



druginterventionprogram Pty Ltd

DRUG OFFENDERS PROGRAM

Our Purpose

In order to prepare drug offenders in facing the courts, our purpose is to:

Assist and inspire offenders to demonstrate remorse, reduce individual recidivism and promote rehabilitation;

Provide offenders with the information and skills necessary to minimise harm, reduce risky behaviours and promote healthy life choices;

Promote informed and pro-active behaviour as litigants; and

Foster informed connectivity with government and non-government services.

Supporting the Government's Key Responses

Supporting key Government Responses to the Special Commission of Inquiry into crystal methamphetamine and other amphetaminetype stimulants.

RECOMMENDATION 12

Mandatory referral by police of people detected in possession of a prohibited drug to an appropriately tailored health/ social and/or education intervention.

The Drug Intervention Program can provide a transition into the proposed NSW pre-court diversion scheme due to commence after 30 June 2023.

The Program can grow with the Government's development of the additional health rehabilitation services and justice initiatives during this period to provide a point of interface for offenders – particularly in rural and regional areas because of the online nature of the course.

RECOMMENDATION 20

That the NSW Government support local, community driven collective impact initiatives, including justice reinvestment initiatives, that aim to respond to drug use in communities.

The Program is consistent with the Justice Reinvest principles which involve particular focus on improving service coordination and collaboration and reducing the number of people imprisoned for minor offences. The Drug Intervention Program will be an impactful 'circuit breaker' to disrupt known pathways to prison.



“ For all the years lawyers like me have dealt with offenders we have recognised a gap in support for drug offenders. This course helps drug offenders better understand the law and the role of lawyers in the criminal justice system. It is beneficial to the legal process and, more importantly, supports the offender to make healthy life choices for moving forward.”

Phil Boulten SC

Former President NSW Bar Association



Who We Are

Three lawyers and an expert in drug and alcohol awareness training have come together to create the Drug Offenders Program.



Michael Finnane KC

Barrister and former District Court Judge who has practiced in wide range of areas including criminal law for approximately 50 years.



Shane Prince SC

A barrister who has practiced extensively in human rights law in addition to his practice in commercial, industrial, and public law.



Paul Bodisco

Sydney barrister who specialises in criminal law practice including in the Local Court and is also a former Secretary, Australian Drug Law Reform Foundation; Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the NSW Premier; Senior Policy Advisor, AIDS Council of NSW.



Jimmy Finnane

Has provided practical drug and alcohol impairment training for more than 8 years as an executive officer and still works part time in drug and alcohol acute care. He is currently the Director and Program Organiser of impairmenttraining.com.au

Consultants

Consultant guidance has been provided from a drug and alcohol researcher and psychotherapist, addiction and trauma specialist to create the Drug Offenders Program.



Ken Pidd

Academic Advisor to the program, is an Adjunct Professor at the National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction at Flinders University. For 20 years he has conducted research and therapeutic practice in alcohol, drug, and mental-health related risks.



Diane Young

Psychotherapist, addiction and trauma specialist at Diane Young and Associates and Addiction Specialist Director at South Pacific Private Hospital.

Importance of early intervention and awareness training

Why it's important

Early intervention and alcohol and drug awareness training are important as they aim to help modify alcohol and drug use before acute treatment and emergency responses are required. Such primary prevention strategies encourage people to avoid harmful alcohol and drug use and help reduce physical and mental health problems, social dysfunction, and the need for more costly complex interventions.

“ The importance of a program like this is to improve your client's chances of successfully entering a state of recovery via a series of modules designed to guide them through entering and navigating the Justice System, educating them about health and well-being including information on mental health and drug and alcohol use, introducing them to social services and support options including suggested pathways to treatment and recovery. And finally informing them of potential outcomes from the Justice System. ”



Diane Young

Psychotherapist, addiction and trauma specialist,
Diane Young and Associates

The Research

Evaluation research has demonstrated that awareness training can improve knowledge concerning alcohol and drug health and safety risks, and knowledge concerning how to get help for drug and mental health issues¹. Research also indicates that early intervention can reduce adolescent substance use and associated behavioural outcomes².

“ I have worked extensively with Jim Finnane as an academic advisor on the development and content of alcohol and drug awareness training courses and can recommend this course as incorporating best practice, innovative processes, and easy to access as it is delivered in an online setting. In my opinion this course will be a great inclusion to court diversion programs, early intervention strategies. It will help young offenders start the process of recovery and will help reduce recidivism. ”



Ken Pidd

Adjunct Associate Professor, Flinders University

1. Chapman, J., Roche, A., Phillips, B., Duraisingam, V., Finnane, J., & Pidd, K. (2020). An Evaluation of a Workplace Alcohol and Drug Harm Reduction Program. Adelaide, South Australia: National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA), Flinders University.
2. Carney T. & Myers B. (2012) Effectiveness of early interventions for substance using adolescents: findings from a systematic review and meta analysis. Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention and Policy(7) 25.

The Program

What is the Drug Offenders Program?

The Drug Offenders Program consists of short, tailored educational modules for offenders who have either been found guilty of, or pleaded guilty to, a drug offence in NSW Courts - or who nominate drug addiction as a causative factor in their offending.

The program helps people attending court for the first time - particularly in the Local Court. It ensures that offenders understand the basics of their rights and obligations as litigants. It also includes practical advice in accessing government and non-government services, information about treatment, the legal system and drug laws, sentencing and practical life skills. It supplements rather than replaces existing court diversionary programs such as MERIT, the Drug Court, and Circle Sentencing.

In summary

It provides information about:

- decision-making abilities
- drug and alcohol treatment options,
- how to prepare for court appearance

The program offers offenders support and guidance, it's not about judging them or making any moral statements. It provides them with encouragement to gain information and practical skills and to continue these important steps as they move to their next stage in life. Ultimately, it aims to help them move forwards to a more fulfilling and happy life.



Program Modules

What modules make up the program?



Entering the Justice System

This module welcomes the participant explaining the goals of the program. It begins to unpack what it means to be caught up in the Justice System and what the right to legal representation means. It explains the role of the lawyer, how to go about getting the services of a lawyer and the importance of having their own lawyer. It helps them to understand such terms as 'their plea', 'their instructions' and other court processes.



Navigating the Justice System - Rights and Responsibilities in more detail

This module gives wise advice on how to respond to the police, explaining police powers, what right to silence means, and accessibility to services like the Legal Aid Hotline. It gives details about police processes they may face and explains such terms as bail, bail conditions and what could happen when the matter is first listed. Finally, for future knowledge, it explains police stop and search powers and their powers of arrest.



Your Health and Well-being: Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Use

In this module the participant has the opportunity to develop an understanding of their own mental health. It explains what mental health is, as well as describes various types of poor mental health conditions. It then moves on to explore how to recognise poor mental health and provides a range of strategies for improving mental health. Importantly, this module also addresses the many factors that influence people's use of alcohol and other drugs. It looks at the short and long term harms, and it also covers healthy coping strategies.



Pathways to Treatment and Recovery, Part One: Early Intervention Treatment Options

This module includes information about treatments the court might ask for, or that their lawyer might recommend as well as options the participant may want to consider themselves. It provides an opportunity for them to consider whether they might be suffering from a dependency problem. It gives information on how to access different types of treatment services, describes different types of therapy and helps them explore the services which are likely to best suit their individual needs.



Pathways to Treatment and Recovery Part Two: Importance of Long-term Support and the lifelong nature of recovery

This module talks about long-term recovery from substance abuse disorder, describing the benefits of short term and long-term rehabs and showing examples of different types of treatment centres that provide rehabilitation. It gives encouraging advice on possible ways to sustain long term recovery through such supports as 12 Step programs, family backing and supported living.



Potential Outcomes from the Criminal Justice System

This module provides a deeper explanation of the structure of the Criminal Justice System including programs such as MERIT program and the Drug Court. It describes likely procedures they will experience when they appear in court. It helps them understand the implications of involvement in the system giving examples of offences involving alcohol and drugs along with a reality check about the serious consequences of drug induced behaviour before the law. There are also descriptions of lesser possible consequences such as court orders for alternative to gaol programs.

Program Delivery

How is the Drug Offenders Program delivered?

Content comes in a range of interesting and engaging modes.

- The main content of the program comes in the form of cleverly illustrated, often dynamic slides. They include graphics and/or photos to illustrate the messages they contain (created in collaboration with E-Creators).
- Short motivational and informative videoed talks are scattered through the program at appropriate points. Jimmy Finnane provides motivational encouragement, Phil Boulten gives legal information, and Di Young talks about the various pathways to treatment and recovery.
- At regular intervals in the course there are simple learning activities to help reinforce the content: True/False statements, multiple choice questions, scenarios with multiple choice responses, personal reflective questionnaires, close sentence and matching column.



**GIVE YOUR
CLIENTS
THE BEST
CHANCE**



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