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

- Evaluation of Walk Tall. Morgan 2000
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