

Walk Tall Programme (Ireland)

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What will be covered

- ★ *Background/Context*
- ★ *Evaluations*
- ★ *National Developments*

Background/Context in the mid 1990s

- ▶ *Growing problem with alcohol, nicotine and illegal drugs*
- ▶ *Realisation that prevention education needed to start early*
- ▶ *Local Drugs Task Forces created*

Structure/Features of Walk Tall

- ✦ *Eight Teacher Manuals*
- ✦ *Introduction, Lesson Plans, Worksheets*
- ✦ *Multi-faceted approach*
- ✦ *Active Learning Methodologies*

Other Features

- ✦ *Child-centred environment*
- ✦ *Importance of school climate*
- ✦ *Appreciation of self and others*
- ✦ *Partnership approach emphasised*

Teacher Training and Support

- ▶ *National Coordinator, trainers*
- ▶ *Training – one day, workshops, longer courses*
- ▶ *Now only in Local Drugs Task Force areas*

Evaluations of Walk Tall

- ★ *A Formative Evaluation. Morgan 1998*
- ★ *Evaluation of Walk Tall. Morgan 2000*
- ★ *The Walk Tall Programme: An Evaluation. Morgan 2003*

A Formative Evaluation 1998

Findings

- *Training viewed as excellent*
- * Teachers showed excellent understanding of principles relating to prevention*
- *Programme suitable for all children*
- *Very positive about teacher manuals*
- *Support service regarded very positively*

Conclusions/Recommendations 1998

- ▶ *Walk Tall as part of new SPHE curriculum*
- ▶ *Issues of sustainability*
- ▶ *In-service model replicated*
- ▶ *Relevance of teaching methodologies*
- ▶ *Partnership approach encouraged*

Evaluation 2000

- ▶ *Context - imminent introduction of national curriculum for SPHE*
- ▶ *Questionnaires to principals, teachers, trainers and children*
- ▶ *Objectives – extent of implementation, perceptions of training, programme*

Findings 2000

Principals/Teachers

- ▶ *3 out of 4 schools implementing programme, 1 out of 3 teachers using programme monthly*
- ▶ *Methodologies well-received*
- ▶ *2 out of 3 saw greater need for programme*
- ▶ *Over-crowded curriculum barrier to implementation*
- ▶ *Support service/ school based in-service facilitating implementation*

Findings 2000

Trainers

- ★ *Training and methodologies contributing to implementation*
- ★ *Enthusiasm of teachers acknowledged*

Findings 2000

Children

- ★ *Enjoyed programme*
- ★ *4 out of 5 said it gave them a chance to express views*
- ★ *Good knowledge of effects of smoking*
- ★ *'It is better to express my feelings instead of being full of anger and taking it out on people' (male, 12)*
- ★ *Better to reflect before making a decision*

Conclusions/Recommendations 2000

- ▶ *Programme fulfils an important need*
- ▶ *Has a sound rationale, valued by all*
- ▶ *Implementation satisfactory, considering*

Evaluation 2003

Relevant Developments

- ★ *Growing concern about substance misuse*
- ★ *New Curriculum in SPHE*
- ★ *National Drugs Strategy 2001-8*
- ★ *School Substance Use Policy*

Findings 2003

- ▶ *90% of teachers in Drugs Task Force areas said it helped children...*
- ▶ *90% taught programme at least once a month*
- ▶ *2 out of 3 said it was more interesting than other lessons*
- ▶ *High level of satisfaction with programme, and support service*

More Findings 2003

- ▶ *Perceived need for programme greater than last evaluation*
- ▶ *Barriers remained the same*
- ▶ *Implementation requires support, links to new curriculum, changes in society attitudes, policy development*
- ▶ *Half of schools hadn't started policy development*

Conclusions/Recommendations 2003

- ▶ *Similar to previous evaluations*
- ▶ *Concern about policy development*

Finally

- ▶ *While some encouraging trends for smoking are emerging, not the same for alcohol*
- ▶ *Biggest challenges are implementation, sustainability*
- ▶ *Effects of Walk Tall? – many other factors at play – hopefully Walk Tall is making a contribution*