing-bete.com)

The National Mental Health Action Plan defines evaluation as:

The process used to describe the process of measuring the value or worth of a program or service (Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, 2000 p.59).

The US based Children, Youth, Families at Risk National Initiative (CYFAR) states evaluation as

a field of applied science which seeks to understand how a successful social program may be designed, implemented, assessed, and sustained in a specific community....(Callor et al., 2000 p.10).

In the document Evaluating Collaboratives the definition is a

systematic inquiry to inform decision-making, judgements and learning. Systematic implies that the evaluation is a thoughtful process of asking critical questions, collecting appropriate information, and then analysing and interpreting the information for a specific use and purpose (Taylor-Powell, Rossing, & Geran, 1998 p.ix).

Thus evaluation is about learning, measurement, science and process. How do all these things combine and become incorporated into CAPERS?
What are the Guiding Principles for Investing In Our Youth? (Philosophy)

The vision that guides the Investing In Our Youth project is…

A healthy and safe community environment for all young people to develop their full potential by building strong relationships and valued participation within our community.

The objects of Investing In Our Youth Incorporated are:

- To develop and implement a community wide prevention plan to support the communities of the Shires of Harvey, Dardanup and Capel and the City of Bunbury to promote the positive development of children and young people.
- To promote, support and facilitate community wide collaboration in relation to issues of healthy youth development.
- To ensure the interventions and procedures are collaborative, inclusive, proactive, based on rigorous research and community-specific.
- Facilitating and accessing the communication of ideas about issues from young people and other client groups of the community.

Philosophy for Evaluation

The key principles to emerge through the development of the Investing In Our Youth project are best encapsulated by:

- open and fluid structure to facilitate ongoing consultation
- accountability through transparency to facilitate consultation and capacity building
- capacity building through training and consultation processes
- consensus approach to decision making
- tolerance and acceptance of a broad variety of perspectives
- striking a balance between challenging the broader power structures reflected in the project and cooperating with those structures to good effect (Carlon, 2002b)

These key principles along with the conceptual framework of the CTC approach form the basis of a philosophy for the ongoing evaluation research development around the implementation of the Investing In Our Youth Community Action Plan.

The conceptual framework that guides the Investing In Our Youth Community Action Plan;

- social development strategy
- population health approach
- community wide - collaboration
- evidence base
- prevention and early intervention focus
Why Take a Researched Based Approach to Implementation and Evaluation of the Investing In Our Youth Community Action Plan? (Rationale)

Current developments in Western Australian policy particularly in crime prevention and mental health prevention and promotion indicate the need for and key advantages of such an approach. To achieve the long-term goals of the Investing In Our Youth Community Action Plan a systematic research based approach to the implementation and evaluation of the plan is required.

The Report on Research in Western Australian State Government Agencies identifies the need at the macro level... “to build a more effective research culture across Government..” (Premier’s Science Council, 2002). The Investing In Our Youth Community Action Plan Evaluation Research Strategy has the potential to build a service based research culture at a community level across government and non-government agencies in the Investing In Our Youth area.

The Western Australian Mental Health Promotion and Illness Prevention Policy identifies research around mental health prevention and promotion program development and evaluation as likely research priorities to come out of the policy (Department of Health, 2002). The Investing in Our Youth Community Action Plan provides a unique opportunity to carry out such research in the context of a prevention science framework within a community consultation/development process.

Recommendations under the proposed New Structures for Crime Prevention in Western Australia centre on supporting organisations to “assess and evaluate crime prevention initiatives”, develop best practice through closer links with local government and other community stakeholders and “ensure the key State Government agencies work together on crime and anti-social problems” (Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2002). The ongoing development and coordination of research around the implementation and evaluation of the Investing In Our Youth Community Action Plan is an opportunity for such recommendations to come to fruition in a community-based project.
EVALUATION – THE ACTION

What is Outlined in the Community Action Plan so Far?

The outcomes based approach to planning underpinning the Community Action Plan is grounded by a strong evidence base. Progress towards achieving community level outcomes will be monitored through community wide research to assess impact at a population level. Considering the time lapse between expected achievement of the community level outcomes and implementation of the plan it is also important to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness and impact of the recommended programs and strategies as they occur.

Program and participant outcomes and an evaluation structure will be developed through negotiation in each instance of implementation. To monitor the take up on the plan and the overall impact of the Investing In Our Youth structure process indicators have been developed to show that the processes that are expected to deliver the anticipated outcomes have been put in place. Program and participant outcomes for each of the programs and strategies implemented under the Community Action Plan will be established and monitored by participating organisations within the context of the Community Action Plan and the development through research of local practice.

The figure below provides an overview for the Evaluation Research Strategy and how it links into the structure of the Community Action Plan.
Investing In Our Youth
Community Action Plan Evaluation Research Strategy (CAPERS)

Community Action Plan

Conceptual Framework
Social Development Strategy
Prevention and Early Intervention
Population health approach
Research- Evidence Base
Community wide collaboration

Priority Groups
Whole of community
0-2 years
2-4 years
5-11 years
12-17 years
Health, Education and Social Service Professionals

Evaluation Strategy

Community Level Evaluation
Community Outcomes
Youth Development Outcomes
Risk and Protective Factor Outcomes
As measured by Youth Survey

Community Processes
Investing In Our Youth coordination consultation
Sample- Process indicators take up of plan
Local action recommended for development through research
Sample- Health Promoting Schools- Workforce development

Program Evaluation
Recommended evidence base programs
Sample FAST program

Existing or proposed program recommended for development through research
Sample- GURD

Figure 4. Overview of Community Action Plan Evaluation Research Strategy (CAPERS)
Evaluation Work Group

An Evaluation Work Group has been established to guide the process of developing a formal evaluation strategy within the context of the Investing In Our Youth committee structure. The Evaluation Work Group is open to all Investing In Our Youth participants. People can become a part of the group on an ongoing basis or bring along concept proposals on a one off basis for support.

It is hoped that the workgroup will contribute to building a culture of evaluation and an ethic of collaboration around funding and program delivery by supporting local organisations to formalise and develop evaluation practice and by ameliorating the excesses of the competitive tendering process through fostering open communication and discussion of funding options and proposal development.

The main issues for Community Board members around evaluation have been named as:

- Training on evaluation.
- Establishing a common language or framework of what Investing In Our Youth means by evaluation.
- Need to allow room for innovation with regards to program delivery.
- Need to work on capacities already in the Investing In Our Youth community.
- Workshops on proposal writing and business plans would also be helpful.

Evaluation training developed by the South West Population Health Unit will be offered to project participants in the coming months.

The project planning outline below was presented by the Evaluation Work Group as a starting point for discussing and applying general principles of evaluation across all programs and strategies in the Community Action Plan.

**Project Planning**

**Goals**
The broad overall aims of what you want to achieve in the long term. In the context of the Community Action Plan the shift you are trying to get in risk and/or protective factors. This is where you need to decide the level of intervention that best fits in with your organisation. That is will your program be universal, selected or indicated?

* **universal**, provided to whole populations;
* **selected**, targeting those population groups at increased risk of developing a disorder;
* **indicated**, targeting people showing minimal signs and symptoms of a disorder.

(from National Action Plan for Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention for Mental Health 2000)

**Target Group**
Primary- those people/groups that the program actually works with.
Secondary those people/groups that will benefit from the flow on effects.

**Objectives**- these could also be thought about as outcomes
Depending on your program this could be the specific activities that you want to carry out within a set timeframe and how you would measure those.
Apply SMART to your program- Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely
Usually only one to three objectives for each goal. Use describing sentences.
**Strategies**

Strategies are the ways you will meet the objectives. This is the point where you look at the literature to find out what types of strategies most effectively meet your objectives—there may be overlap. This is best achieved by developing strategies that address the problem from a wide range of perspectives. These include:
- Developing personal skills
- Creating supportive environments
- Strengthening community action
- Healthy public policy
- Reorienting services to prevention

**Other tips**

Try to avoid passive language.

**Evaluation**

*Formative evaluation* identifies "What is likely to work best?"

Formative evaluation is carried out prior to or in connection with the different components of a program in order to formulate and improve the program during its course. It is concerned with pre-testing of materials, piloting strategies, target group clarification, and other evidence with respect to potential effectiveness before initiation, continuation or wider development.

Process evaluation is carried out on the components of a program either during or at the end of the intervention. The questions these measures are designed to answer relate to whom the program was delivered, and how well the various components were implemented. It asks the following questions:
- How many people participated in the program?
- Is the program reaching the target group?
- Are all parts of the program reaching all parts of the target group?
- Are participants satisfied with the program?
- Are all the activities of the program being implemented?
- Has the implementation caused any problems?
- Are all the materials and components of the program of good quality and accessible?
- Can participants recall key messages?
- Is it culturally appropriate?

**Impact / Outcome Evaluation**

Impact evaluation focuses on whether or not the project met its objectives. It asks the following questions:
- What was the immediate effect?
- Did the program make a difference (i.e., did it achieve what it set out to do)?

It measures changes in:
- Knowledge, skills or attitudes
- Behaviour
- The environment
- Social support structures
- Patterns of community participation
- The extent of service provision
- Public policy

It also examines the patterns of change. Questions to ask include:
- Are the changes statistically significant?
- Can the changes be attributed to the program?
- Did the change occur evenly across the target group?
- Did some groups respond differently? What does this imply?
- Unexpected impact. Was there any unexpected impact?

Outcome evaluation occurs in the final phase of program evaluation and tests the performance of a program. It is concerned with:
- the program goal (a shift in risk and protective factors);
- reduced risk and/or increased protective factors
**Self, Peer and Participant Evaluation**

Self-evaluation involves asking:

* What did I do well?
* Is there anything I feel dissatisfied about?
* How did other people seem to react?
* Is there anything I would change next time?

Peer evaluation involves asking a trusted colleague for constructive feedback on

* things you did well
* things you did not do so well
* how things might be improved

It is important that when you provide feedback to keep REG (Respect, Empathy and Genuineness)

Participant evaluation is essential. It is important to be aware of how the program participants view the program and to keep in mind the needs and interests of program participants.


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**Resources Work Group**

A work group focused on resources has also emerged within the Investing In Our Youth structure in 2003. This group will work along side, support and supplement the work of the Evaluation Work Group.

The focus for the Resources Work Group will be on accessing funding for the systems level work of the Community Action Plan and supporting local agencies/organisations to access funds for the program level work of the Community Action Plan.

The first task for this group has been to begin to establish protocols for developing funding proposals within the broader context of competitive tendering. At the time of writing the following was a guide for supporting funding proposals.

**Investing In Our Youth** will endeavour to:

1. Offer support to all participating and local organisations through an open process of consultation with the Executive Officer and the evaluation and/or resources work groups on an equitable basis at the initiation of each organisation.

2. Consults will be listed in Executive Officers monthly reports and work groups minutes.

3. Information regarding competing applications will not be shared without permission and each organisation will be actively encouraged to communicate with competitors.

4. Collaboration across organisations will be actively encouraged.

5. Priority will be given to those proposals that are closest fit to the Community Action Plan:
   - Recommended program or strategy direct from the Community Action Plan.
   - Proactive participation; the organisation/s is ready to move forward with a proposal.
   - Collaboration; where possible and appropriate more than one organisation involved in the proposal.
   - Linked to the research.
   - Adequate evaluation.
It is anticipated that standards for evaluation and Community Action Plan priorities for implementation will emerge through the developmental process of the Investing In Our Youth committee structure.

Figure 5. Investing In Our Youth Community Board Work Groups Implementation Phase

The Committee structure of the Investing In Our Youth Community Board shifts with the work of the project. Figure 5 shows the structure at the time of writing.

Evaluation Structure for Community Action Plan

As outlined in the outcomes based approach to planning the overall measure of effectiveness will be a shift in risk and protective factors in the local community. The following samples come directly from the planning work group’s proposals developed in 2002.

The Community Action Plan Evaluation Research Strategy (CAPERS) links directly into the structure of the Community Action Plan, as outlined earlier pages 6 and 7. Community level and program level evaluation samples presented in this paper come directly from the planning work groups proposals developed in 2002.
**Community Level Evaluation Samples**

**Community Outcomes**
Within the context of the CTC framework Community-level outcomes, that is Youth Development Outcomes and Risk and Protective factor outcomes as stated in the Community Action Plan, can be measured by using the same data collection methods utilised in the community assessment process:

- survey result
- archival data
- focus groups

**Action**
Implement archival data analysis in 2005.
Implement focus groups as required.

**Sample Programs and Strategies for Evaluation from Planning Work Group Proposals**

**Community Processes**

Sample - Community Action Plan Priority Group
Health, Education and Social Service Professionals
Strategy 11

Coordinated approach to implementation

- Investing In Our Youth to facilitate implementation of the plan through a coordination, communication and clearinghouse role.
- Research to build on evidence base for local practice. Evaluation of all program strategies and overall planning approaches. As outlined in funding proposal “Development of an evidence-based approach to improving child health in a local community setting”.
- Training and Best Practice Forums.
- Ongoing process evaluation of Investing In Our Youth as a facilitating process/structure.

**Action**
Implement process evaluation strategies as outlined Evaluating Collaboratives document (Taylor Powell et al. 1998).

Sample Community Action Plan Process Indicators

- Ongoing process evaluation of take up on the Community Action Plan through monitoring and review of process indicators.

*Local action recommended for development through research*

Sample Community Action Plan Priority Group
Health, Education and Social Service Professionals
Strategy 9

Health Promoting Schools as outlined in the planning work group proposal. This involves the provision of a whole-of-school approach promoting

- A connected and caring school community.
- Home-school-community partnerships.
• Monitoring and assessment of learning environments, monitoring indicators on causal pathways to poor outcomes.

• Developmentally appropriate teaching and learning practices.

• A curriculum that promotes social competence – which teaches specific skills that help students to behave in responsible and healthy ways, and promotes the development of self-efficacy, the ability to adapt and integrate feelings, thinking, and actions to achieve specific goals.

**Action**
Eaton Community College in collaboration with Shire of Dardanup, Peer Youth evaluation. Implement process evaluation strategies as outlined Evaluating Collaboratives document (Taylor Powell et al. 1998).

**Program Level Evaluation Samples**

**Program Evaluation**

**Recommended evidence base programs**

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<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Community Action Plan Priority Group</th>
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<td></td>
<td>5-11 years</td>
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<td>Strategy 7</td>
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Families and Schools Together (FAST) program

A major strength of FAST is its strong commitment to program effectiveness. Every activity of the program has been specifically built on a body of highly respected research. FAST rigorously measures the impact on the participating children and families. The program routinely measures six outcomes using standardised instruments with established validity and reliability:

1. Family Functioning
2. Family Social Isolation
3. Parent Involvement at School
4. Child Behaviour at Home as Rated by Parent
5. Child Behaviour at School as Evaluated by the Teacher
6. Family-Consumer Rating of the FAST Experience

This overview of FAST was taken from (Coote, 2000).

**Existing program recommended for development through research**

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<th>Sample</th>
<th>Community Action Plan Priority Group</th>
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<td>12-17 years</td>
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<td>Strategy 1</td>
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Steering Clear as recommended by the planning work group:
Support for Families.
Relationships Australia Steering Clear program positive management of anti-social behaviours.

**Action**
Review current evaluation methods and data in the context of CAPERS.
Sample  Community Action Plan Priority Group  
5-11 years  
Strategy 1  

GURD as recommended by planning work group:  
GURD is a Universal program delivered by police officers in schools.  
Primary Target Group: 7-14yrs.

2 messages;  
• There are more fun ways to get smashed than drinking.  
• There are more fun ways to go off than doing drugs.

Compliments the School Drug Education Program. Evaluation Process;  
• number of schools participating.  
• number of sessions delivered.  
• number of students participating.  
• strengthened partnerships between schools and police.

Proposed program recommended for development through research  
Sample  Community Action Plan Priority Group  
2-4 years and 5-11 years  
Strategy 1 and Strategy 3  

Opportunities for Kids and Youth (OKAY) as recommended by planning work group: Collaboration between Greater Bunbury Division of General Practice, St John of God Health Service/South West Community Drug Service Team and South West Mental Health Service- Program proposal OKAY (Opportunities for Kids and Youth), Assistance and support for children a program of service delivery for the children of families with alcohol issues.

Evaluation tools are pre program assessment questionnaire, interview and pre and post test questionnaire measuring changes in child behaviour for children over 10; see proposal for further information.

Local action recommended for development through research; Work Force Development  
Sample  Community Action Plan Priority Group  
Health, Education and Social Service Professionals  
Strategy 7  

Providing training for service providers to deliver education sessions as recommended by planning work group:

Train service providers to deliver education sessions.

Methods;  
• Liaise with management of service providers.  
• Conduct training sessions.  
• Provide ongoing support.
Evaluation
Process;
• # trained.
• # workshops/seminars conducted.

Participant satisfaction with the;
• workshops/seminars.
• Satisfaction of service providers with support, in-service, and incentives.
• Facilitator feedback on workshop/Seminars.
• Independent assessment of the quality of the workshops and the facilitator.

Methods;
• Record keeping.
• Post workshop survey of service providers.
• Facilitators notes.
• Independent observer.

Local action recommended for development through research; Community Education
Sample Community Action Plan Priority Group
Whole of Community
Strategy 22

Media forum training for secondary target group as recommended by planning work group:

Methods:

These workshops provide participants with an understanding of the role of the media and how to strengthen community action.

• Run workshops on: Working with the Media (South West Population Health Unit), letter writing skills, how to write a press release.
• Seminars to existing community groups (eg LDAG, P&F groups, Rotary, Lions Apex, BPW etc).
• Run workshops on: Facilitating Community Action (South West Population Health Unit). For health professionals, community leaders, young people etc.

Evaluation
Process;
• # seminars provided.
• participant satisfaction with seminars.
• Facilitators feedback.
• Methods;
• Record keeping.
• Post seminar survey.
• Facilitators notes.
LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Sample Community Action Plan Priority Group
Whole of Community
Strategies 11-16

11. Advocate community attitudes promote resiliency.
12. Positive promotion of young people in the community.
13. Development of a toolkit targeted at new programs detailing how to enhance protective factors through the social development strategy.
14. Provide opportunities to report pro-social behaviour e.g. School Newsletters, Youth Express.
15. Accessing local government websites (and other websites used by young people) to report on pro-social behaviour.
16. Link Investing In Our Youth website to local government websites.

The Social Development Strategy Toolkit

The key thrust of the project will be to develop a toolkit targeted at community and service groups detailing how to enhance protective factors. The toolkit will be developed in the context of the Communities That Care research framework through an educative consultation process aimed at enhancing community attitudes that promote resiliency, promote positive images of young people and to develop sustainable communication networks to provide opportunities to report pro-social behaviour.

Theoretical Understandings and Approach

The project will be guided by the theoretical understandings of the risk and protective factors as researched through Prevention Science. This project specifically aims to boost protective factors at a community level. The relationship between the presence of protective factors and the decrease in health compromising behaviours/crime shows that a young person with seven or more protective factors in their environment have a much lower incidence of health compromising behaviours/crime. Thus increasing the impact of 2 to 3 protective factors across the community would see a significant drop in the incidence of health compromising behaviours/crime in the local area (Bond et al. 1999). The Social Development Strategy builds protection for young people in the local community it begins with the goal of achieving healthy behaviours among young people. The project takes a population health approach assessing needs at a population level, targeting interventions across whole population groups and supported by appropriate monitoring and evaluation.

Primary Target Group

The primary target group are those people active in the community that are in a position to enhance their capacity to promote community level protective factors for children and young people.

In the long term the project will benefit children and young people in the community and enhance community connectedness and community safety.
**Evaluation**

In the long term the broader implementation and evaluation of the Investing In Our Youth Community Action Plan would expect this and other projects to contribute to a shift in the risk factors and protective factors and health compromising/criminal behaviours as targeted by the plan.

As part of the Community Action Plan the long-term impact of this project will be measured through the Community Action Plan Evaluation Research Strategy. As such a drop in the number of young people reporting an absence of this protective factor and increase in the number of local service clubs and community groups demonstrating the concept of the social development strategy within their vision and goals will show effectiveness. Such measures are not likely to be significant within the 12 month period of the project but will be monitored and available to local communities through the long-term implementation and evaluation of the Investing In Our Youth Community Action Plan.

**Evaluation Plan for Program Outcomes**

Evaluation will be built into the role and will be monitored through the Investing In Our Youth evaluation and best practice seminars and forums. The first task of the Community Worker/Production Officer will be to determine the extent of:

- Current understandings of the principles of the social development strategies in community and service groups the Investing In Our Youth Resource Assessment report already documents much of this information.
- Current opportunities to model and enhance community attitudes that promote resiliency.
- Current opportunities to promote positive images of young people in the community.
- Current communication networks to provide opportunities to report pro-social behaviour.

The final task of the Community Worker/Production Officer will be to revisit this information to determine the impact of the 12-month project process.

**Evaluation of Participant Outcomes**

- An increased awareness of the theoretical concepts of social development strategy.
- An increased awareness of the benefit of community level recognition of the young people.

Clearly the evaluation for a project such as this will need to go beyond the life of the project.
WHERE TO FROM HERE? POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Investing In Our Youth Evaluation Research Strategy supports a multi level complex process of community development and program/strategy implementation in the context of a population based research framework.

Key implications for policy are:

- Community ownership of the research and goals is vital to long term commitment.
- The importance of processes and context in terms of community trust and integrity.
- Capacity building for evaluation at the ground level needs to be actively facilitated. This involves the development of a culture of reflection with a cycle of continuous improvement.
- Long-term nature of the project requires adequate funding which allows for evaluation of processes as well as outcomes.

The experience thus far of Investing In Our Youth indicates that the prevention science framework provides a context for programs/strategies to participate in a community wide effort in addressing population level indicators. The open structure of community consultative processes presents a meaningful way at the local level for individual programs/strategies, across a range of disciplines, to develop from the ground up thus facilitating capacity building in a community wide effort. Such an approach strives to be scientific yet does not ignore the contextual processes that impact on program outcomes.

For some community workers the ideas outlined in this paper are not new. They can, however offer a conceptual tool and measurement potential to capture more efficiently what is often difficult to document i.e. the unseen work of community capacity building. For others, program planners, policy developers and funding bodies this can challenge them to consider how their work, polices or funding options, might enhance broader community efforts to prevent crime and promote quality of life in a durable and systematic way (Labonte, Woodard, Chad, & Laverack, 2002).
Bibliography


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