

Community Responses to Methamphetamine: Final Report and Recommendations

Overview:

With support from the City of Revelstoke, Community Connections received funding from the Union of British Columbia Municipalities in June 2006. Community Connections was the lead in the project and the on-staff Social Worker was appointed the Project Coordinator.

The project's main goals were:

- 1) To initiate the development and implementation of public awareness and implement education strategies about Methamphetamine for the community Revelstoke.
- 2) To develop and implement community-based approaches and solutions for the prevention of Methamphetamine production and usage in our community and
- 3) To begin collaboration with agencies and community members to increase capacity for community response to local issues regarding Methamphetamine production and usage.

Project Activities to Date:

One of the first tasks completed was the creation of a Revelstoke Methamphetamine Task Force in the Fall of 2006 which included 15 active members from a variety of social service organizations/agencies in Revelstoke (i.e. R.C.M.P., School District #19 Support Services, Interior Health Authority – Drug and Alcohol Counsellor, Community Connections, Canadian Pacific Railway – EAP Services, School Based Prevention Coordinator, Revelstoke Ambulance Services, Revelstoke Women's Shelter) and individuals who have personal experience with Methamphetamine and other drug use. The task force met monthly at Community Connections, chaired by the Project Coordinator; the purpose of the Task Force was to serve as an advisory committee for the Project Coordinator and to collaborate and assist in the facilitation of project activities and brainstorm ideas and strategies.

List of Activities to Date:

1. In partnership with Revelstoke Secondary School, Community Connections hosted a play called, CRANKED about a youth's struggle with Crystal Methamphetamine. The Play was shown to the entire school.

Follow-up presentations were held for three Planning 10 classes at Revelstoke Secondary School, focusing on more detailed information about Methamphetamine.

2. A variety of educational materials were collected to support the project including CBC's 'Dark Crystal' video and a video made by youth for youth called 'Rewind' which focused on teen's experience of drug use.

Pamphlets from Crystal Meth BC, No2Meth and the Golden Methamphetamine Task Force were made available at Community Connections, Queen Victoria Hospital and the Revelstoke Community Centre for community members. Labels were placed on the No2Meth pamphlets indicating a HOTLINE individuals can call if they need information about Methamphetamine and support services available. In addition, fact sheets were printed out and made available to the public to educate themselves on Methamphetamine.

3. One thousand wristbands were created and distributed throughout Revelstoke bearing the slogan, "DON'T METH AROUND", which was created by a Gr. 9 student at Revelstoke Secondary School and chosen during a Crystal Meth Slogan contest held at the school.
4. Research was conducted on Revelstoke's awareness of methamphetamine, its effects and future ideas for a Methamphetamine awareness program; the results were made available to the public, published in the local newspaper and presented at a Public Forum on Methamphetamine.
Please see attached.
5. The project was highlighted in the local newspaper numerous times, including pictures and articles; also an interview was done on the local radio station and presentations about the project were given to City Council and the Rotary Club. **Please see attached.**
6. Every pharmacy, hardware store and grocery store was contacted and sent an information sheet regarding details of Methamphetamine use, ingredients involved and suggestions for their involvement in the MethWatch program.
7. The Revelstoke Task Force collaborated with the Golden, Kamloops and Maple Ridge Task Forces in sharing the support services available in their respective communities for users of Methamphetamine and their families and friends.
8. A Public Forum on Methamphetamine was held on May 16th, to facilitate a discussion with community members around the following:
 - a. History of the project
 - b. Activities done to date
 - c. An overview of Methamphetamine – production and usage
 - d. The prevalence of Methamphetamine in Revelstoke
 - e. Local treatment & support services available

The Forum was led by the Project Coordinator and there was a Panel of speakers including, an R.C.M.P. Officer, School Based Prevention Coordinator and the Drug and Alcohol Counsellor. Community members were given time to ask questions and provide feedback during the Forum, as well as each person who attended filled out an Evaluation of the Forum.

Please see attached.

Fundraising:

In addition, to the core funding for the project from the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, we received community support from seven businesses/organizations

in town after a letter providing an opportunity for contribution to the project was sent out to over 100 businesses.

Survey Results:

As mentioned above, in the Fall of 2006 research was conducted to determine Revelstoke's overall knowledge of Methamphetamine, knowledge of the effects of Methamphetamine use and ideas for future direction of the project.

Please see attached Summary of Results.

Summary and Recommendations:

While the goals set out by the Task Force may have been ambitious there has been significant progress in addressing the methamphetamine concern in the community.

Under the leadership of Community Connections the Revelstoke Methamphetamine Task Force with membership from key community stake holders has established the foundation and infrastructure for further collaboration in responding to the issues related to methamphetamine in particular and drug concerns in general in the community. Members of the Task Force are currently considering expanding the mandate of the committee to include other drugs with the view of building on the momentum created by the Methamphetamine Task Force.

With the RCMP and medical community support, local businesses became aware of the impact of methamphetamine on individuals and communities and quickly addressed the issue of production. Pharmacies and hardware stores proactively identified and removed products utilized in methamphetamine production embracing the MethWatch Program.

The Task Force successfully raised the awareness of the community with regards to methamphetamine use with an ambitious educational campaign including distribution of informational materials, the research project, presentations in the local high school, media exposure and the Public Forum. While the Task Forces focus was methamphetamine it quickly became a beacon in the community for general drug concerns.

Information derived from the Methamphetamine Task Force meetings, the Public Forum evaluations, the research results and feedback from community members indicates there is a significant desire to continue the education campaign on methamphetamine use and more general drug use in the community. Suggestions include continuing to raise awareness through community presentations, public forums, highlight the impact of drug use through the local media and making information public for individuals to access.

The community also made it clear they desire a made-in-Revelstoke solution for those individuals and families struggling with drug abuse with the suggested creation and development of a Substance Abuse treatment facility and/or a Detox centre.

In closing, RCMP information indicates that approximately 10% of the population (8000) in Revelstoke is involved in some form of illegal drug use. In addition to a growing interest in Methamphetamine use on its own it is also increasingly present in

local cocaine and ecstasy. Because Methamphetamine is cut with the popular drugs in town there is a significant risk and probability that many individuals will become addicted to Methamphetamine without knowing it.

By surveying the community on their knowledge of this risk and other knowledge of Methamphetamine the Task Force was able to collect data to help guide and inform the direction of the project and future strategies regarding education and awareness on Drugs and Alcohol in Revelstoke. In turn, the Task Force initiated an awareness campaign to facilitate discussions in and involvement from the community around the dangers and risks of Methamphetamine and how to prevent the use of it in Revelstoke.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Trauzzi'.

Karley Trauzzi, RSW