



Creative Education for Youth on Drugs and Alcohol (CEYDA) Project

Project Title	CEYDA Project
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Date	December 2007

Please note: The Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians is an independent advisory council. The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Office of Youth Affairs or the Northern Territory Government.

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- Sanderson High School
- Don Dale Detention Centre
- Mission Australia
- The SHAK and The Smith Family
- Australian Red Cross
- Participants and young people involved
- Members of the 2007 Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians for your continued support and assistance throughout the year

Executive Summary

The Creative Education for Youth on Drugs and Alcohol (CEYDA) project aimed to identify creative options from young people on discouraging drug and alcohol use from the Darwin urban and rural area. Through examining current literature on this topic and distributing surveys, we wanted to find out exactly where young people receive their drug and alcohol education from and how effective they believe this to be.

The source of and responsibility to deliver drug and alcohol education is a topic mentioned in many drug and alcohol journals in Australia. Journals from 'Of Substance' magazine illustrate considerable evidence that inadequate drug and alcohol education leads to higher rates of drug and alcohol misuse and crime rates.

Informing government and the community on the adequacy of drug education should have positive outcomes on rates of crime prevention and re-offending of incarcerated youths and minimising related anti-social behaviour. As such, the main goal of this project is to provide findings of survey results to determine how effective young people find drug and alcohol education to be and thus aim to reduce crime rates in young people and break the cycle of re-offending.

The CEYDA team had three main aims:

1. Investigate the effectiveness of current drug and alcohol education in the Territory;
2. Gauge community attitudes towards current drug and alcohol education; and
3. Provide advice for future policy change if needed.

In order to collect these views, three separate surveys were developed and distributed to selected groups of young people in the Darwin, Palmerston and Darwin rural region. There were 20 'Youth Issues' surveys completed, which are found in attachment A of the appendices section of the report; 21 'Drug Use Questionnaires' as seen in attachment B of the appendices, and 25 'Creative Drug and Alcohol Education' surveys found in attachment C of the appendices. The results from these surveys were then analysed. From this analysis a list of recommendations have been developed:

1. The Northern Territory Government provide support and information for parents or caregivers to be assisted in their role as one of the primary drug and alcohol health educators with geographically appropriate resources and information to deliver this information correctly. There exists an opportunity for developing a local resource of a similar nature.

2. The Northern Territory Government provide support in developing a local documentary titled: “A day in the life of an alcoholic or a drug user”.
3. The Northern Territory Government provide support to increase and improve current drug and alcohol education professional development opportunities for all teachers and school constables currently working in the Northern Territory as well as new and updated education, particularly for new drugs such as ICE.
4. The Northern Territory Government provide support in offering how to “teach” drug and alcohol education training in education and teaching courses at university and other tertiary institutions.
5. The Northern Territory Government provide support to schools to coach older students in taking on roles of drug and alcohol education delivery and establishing forums where parents can come into the school and see what students have been learning about drugs and alcohol with the opportunity to ask questions as exemplified by Townsville Grammar and Narrabundah College.
6. The Northern Territory Government provide support for ‘older’ young people to take on volunteer roles outside of schools to assist in the delivery of drug and alcohol education and be role models to younger people as being implemented locally by the Australian Red Cross.

Introduction

The CEYDA team approached the project from a three-tiered approach, using three separate surveys with a purpose of ascertaining creative options from young people to discourage drug and alcohol use in urban and rural areas of Darwin and Palmerston. The intent was not to provide any recommendations that may duplicate existing services of this kind, but to identify possible actions that may be considered as a part of holistic strategies to break both the cycle of re-offending and substance abuse.

The CEYDA project focused on interviewing young people considered at risk of using drugs and alcohol as determined by youth workers working with those young people. The intention was to provide young people with an opportunity to creatively identify areas that can be targeted to address the cycle of drug and alcohol misuse.

The project coordinators liaised with the corrections and teaching staff within the Don Dale Detention facility; receiving their support to interview young people. Unfortunately due to the ethics approval not being obtained in time, the project focused on surveying young people outside of school and involved in youth groups that are managed by organisations, such as Mission Australia and The SHAK, as well as on the streets.

These young people provided feedback on educational strategies and their views on drug use. Using an informal interview style we expected to engage youth and provide some linkages to programs, which may be incorporated into communities at varying levels to address ongoing substance abuse, together with providing recommendations that may complement the 'Closing the Gap Report', released by the Northern Territory Government in 2007.

Discussion/Major Findings

The view of the CEYDA team was that the fastest, easiest and most cost efficient way to gauge community attitudes was through surveys.

The initial survey was used by the project coordinators to elicit how past detainees of Don Dale thought crime rates could be lowered for young people aged 25 or below. This led the team to tackle the issue of youth crime rates from a drug perspective.

A short questionnaire was then developed by the CEYDA team based on a questionnaire from 'Of Substance' magazine to discover the current level of drug use in 21 young people aged 14 to 16 years living and schooling in the Darwin urban region. Completing this questionnaire was strongly cited as being entirely voluntary and that anybody could participate and/or withdraw at any time. A major emphasis was placed on maintaining the confidentiality of identities and this was achieved. Graph 1.1 from the CEYDA project showed that the ratio for drugs used in one's lifetime and within the past seven days were almost identical to those published in 'Of Substance' magazines April issue by White & Hayman (2007 p.22-24). Their survey of 21 805 Australian Secondary Students aged 12 – 17 was conducted in 2005 and has been done so every three years by the Australian Secondary Students' Alcohol and Drug Survey (ASSAD) since 1984.

The third and main survey of the CEYDA project needed to be modified various times and a final anonymous survey was eventually developed and delivered to target young people aged 12-25 years from all walks of life. These surveys were distributed throughout the Darwin, Palmerston and outer Darwin region by the project coordinators directly. As drug use and crime rates are such huge issues, it was decided to keep the survey population on a small scale and deliver to youth in our local region. In particular, the CEYDA team attempted to seek the views of 'at risk' young people, suggested to the project coordinators by youth workers, parents and teachers. Surveys were filled out by youth either on their own or with the assistance of project coordinators or youth workers in their own time. The results were collected by these administering staff and placed immediately into a bag or envelope.

This project required the assistance of Mission Australia in administering surveys, which proved a valuable resource.

The CEYDA team had five main aims for this survey:

1. What drug and alcohol education young people have received and how effective they believed it to be,
2. What young people think about current drug and alcohol education,
3. What young people think about selected drugs and alcohol,
4. Views of the role and source of drug and alcohol education for young people; and,
5. Provide creative suggestions for new and improved drug and alcohol education in the future.

The responses to these three aims gave positive and useful results. Graph 3.2 demonstrates young people believe drug and alcohol education is important while graph 3.3 illustrates it was a unanimous view held by young people that drug education came from several main sources with the top three being school, community and family. Other sources included advertisements on television and radio, friends and other family members as well as the workplace. Thirty-eight per cent of young people believed drug and alcohol education should be taken care of at school more so than in the community you live in (24%) and by close family (19%) as publicised in table 3.3.

Further research into current literature exemplifies how Townsville Grammar School have developed a comprehensive Prep-Year 12 drug education program culminating in a drug education forum attended by more than 200 parents of students in years 7-9 ('Of Substance', October 2007, Vol.5, No.4, p.17). This forum showed parents what work the students had done on drugs as part of the Health and Physical Education curriculum, as well as demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of drugs and their developing values in relation to drug use.

"Messages about drugs and alcohol delivered by parents and teachers can often be ignored or dismissed" ('Of Substance', October 2007, Vol.5, No.4, p.17). This is why Narrabundah College developed their drug and alcohol education program to 'up-skill' year 12 students to deliver the drug and alcohol message to their year 11 peers. The principal, Steve Kyburz, believes the quality goes up when students discuss issues with other students rather than with teachers and are more likely to become involved in the topic. Students who want more information are offered further resources.

This program is similar to the Save-a-Mate (SAM) program being rolled out by the Australian Red Cross nationally. The NT division has been conducting the program in Indigenous communities recently and began doing this in Darwin schools throughout 2007 with the intention to increase its focus on Middle Schools in 2008. Peer education is part of the delivery where young Red Cross volunteers just beyond senior high school age assist in the delivery of the program and provide support at a later date for those who come in searching for further information.

Drug Use Questionnaire

See Appendices Attachment B

The purpose of this questionnaire was to compare the current level of drug and alcohol use in 14 – 16 year olds living in urban Darwin and young people surveyed Nationally in the ASSAD survey conducted by White & Hayman and published in 'Of Substance' (April 2007 p.22-24).

Graph 1.1

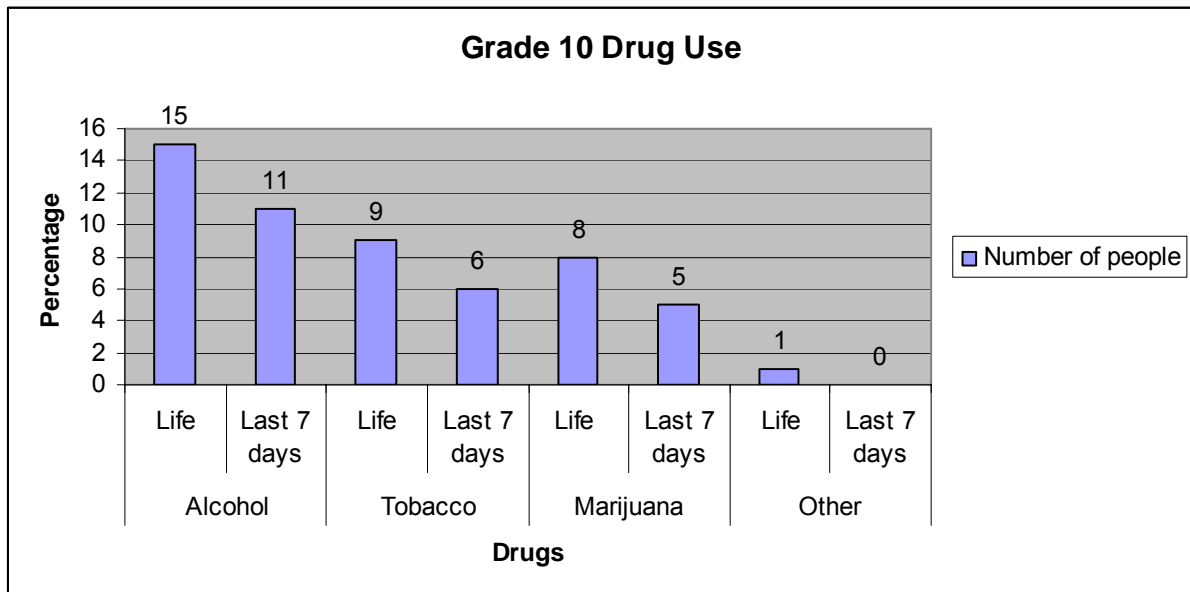


Table 1.1

Drug use	#	%
Alcohol (lifetime)	15	71
Alcohol (last 7 days)	11	52
Tobacco (lifetime)	9	43
Tobacco (last 7 days)	6	29
Marijuana (lifetime)	8	38
Marijuana (last 7 days)	5	24
Other (lifetime)	1	5
Other (last 7 days)	0	0

The most obvious fact from a random survey of young people aged 14 to 16 years shows that the ratios of tobacco use to marijuana use in participants lifetimes is similar, as is the ratio of use between these drugs in the last seven days.

Alcohol is high in use among these young people as it has fewer restrictions and the community views of alcohol.

CREATIVE DRUG AND ALCOHOL SURVEYS

See Appendices Attachment C

The purpose of these surveys as sent out by the CEYDA Team was to elicit the following information:

- How youth believe crime rates can be lowered?
- The current level of drug use of a small group of young people from a specific geographic area being Darwin and specific age group being 14 - 16
- What young people knew about drug and alcohol education; and
- How young people thought drug and alcohol education could be taught best

Composition of survey respondents

Gender breakdown and composition of respondents:

Graph 2.1

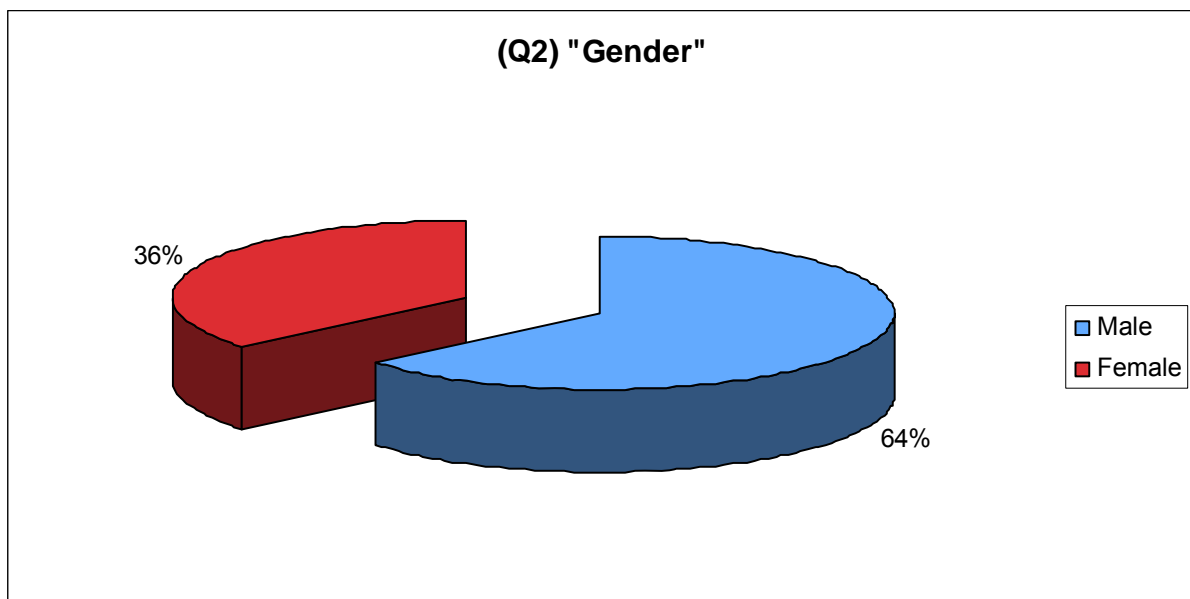


Table 2.1

Gender Breakdown	#	%
Female	9	36
Male	16	64

Throughout the consultation period, males dominated the gender breakdown. Apart from the implication that the surveys could have not been an even spread, this could also be due to males being more likely to be considered 'at risk'; more willing to talk about drug usage; be further prone to using drugs and alcohol more often; or the fact that males mostly delivered the surveys.

Age breakdown and composition of respondents:

Graph 2.2

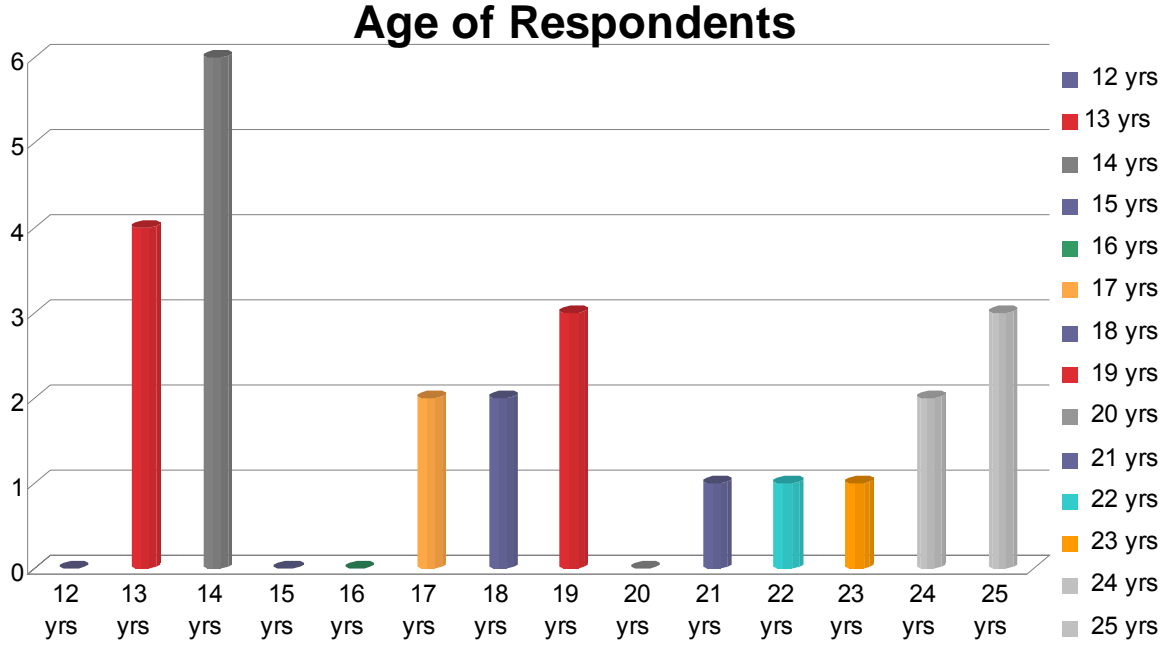


Table 2.2

Age Breakdown	#	%
12 – 14 (inclusive)	10	40
15 – 17 (inclusive)	2	8
18 +	13	52

The 13 to 14 year age group was more accessible in completing surveys as they could be targeted at local ‘hangouts’ and is the majority of the clientele for Mission Australia. Through the coordinators contacts, those people aged over 18 could be targeted. This is important as young people enter a new part of their lives where party drugs are more likely to be introduced coinciding with clubbing.

Cultural breakdown and composition of respondents:

Graph 2.3

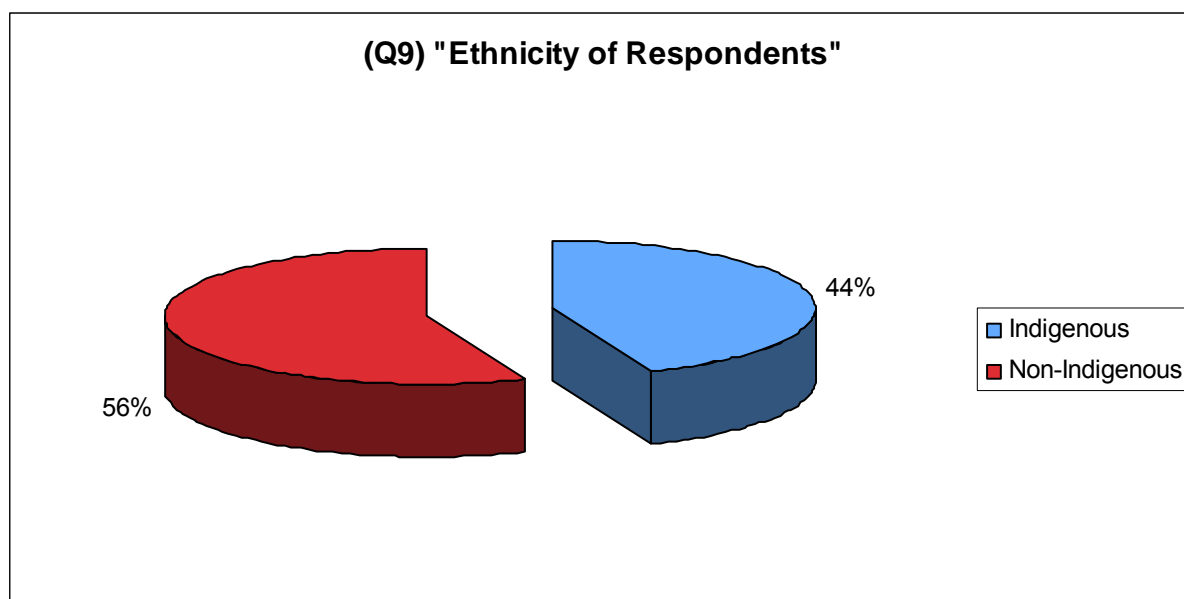


Table 2.3

Cultural Breakdown	#	%
Indigenous	11	44
Non-Indigenous	14	56

There was no conscious plan to search out any particular cultural group and as a result the breakdown of Indigenous to non-Indigenous participants was fairly even. In this project the non-Indigenous component included participants who were European Australian, African Australian, Greek Australian, Filipino and East Timorese. The Indigenous component included participants who were Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander.

Employment breakdown and composition of respondents:

Graph 2.4

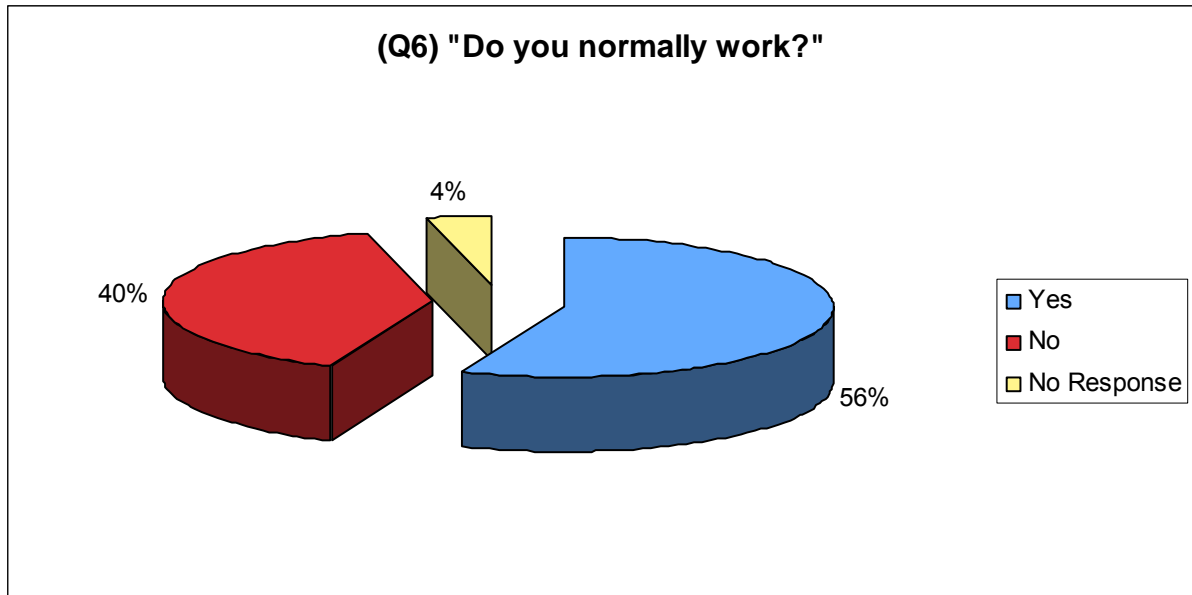


Table 2.4

Employment Breakdown of Respondents	#	%
Yes	14	56
No	10	40
No response	1	4

The breakdown of employed to unemployed is very close. This is due to the fairly even breakdown of respondents who were school aged and those who were aged over 18 years. All participants at school did not work while some participants over 18 were unemployed.

Residential breakdown and composition of respondents:

Graph 2.5

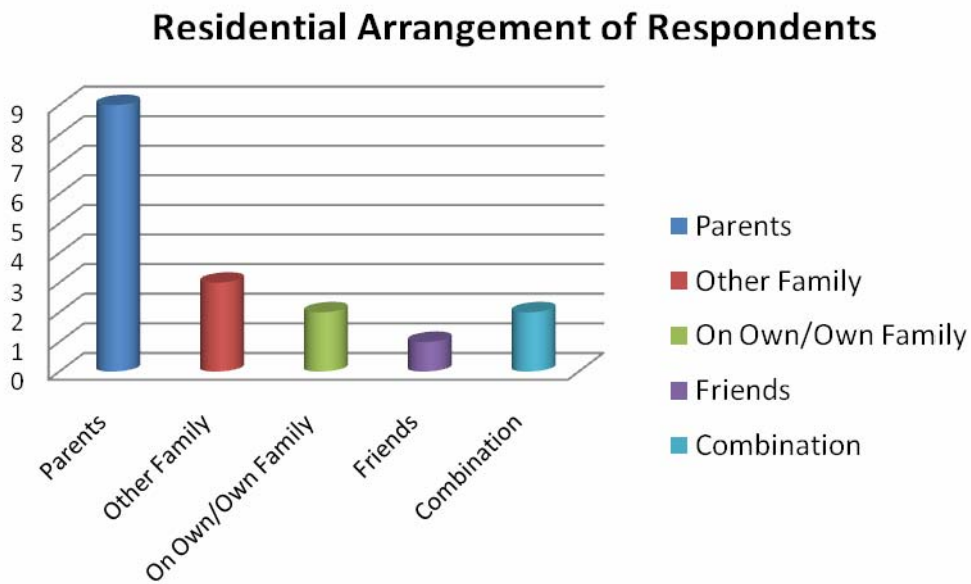


Table 2.5

Residential Breakdown of Respondents	#	%
Live with Parents	12	48
Live with Other Family	4	16
Live On Own/Own Family	3	12
Live with Friends	3	12
Combination	3	12

Approximately half the youth surveyed lived with parents. For participants aged over 18 years, they lived in various situations ranging from with their own family to on their own and with friends.

Personal views on Drugs

This component of the survey was aimed at gathering the views of respondents on the use and social acceptability of common drugs, illicit and otherwise. The results are listed in details in the following pages.

Personal views on alcohol:

Graph 2.6

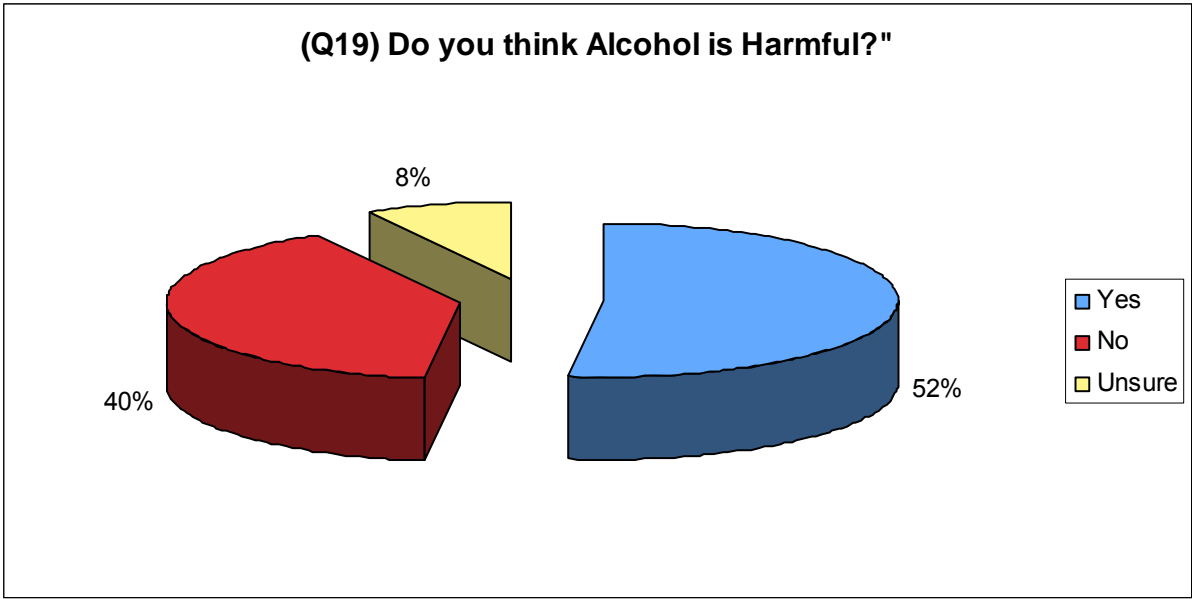


Table 2.6

Is Alcohol harmful?	#	%
Yes	13	52
No	10	40
Unsure	2	8

Binge drinking is considered as more than four drinks in a row (Viner 2007). As alcohol is considered to be less harmful by Australian society in general, the close results is not a surprise. A participant was quoted in their survey as saying it is a 'social tool' and another believing it to be a 'great way to relax'.

Personal views on cigarettes:

Graph 2.7

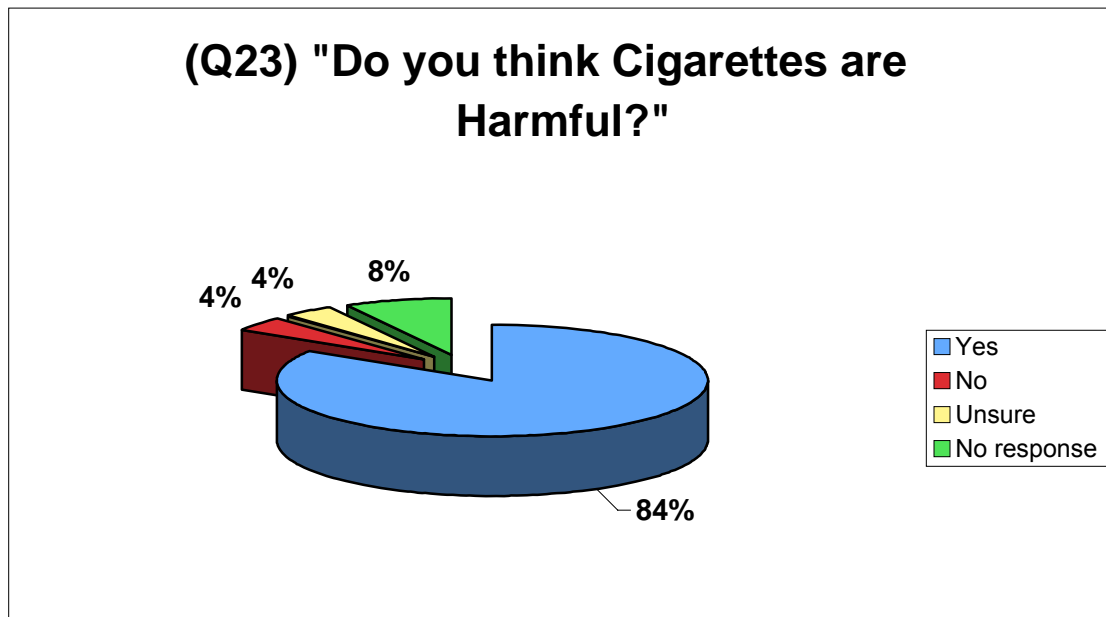


Table 2.7

Are Cigarettes harmful?	#	%
Yes	21	84
No	1	4
Unsure	1	4
No response	2	8

Cigarettes, unlike alcohol, have had more publicity on television, radio and its packaging about the harm it causes and as a result many more young people believed it to be harmful. This could also be a result of the harsher penalties that drugs such as marijuana and ecstasy carry compared to alcohol.

Many participants who admitted (without being asked) that they smoked cigarettes, still said cigarettes were harmful. Of these, some said they were trying to give up or were not ready to give up just yet although they planned to.

Personal views on Marijuana:

Graph 2.8

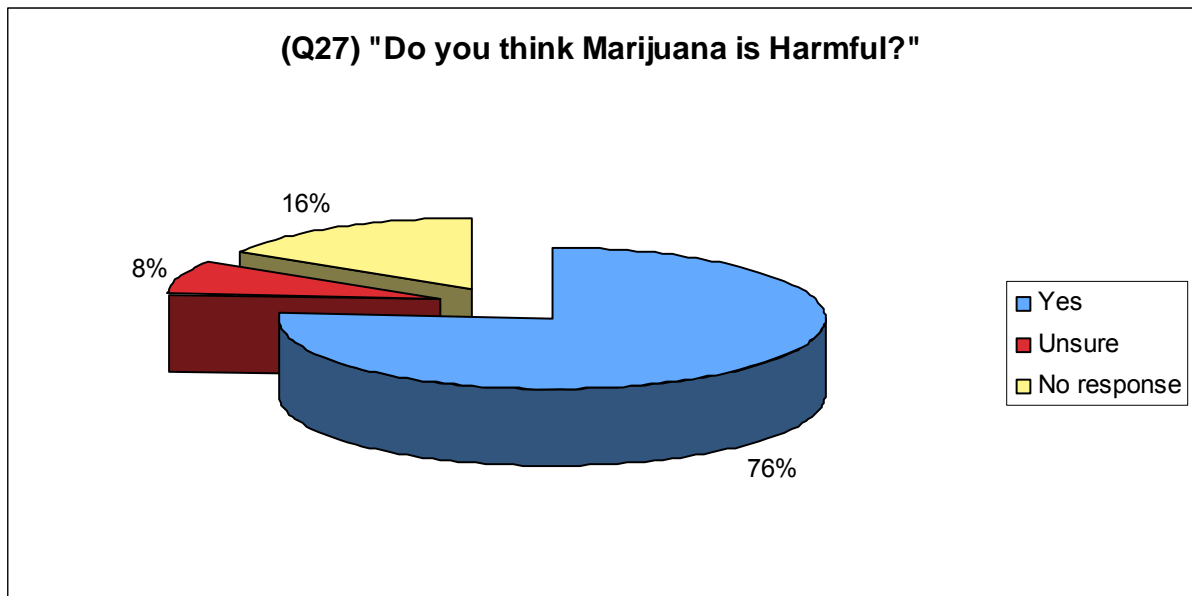


Table 2.8

Is Marijuana harmful?	#	%
Yes	19	76
Unsure	2	8
No response	4	16

Marijuana is believed to be harmful by most of the participants. One participant who did not respond to this question made a comment on their survey that marijuana was good for you as it is a natural substance. This may indicate that there is still some misconception about the effects of marijuana use.

Personal views on Kava:

Graph 2.9

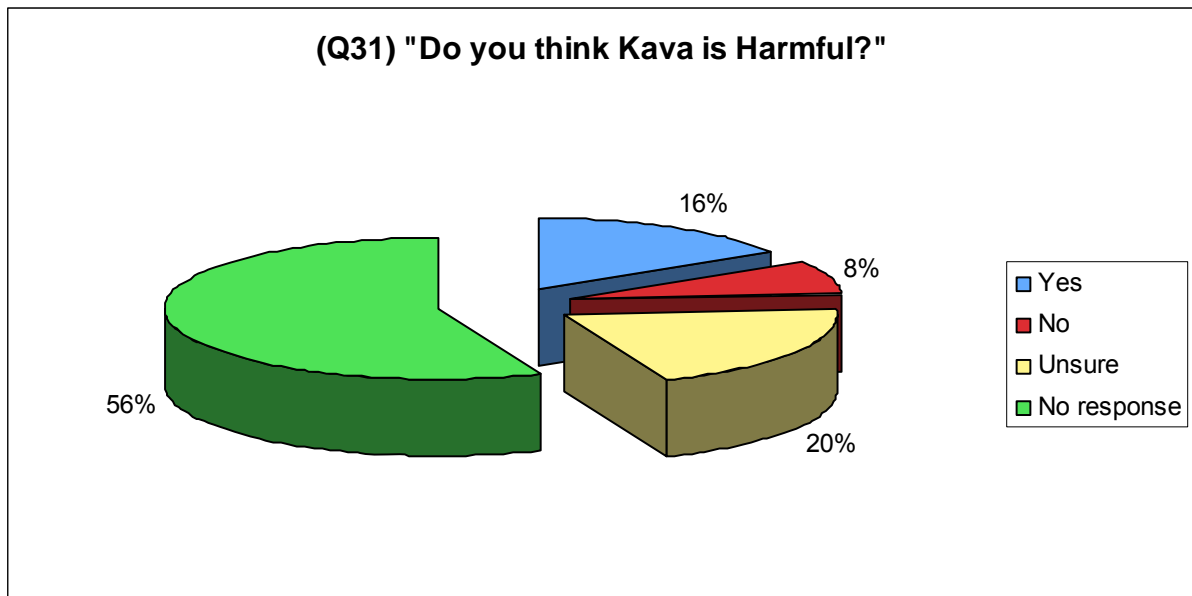


Table 2.9

Is Kava harmful?	#	%
Yes	4	16
No	2	8
Unsure	5	20
No response	14	56

Kava is a less common drug in Darwin and as a result not many participants knew what it was and whether it was harmful.

Personal views on sniffing harmful substances (eg. Petrol, paint, glue, etc.):

Graph 2.10

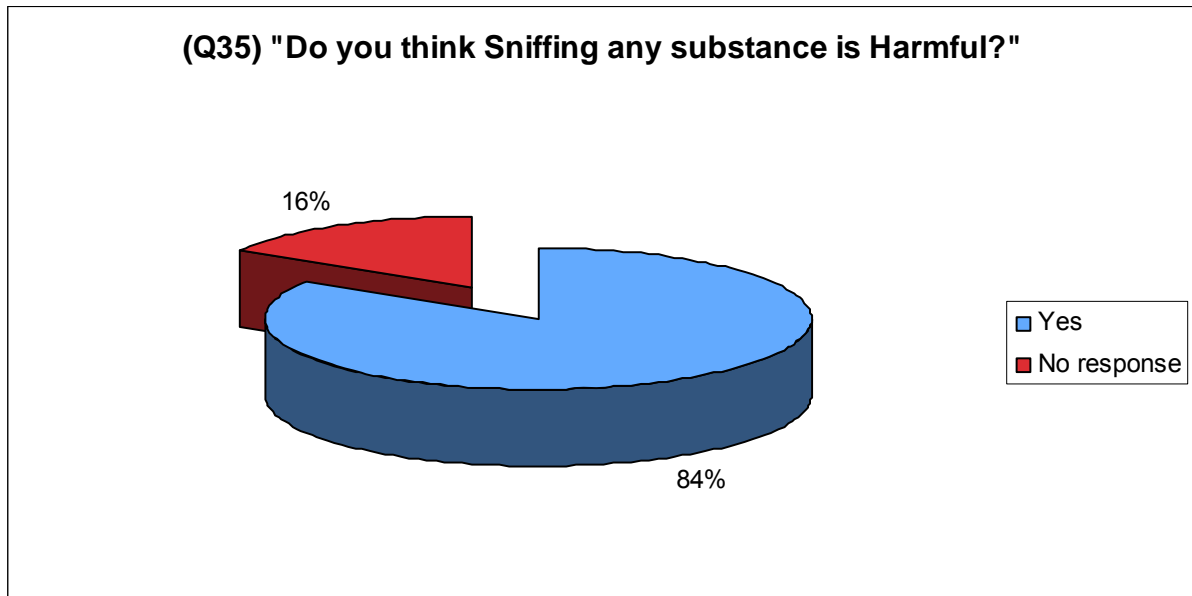


Table 2.10

Is Sniffing any substance harmful?	#	%
Yes	21	84
No response	4	16

Sniffing included petrol, glue, paint and anything anyone thought could be sniffed rather than snorted. Sniffing is considered harmful by the majority of participants while no one said it was not harmful. Further research into those who sniff substances as a way of taking drugs is required to find out more on this issue.

Personal views on the use of 'Party Drugs' (eg. Ecstasy, speed, ICE, heroin):

Graph 2.11

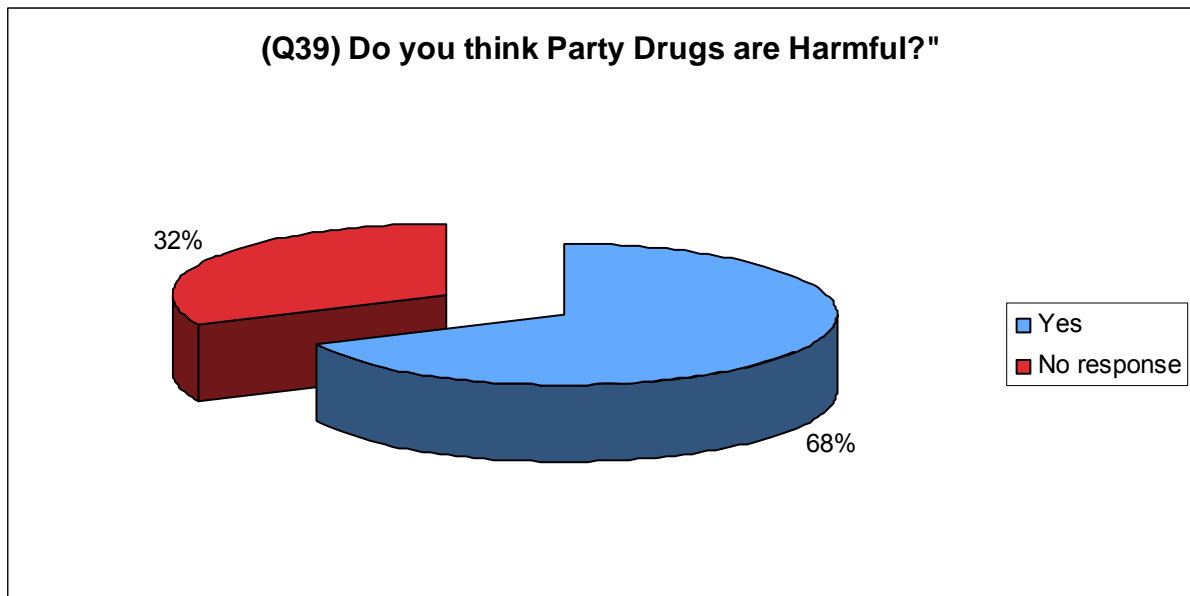


Table 2.11

Are 'Party Drugs' harmful?	#	%
Yes	17	68
No response	8	32

The statistics for party drugs, including ecstasy, speed, ICE and heroin were very similar to those for sniffing. There were more young people that did not respond to this question than sniffing; however, this could be that the younger participants did not know about these drugs as much as the others. Other suggestions for this are that these drugs are more expensive and harder to obtain as you would need to know of a dealer or know someone who knows a dealer. It is different from simply going to a shop to buy alcohol or cigarettes.

Personal views on Drug Education

This component of the survey was aimed at gathering the views of respondents on how effective current drug education is. The results are listed in details in the following pages.

In recent years, the Northern Territory Government has promoted and implemented the DARE drug education program throughout Northern Territory schools. One of the components of our surveys was to investigate the effectiveness and the recollection of the DARE, or similar, programs.

Personal Drug Education:

Graph 2.12

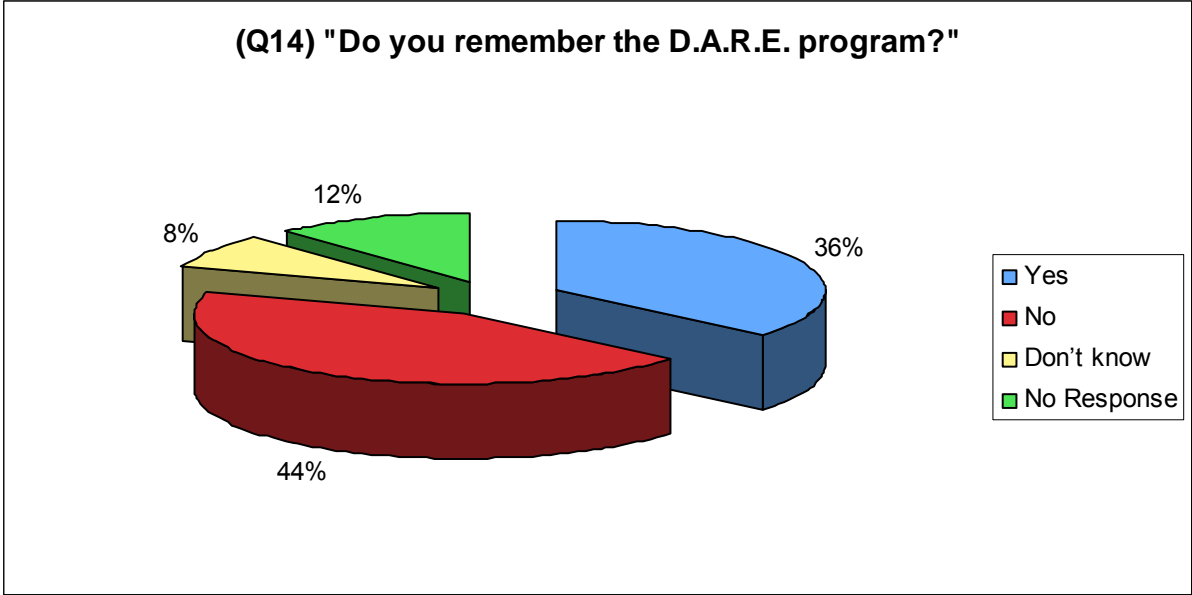


Table 2.12

Do you remember the DARE program?	#	%
Yes	9	36
No	11	44
Don't know	2	8
No response	3	12

When analysing these surveys it was interesting to note that all those participants that remembered the DARE program were under the age of 18. The DARE program was Territory specific, so those that did their schooling elsewhere ticked the 'no', 'don't know', or 'no response' boxes.

Effectiveness of Drug Education:

Graph 2.13

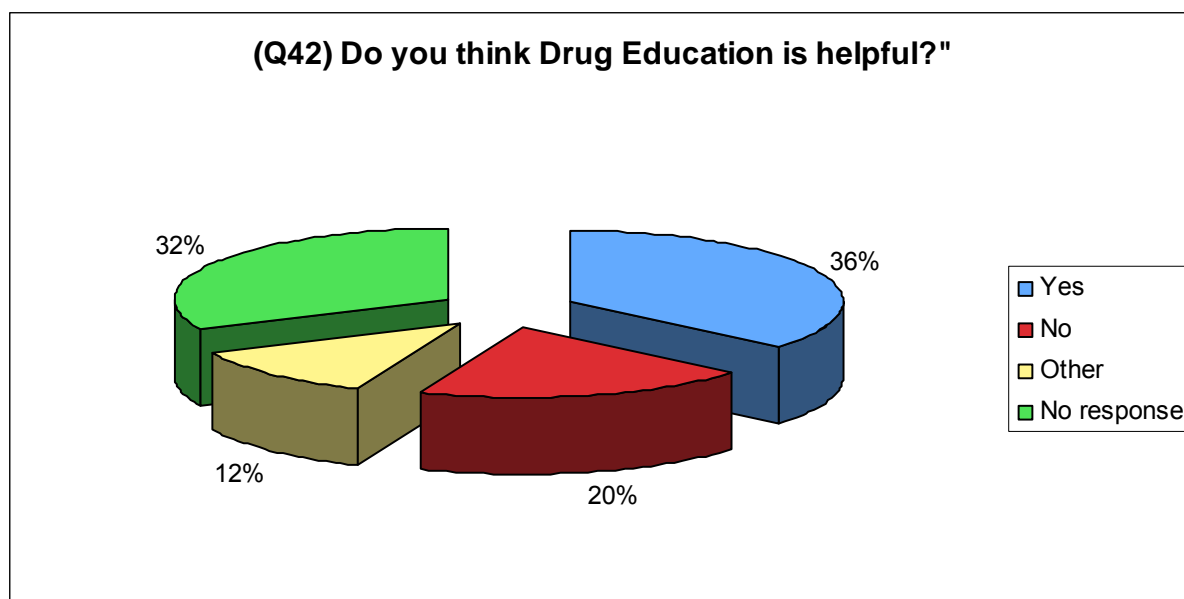


Table 2.13

Is Drug Education helpful?	#	%
Yes	10	40
No	5	20
No response	8	32
Other	2	8

Most participants believed drug education was beneficial while interestingly some of them thought it was not beneficial at all. Of those that said yes or no, many stated that you will not stop everyone. Three young people commented that “it helps them to make informed choices about their personal drug use”, “gives people a chance to form their own opinion about whether they want to go down that road”, and that it “raises the level of awareness for those that want to listen”. There was quite a large proportion that did not answer the question. This may be that there are so many factors influencing people to try, take, or continue to use drugs and alcohol that they felt they could not answer the simple question without entering into a very complex and long debate.

The rationale behind those that said it was not beneficial were based on the belief that if a person is going to take drugs, they will regardless of the level of education and awareness. Five participants thought drug education only affected those young people that were not already using drugs and alcohol. One young person stated that “Young people will not pay attention if they've tried it or don't believe what the program is showing”. Another commented, “It is never going to stop youths trying new things”. All others who believed drug education was not beneficial did not comment as to why.

Where should drug education be taught?

Graph 2.14

(Q45) "Where should drug education be taught?"

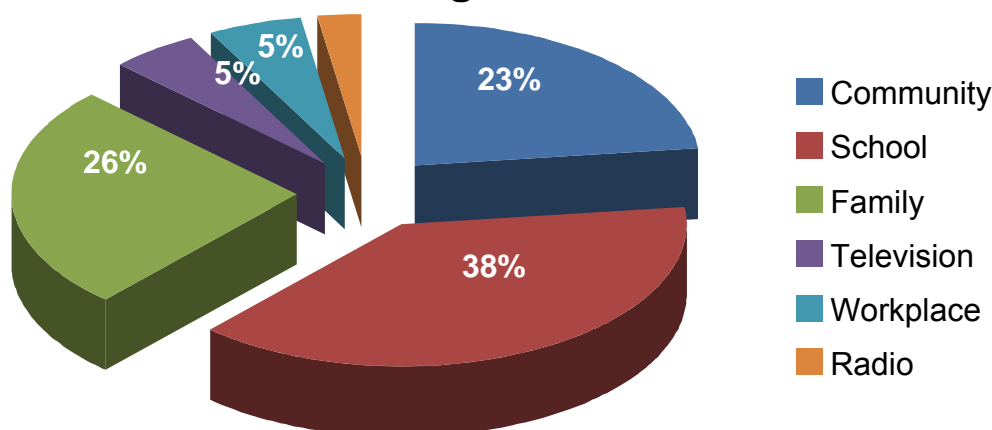


Table 2.14

Where should drug education be taught?	#	%
Community	5	24
School	8	38
Family	4	19
Television	2	9
Workplace	1	5
Radio	1	5

Throughout the consultation process, this question is the one that has come up the most in our consultation process with young people. It is easy to see that the majority of people believe drug education needs to come from many sources but in assessing the surveys and talking to young people on the street, in sporting organisations and in schools, the general feeling is that parents and schools need to be the primary sources for delivering the information while other sources including community, other family, television, radio, workplace and church need to play a secondary role in supporting that positive education.

The conclusion of this information is that either parents or schools need to deliver drug education. If one is lacking or non-existent it makes it very difficult to instil the message.

Creative Solutions

Young people offered some creative suggestions in our surveys and in general conversation for how to offer drug education and these included:

- “Talking to people who have had experience”
- “Ads”
- “Documentaries on people who've died or still on it. A day of what drug users do. Show real life documentaries”
- “More hardcore, scary, horribly detailed pictures and information about how they will destroy your life and kill you”
- “By giving reasons and substance to why and how they can have negative affects”
- “Information packs for families, showing real situations about the negative effects of drugs”
- “Classes in school”

There were also some creative suggestions from the young people surveyed on how to stay off drugs and alcohol. These included:

- “Think about it and make sure you are aware of the consequences”
- “Look at friends and family who use drugs, illicit, illegal or otherwise - see that they are slower, unable to deal with simple problems, losing their basic abilities - the little things that make life possible - and ask yourself if that is what you want to become”
- “Be involved in the community or local church. Have positive people around you”
- “Mix with people that aren't into drugs”

Conclusion

In conclusion, this report has presented its findings from a range of surveys of young Territorians. A three-pronged approach to lower the use of drugs and alcohol among young people in the Northern Territory was used to thus lower crime rates in the same focus group. The main findings from these surveys are that the best drug education comes from school and supported by families and communities.

The youth surveyed suggested that penalties for the use of restricted drugs such as alcohol and cigarettes as evident in questions 21 and 25 of the third survey should be increased to make these licit drugs more intricate to obtain.

Therefore, this report recommends that the drug and alcohol information provided by the Australian Government through home information packs along with TV and radio advertisements need to be specific to the region. When distributing resources from the 'Closing the Gap' report our recommendation is that the Northern Territory Government develops a local filmed documentary, such as 'A day in the life of a drug and alcohol user' and information packs on drugs relevant to Territory families. Drug education should be hard hitting and compulsory for all students to undertake at all ages; though, made relevant to that age. Schools and the community need to work as one on tackling the issue and this can be achieved by conducting forums as done by Townsville Grammar School. As William Glasser said; we remember 95% of what we teach somebody else so having older students teach younger ones in a peer teaching role, similar to Narrabundah College, the younger students are more likely to take notice and the older ones more likely to remember the information.

Recommendations

Based on the research from the three surveys and study into drugs and alcohol education, the CEYDA team came up with the following recommendations for drug and alcohol education with a goal to lowering drug and alcohol use in the Northern Territory:

1. The Northern Territory Government provide support and information for parents or caregivers to be assisted in their role as one of the primary drug and alcohol health educators with geographically appropriate resources and information to deliver this information correctly. There exists an opportunity for developing a local resource of a similar nature.
2. The Northern Territory Government provide support in developing a local documentary titled: "A day in the life of an alcoholic or a drug user".
3. The Northern Territory Government provide support to increase and improve current drug and alcohol education professional development opportunities for all teachers and school constables currently working in the Northern Territory as well as new and updated education, particularly for new drugs such as ICE.
4. The Northern Territory Government provide support in offering how to "teach" drug and alcohol education training in education and teaching courses at university and other tertiary institutions.
5. The Northern Territory Government provide support to schools to coach older students in taking on roles of drug and alcohol education delivery and establishing forums where parents can come into the school and see what students have been learning about drugs and alcohol with the opportunity to ask questions as exemplified by Townsville Grammar and Narrabundah College.
6. The Northern Territory Government provide support for 'older' young people to take on volunteer roles outside of schools to assist in the delivery of drug and alcohol education and be role models to younger people as being implemented locally by the Australian Red Cross.

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Appendices

Attachment A

Youth Issues

Are you a young person (12-25 years of age) living in the Northern Territory? If so, we need your help! This is a quick survey to find out what young people consider are the 'most important' issues in their regions.

The Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians is a direct communication avenue between young Territorians and the Northern Territory Government. The Round Table consists of 16 members who are aged 15 to 25 years. This issue will be presented to the Minister for Young Territorians and may be chosen by members to work on throughout the year as a project.

Age	Suburb/Community/Town
Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	Name of School or Work (if applicable)
What's the main language spoken at home?	Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

What do you think is the most important issue facing young people in your region?

Any ideas for a solution?

If your issue were progressed would you like to be involved? Yes No
If yes, please complete mailing list form attached.

Office of Youth Affairs Department of the Chief Minister GPO Box 4396 DARWIN NT 0801	Free Call: 1800 652 736 Email: oya@nt.gov.au Fax: 8999 3722 www.youth.nt.gov.au
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Attachment B



Drug Use Questionnaire

1. Have you used alcohol at all in your lifetime?
2. Have you used alcohol in the past seven days?
3. Have you smoked a cigarette at all in your lifetime?
4. Have you smoked a cigarette in the past seven days?
5. Have you used marijuana at all in your lifetime?
6. Have you used marijuana in the past seven days?
7. Have you used any other drugs at all in your lifetime (ie. ICE, speed, ecstasy)?
8. Have you used any other drugs in the past seven days (ie. ICE, speed, ecstasy)?

Attachment C

Creative Drug and Alcohol Education



Identifying Creative Education on Drugs and Alcohol for Youth (ICEDAY) Team

The aim of this project is to prepare a report with creative ideas from youth in the Northern Territory on how to prevent abuse of drugs and alcohol. We would like to know what you think.

The information you give us will be kept confidential and with the project coordinators, Katrina and Jacob. It will be developed into a report that will not contain your name or any link to you.

You do not need to answer any questions if you don't want to and you can stop at any time. This includes in the middle of a question.

By signing this document you agree to help out and understand the project.

Participant



Background Information

1. Age:
2. Gender:
3. Which suburb or community do you normally live in:
4. What was your current/last school:
5. What was the last grade you completed:
6. Have you ever or do you normally work:
7. If so, what sort of work was/is it:
8. Who do you normally live with:
9. Do you identify as:
10. Where were you born:
11. Were you born in the Northern Territory: N
12. How long have you lived in the Northern Territory:
13. What is the main language spoken at home:

Questions

14. Did you complete or do you remember the D.A.R.E program?
15. How effective do you think the drug education you received at school was?
16. What sort of drug education did you receive in your community eg. from friends, advertising?
17. What sort of drug education did you receive in your home eg. from family?

Alcohol

18. What do you think about this drug?
19. Do you think it is harmful? (Binge drinking?)
20. What would/has stopped you from using this drug?
21. What do you think would help to stop people abusing alcohol?

Cigarettes

22. What do you think about this drug?
23. Do you think it is harmful?
24. What would/has stopped you from using this drug?
25. What do you think would help to stop people abusing cigarettes?

Marijuana

26. What do you think about this drug?
27. Do you think it is harmful?
28. What would/has stopped you from using this drug?
29. What do you think would help to stop people abusing marijuana?

Kava

30. What do you think about this drug?
31. Do you think it is harmful?
32. What would/has stopped you from using this drug?
33. What do you think would help to stop people abusing kava?

Sniffing (Paint, glue, petrol)

34. What do you think about this drug?
35. Do you think it is harmful?
36. What would/has stopped you from using this drug?_It has never been an issue.
37. What do you think would help to stop people sniffing?

Other Illicit Substances – Ecstasy, Speed, ICE, Herion

38. What do you think about this drug?

39. Do you think it is harmful?

40. What would/has stopped you from using this drug?

41. What do you think would help to stop people abusing these substances?

Drug and Alcohol Information

42. Do you think Drug and Alcohol information helps young people?

43. If yes, what about it helps? If no, why not?

44. How could it be taught best?

45. Should it be taught in: (Please tick all the boxes you feel apply):

46. Do you have any comments about drugs and alcohol that you would offer younger people to help keep them safe?

Evaluation

The recommendations made to the 2007 Youth Minister's Youth Round Table of Young Territorians by past Round Tablers was to regularly do a small bit on your project as the year can slip by very quickly. Not long before the first draft of the project was due in October did this suggestion really hit home. A year is not a long time when doing a project like this, especially when you include all your other requirements you must fulfil in other areas of your life throughout the year. There is timelines set by OYA and these are best stuck to, to get the best out of yourself, your team, and your project.

We began this project with the aim of reducing youth crime by preventing incarcerated youths in re-offending. It was modified many times before a final idea for the report took shape. There were many areas you could tackle this issue from though through consultation with young people early in the year, it was decided that to reduce crime, one way was to reduce drug use. How to reduce drug use was the next step as this too was a massive task. The decision to focus on drug education looked to be the most effective for us. Looking back at the end of the year, I still believe this was the best way to do it, although many paths could have been taken.

If I was to do this project again, there are several steps I would do differently that are:

- Find the specific area I am going to concentrate the project on to achieve the major goal as a whole. In this instance, the specific area was coming up with creative ideas for drug education with the whole goal being to reduce crime.
- Determine who I want to talk to and what organisations I need to contact throughout the year and include these in the timeline from the beginning.
- Begin working on obtaining ethics approval for whatever means I am going to gather information, whether it is surveys, interviews or questioning.
- Do something small regularly on the project. This could be one hour each weekday or 2 hours every second day.

Being a member of the Youth Roundtable is an extremely valuable opportunity as members learn about themselves in so many ways. These include:

- How you work under pressure, under stress, to timelines; individually and in a team.
- How you handle a year-long project, which is a marathon assignment rather than the sprint assignments most people are used to from high school and undergraduate degrees at university.
- The current literature about the issue you are interested in.

As a neophyte teacher already on a steep learning curve, I believe the best age and time to be a member of Youth Roundtable is when you have finished school or uni but when you have experience working in your field. The Youth Roundtable is a valuable resource for all Young Territorians and when given the opportunity, should be maximised.