

Pills and powders

Harm reduction campaigns aimed at club drug users among the student population in Ireland.

Nicki **Killeen**
Project Worker,
Ana Liffey Drug Project.

Andy **Osborn**
Team Leader-Online & Digital Services,
Ana Liffey Drug Project.

Dr Eamon **Keenan**
National Clinical Lead,
HSE Addiction Services.

What's in the presentation?

- Drugs.ie is a partnership project between the HSE and The Ana Liffey Drug Project
- A range of partnership campaigns with HSE Social Inclusion, HSE communications, The Ana Liffey Drug Project and student services

Background: Drug trends

Emergence of NPS

- Headshops 2000-2010: pills, powders and smokable substances
- Psychoactive Substances Act (2010)
- Black market

Adulterants appearing in traditional drugs

- Late 2000's low purity, bad quality pills
- Virtual disappearance of MDMA (EMCDDA, 2016)
- Post headshops: NPS (PMA, PMMA)
- Synthetic opioid sold as cocaine 2016/2017

Background: Drug trends

Increase in purity

- PMK-Glycidate = increase in MDMA use and purity in Europe
- Dangerously high levels
- Pills are made to cut in half

Availability

- Dark web/home delivery is common
- New user groups

Current use in Ireland

Pills

- Ecstasy: second most used drug by the general population (15-34) in Ireland
- MDMA use mainstream and not specifically associated with the dance scene (reflection of EU trends)
- NPS – 2c family
- €10

Powders

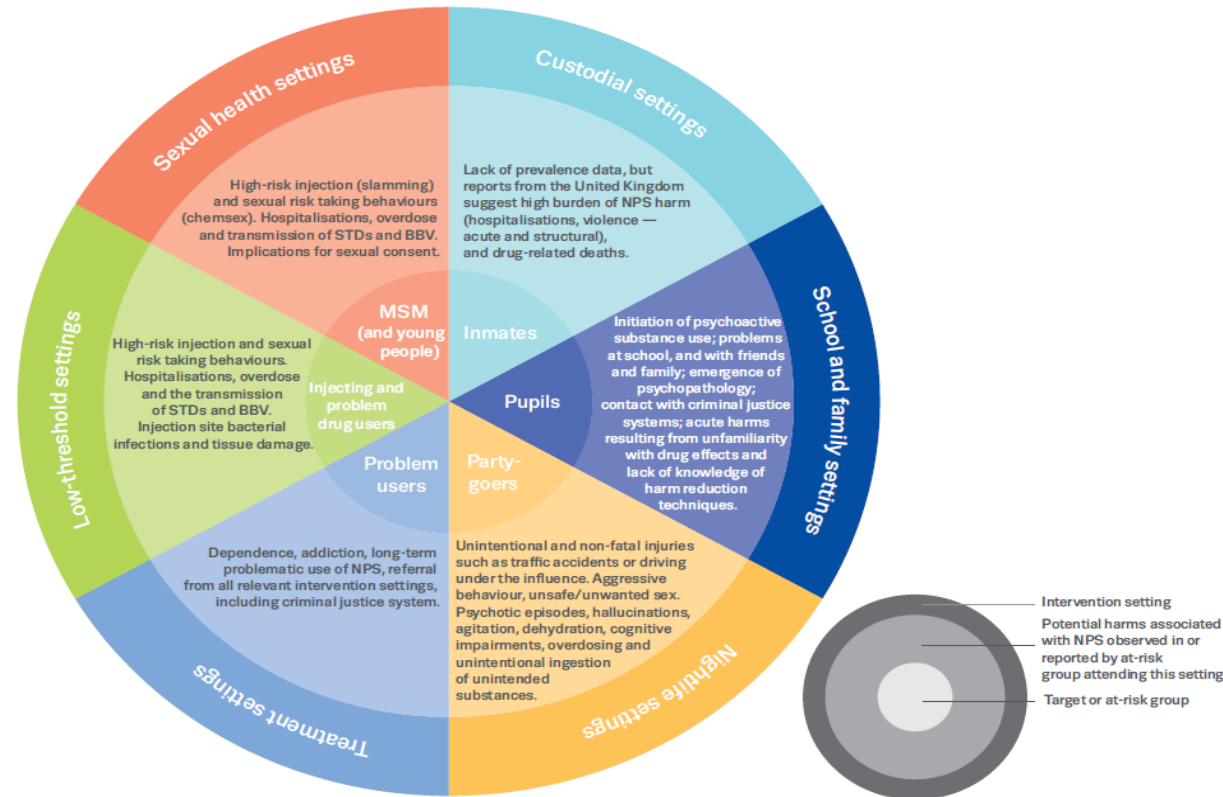
- Cocaine is 3rd most used illicit drug among general population
- Increase in cocaine use despite the purity being low and price being high
- €70 gram
- NPS – ketamine may be controlled at national level it is not controlled at EU or international level
- 25I-NBOMe, MDMA
- €50 gram cathinone

So, what's in the pills and powders in Ireland?

- Cocaine only 24% pure at street level
- Cathinone's (a-PVP) in cocaine
- Levamisole, benzocaine & lidocaine
- MDMA: 1992 levels, approximately 120mg
- High potency MDMA accessed online
- Tryptamines

Framing the response

Relevant intervention settings (outer ring) where potential NPS-related harms and risk behaviours (middle ring) are reported by or observed among at-risk groups (inner ring)



Localising the response

- Multi-disciplinary approaches offer a useful way of engaging vulnerable groups who may not come into contact with traditional drug services (EMCDDA, 2016)
- Identified third-level students need for harm reduction information
- Utilise links with addiction services & student services

The response 2015 - 2016

- Two campaigns established with DIT, UCD and TCD
- Addressed need at the time – NPS and adulterants
- ‘What’s in the Pill?’ and ‘What’s in the Powder?’
- Applied to stimulants, depressants and hallucinogenic drugs
- Important messaging: you can never be fully sure of the contents
- Poster and fact sheet: fact sheet supported professionals
- Gave student unions ownership of the campaigns
- Launch event with Minister for Drug Strategy and Lord Mayor

WHAT'S IN THE PILL?



A number of pills sold as ecstasy have been tested and found to contain substances other than MDMA. MDMA, and many of these substances, have been linked to hospitalisations, deaths and possible mental health issues. There is no way of telling what is in a pill just by looking at it. **IT'S ALWAYS SAFEST NOT TO TAKE UNKNOWN OR ILLICIT DRUGS AT ALL.** If you do take a pill...

- IT IS LESS RISKY TO TAKE HALF (ALTHOUGH SMALLER DOSES CAN ALSO BE DANGEROUS)
- IF YOU DON'T COME UP AS QUICKLY AS EXPECTED DON'T ASSUME YOU'VE GOT DUD PILLS. WAIT 2 HOURS. SOME DRUGS TAKE LONGER TO TAKE EFFECT THAN OTHERS
- NEVER DOUBLE DROP
- NEVER MIX YOUR DRUGS. ALCOHOL, OTHER CLUB DRUGS AND PRESCRIBED DRUGS CAN ALL INTERACT DANGEROUSLY WITH PILLS, AND WITH EACH OTHER
- IF DANCING, REHYDRATE WITH WATER OR ISOTONIC DRINKS REGULARLY, BUT DON'T GO OVER A PINT PER HOUR
- TAKE BREAKS FROM DANCING

The Students' Union in no way condones the use of illegal drugs

If you are concerned about a substance that you or a friend have taken:

- Don't take any more
- Don't take other drugs
- Seek medical advice

For information and support on drugs and alcohol, visit **drugs.ie**
The HSE Drugs & Alcohol Helpline can be reached on **1800 459 459**

DRUGS.ie
Drug and Alcohol Information and Support

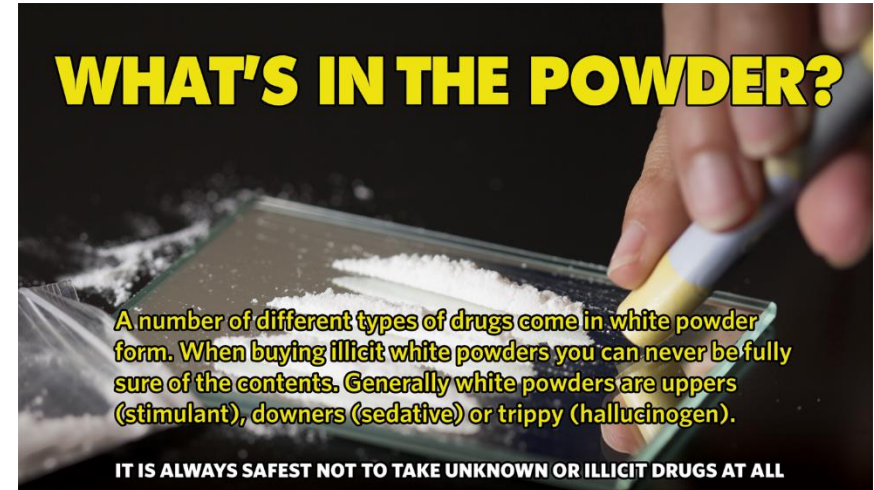


ana lifey drug project
LIFE • LIVES • LEARNING • SUPPORT



dif students' union

WHAT'S IN THE POWDER?



A number of different types of drugs come in white powder form. When buying illicit white powders you can never be fully sure of the contents. Generally white powders are uppers (stimulant), downers (sedative) or trippy (hallucinogen).

IT IS ALWAYS SAFEST NOT TO TAKE UNKNOWN OR ILLICIT DRUGS AT ALL
IF YOU DO DECIDE TO TAKE POWDERS...

- IT IS LESS RISKY TO START WITH A SMALL TEST DOSE TO SEE WHAT EFFECT THE DRUG HAS ON YOU. HOWEVER, YOU CANNOT REMOVE THE RISK ENTIRELY. SMALL DOSES CAN ALSO BE DANGEROUS
- NOT ALL POWDERS ARE SUITABLE FOR SNORTING. PLAN HOW YOU WILL TAKE YOUR POWDER IN ADVANCE
- WAIT 2 HOURS. SOME DRUGS TAKE LONGER TO TAKE EFFECT THAN OTHERS
- USE YOUR OWN TOOTER. SNIFFING OFF UNCLEAN SURFACES SUCH AS TOILETS SEATS/PHONES & SHARING YOUR TOOTER INCREASES THE RISK OF GETTING INFECTIONS INCLUDING BLOOD-BORNE VIRUSES
- RINSE OUT YOUR NOSE WITH WATER AFTERWARDS. SOME POWDERS CLUMP IN THE NOSE AND DRIP DOWN THE THROAT. KETAMINE IN PARTICULAR CAN CAUSE HARM TO YOUR STOMACH
- REHYDRATE WITH WATER OR ISOTONIC DRINKS REGULARLY, BUT DON'T GO OVER A PINT PER HOUR. IF DANCING, TAKE REGULAR BREAKS
- AVOID MIXING WITH OTHER DRUGS INCLUDING ALCOHOL AND PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION. MIXING DRUGS CAN BE UNPREDICTABLE AND MAY PLACE GREATER STRAIN ON THE HEART OR OTHER INTERNAL ORGANS
- USE IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT. THE USE OF PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES IN CLUBS OR AT FESTIVALS CAN BE FRIGHTENING IF YOU BEGIN TRIPPING OR FALL INTO A K HOLE
- SEEK HELP IF NEEDED AND BE HONEST WITH EMERGENCY SERVICES ABOUT WHAT YOU THINK YOU'VE TAKEN

The Students' Union in no way condones the use of illegal drugs

If you are concerned about a substance that you or a friend have taken:

- DON'T TAKE ANY MORE
- DON'T TAKE OTHER DRUGS
- SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE

For information and support on drugs and alcohol visit **drugs.ie**
The HSE Drugs & Alcohol Helpline can be reached on **1800 459 459**

DRUGS.ie
Drug and Alcohol Information and Support



dif students' union

The response 2016 - 2017

Phase 1

- USI, HSE Social Inclusion, HSE Communications and Drugs.ie
- HSE: "We have a duty to reduce harm and protect young peoples' health"
- MDMA and ketamine 2016 'Do you know what you are taking?'
- Addressing trend: The strength of your drugs may be higher than you think
- MDMA: Start with 1/4 of a pill
- Ketamine: Use in trusted company
- Supported by Minister responsible for Drug Strategy

Phase 2

- Raising awareness on 2 specific NPS
- NPS:2014 Flash Euro barometer: Highest consumption- Ireland (22%)
- Hospital emergency presentations and acute drug toxicity in Europe (EMCDDA,2016)
- In line with 'Connecting for Life'
- If you have physical or mental health problems such as epilepsy, heart problems, asthma, depression, panic or anxiety attacks use is more risky

Do you know what you are taking?

The strength of your ecstasy pill may be higher than you think.

Ecstasy (MDMA):

It's safer not to use but if you do remember:

- Mixing drugs and alcohol can increase the risk of unwanted side effects
- Stay well hydrated by drinking water
- MDMA can make people sexually aroused. Always use a condom

Stay safe:

- Stay with trusted friends
- When buying always know your source
- Test dose a new batch Begin with a low dose 1/4 pill
- Some pills are cut with other drugs that take effect more slowly
- Wait at least two hours before using any more

Look after yourself:

- Eat properly
- Have regular sleep after sessions
- Wait 4 weeks between sessions
- Chewing gum can help jaw cramps

Ecstasy can cause physical and psychological unwanted side effects.

If you have physical or mental health problems such as epilepsy, heart problems, asthma, depression, panic or anxiety attacks use is more risky. You are advised not to use.

It's always safer not to use illegal drugs.



For more information
DRUGS.ie
Drug and Alcohol Information and Support

HSE Drug/Alcohol helpline
Freephone: 1800 459 459
9.30 - 5.30 Monday - Friday
Email support: helpline@hse.ie



Do you know what you are taking?

Look after yourself. Look out for your friends.

Ketamine (K):

It's safer not to use but if you do remember:

- Avoid alcohol and other drugs
- Mixing drugs and alcohol can increase the risk of unwanted side effects such as stomach cramps (K belly) and damage to the kidneys (K bladder)
- Stay well hydrated by drinking water

Stay safe:

- Stay with trusted friends
- Avoid risky situations
- Don't use in unfamiliar surroundings
- When buying always know your source
- Plan session in advance
- Test dose a new batch
- Begin with a low dose as effects depend on your own tolerance and weight
- Ketamine can be cut with other drugs that take effect more slowly
- Wait 60-90 minutes before using more

Look after yourself:

- Grind any crystals into a powder
- Always use your own straw
- Eat properly and drink plenty of water after a session
- Have regular sleep after sessions
- Wait 4 weeks between session

Ketamine can cause physical and psychological unwanted side effects.

If you have physical or mental health problems such as epilepsy, heart problems, asthma, depression, panic or anxiety attacks use is more risky. You are advised not to use.

It's always safer not to use illegal drugs.



For more information
DRUGS.ie
Drug and Alcohol Information and Support

HSE Drug/Alcohol helpline
Freephone: 1800 459 459
9.30 - 5.30 Monday - Friday
Email support: helpline@hse.ie





Name/tablet branding: Darth Vader (Black)
Tablet weight average: 534.1mg
 (Range 487.9mg to 574mg)
Number of pills analysed: 7
Dose range:

71-105mg

to

>140mg



Name/tablet branding: Darth Vader (Grey)
Tablet weight average: 434.5mg
 (Range 423.8mg to 441.8mg)
Number of pills analysed: 3
Dose range:

71-105mg

to

106-140mg

Do you know what you are taking?



Mephedrone (‘Meow Meow’/MCAT)

Mephedrone is a powerful stimulant and is part of a group of drugs (Cathinones) closely related to amphetamines.

It's safer not to use but if you do remember:

- Mixing drugs and alcohol can increase the risk of unwanted side effects
- Stay well hydrated by drinking water
- When buying always know your source
- Only carry what you are going to use that day

Stay safe:

- Stay with trusted friends
- Avoid risky situations
- Don't use in unfamiliar surroundings
- Plan your session in advance
- Test dose a new batch
- Begin with a low dose before taking your regular dose
- Wait until it takes effect
- Sometimes it can be cut with other drugs that take effect more slowly
- Wait at least 60-90 min before using any more

Look after yourself:

- Eat properly
- Have regular sleep after sessions
- Wait 4 weeks between sessions
- Do not inject
- If snorting, clean out nose after use and use clean straw - don't share with anyone else and alternate between nostrils
- A nasal douche of luke warm salt water can help minimise the damage done by snorting

Mephedrone can cause physical and psychological unwanted side effects.

If you have physical or mental health problems such as epilepsy, heart problems, asthma, depression, panic or anxiety attacks use is more risky. You are advised not to use.

It's always safer not to use illegal drugs.

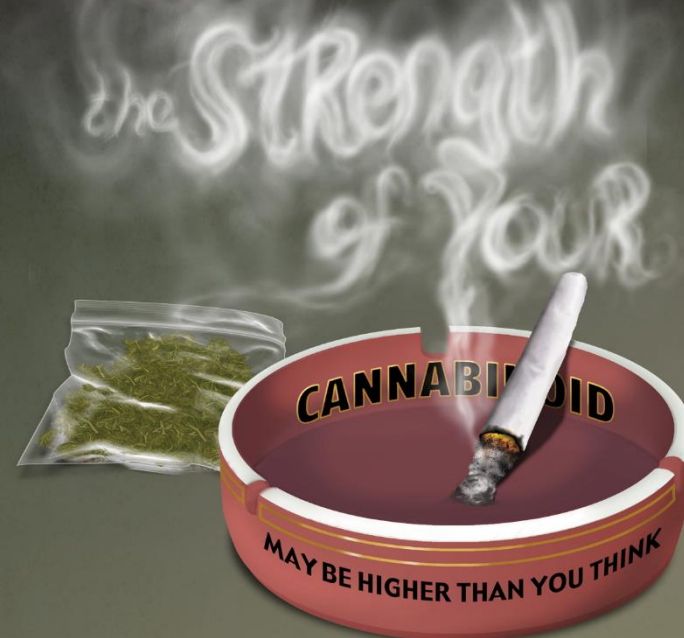


For more information
DRUGS.ie
Drug and Alcohol Information and Support

HSE Drug/Alcohol helpline
Freephone: 1800 459 459
9.30 - 5.30 Monday - Friday
Email support: helpline@hse.ie



Do you know what you are taking?



The strength of your cannabinoid may be higher than you think.

Synthetic Cannabinoids (‘Spice’):

The strength of your cannabinoid may be higher than you think

Synthetic cannabinoids can mimic the effects of cannabis and can cause extreme agitation and aggression

It's safer not to use but if you do remember:

- Avoid mixing with alcohol and other drugs as this increases the risk of unwanted side effects
- The psychoactive effects of smoking a pre-packaged synthetic cannabinoid mixture vary considerably
- Avoid blends containing a mix of chemicals as it's harder to regulate intake and easy to take too much
- Stay well hydrated by drinking non-alcoholic drinks
- When buying always know your source

Stay safe:

- Stay with trusted friends
- Avoid risky situations
- Don't use in unfamiliar surroundings
- Test dose a new batch. Begin with a small amount and wait at least 30 minutes for effect before re-dosing
- When smoking in a pipe use a small glass or steel pipe which give off less fumes.
- Don't use bongs as it is easy to take too much
- Be careful with using from the "bottom of the bag" as it can be potent
- Smoke in a joint using thinnest papers

Look after yourself:

- Eat properly
- Have regular sleep after sessions
- Wait 4 weeks between sessions

Cannabinoids can cause serious physical and psychological unwanted side effects.

If you have physical or mental health problems such as epilepsy, heart problems, asthma, depression, panic or anxiety attacks use is more risky. You are advised not to use.

It's always safer not to use illegal drugs.



For more information
DRUGS.ie
Drug and Alcohol Information and Support

HSE Drug/Alcohol helpline
Freephone: 1800 459 459
9.30 - 5.30 Monday - Friday
Email support: helpline@hse.ie

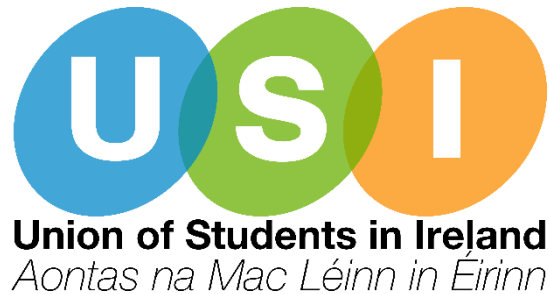


Key harm reduction messages in all campaigns

- It is always safest not to take unknown or illicit drugs...
- Always start with a test dose and wait
- You can never be fully sure of the contents or dose of illicit drugs
- Use in trusted company and in a safe environment
- Seek medical advice if you are concerned
- Valuable information for those who might be inexperienced:
cut a straw in half, position tooter high up nostril, don't drop ketamine,
wash nostrils, cocaethylene
- Provide harm reduction information but also raise awareness
of drugs.ie site and drug and alcohol helpline

Promotion: campus

- Promoted through student union welfare officers
- USI 34 colleges nationally
- College bars



Minister Catherine Byrne, T.D. and Cian Power, Union of Students in Ireland.

Promotion: online

Internet and other digital platforms such as smart phone apps have become more popular as a means of delivering health interventions (EMCDDA, 2016).

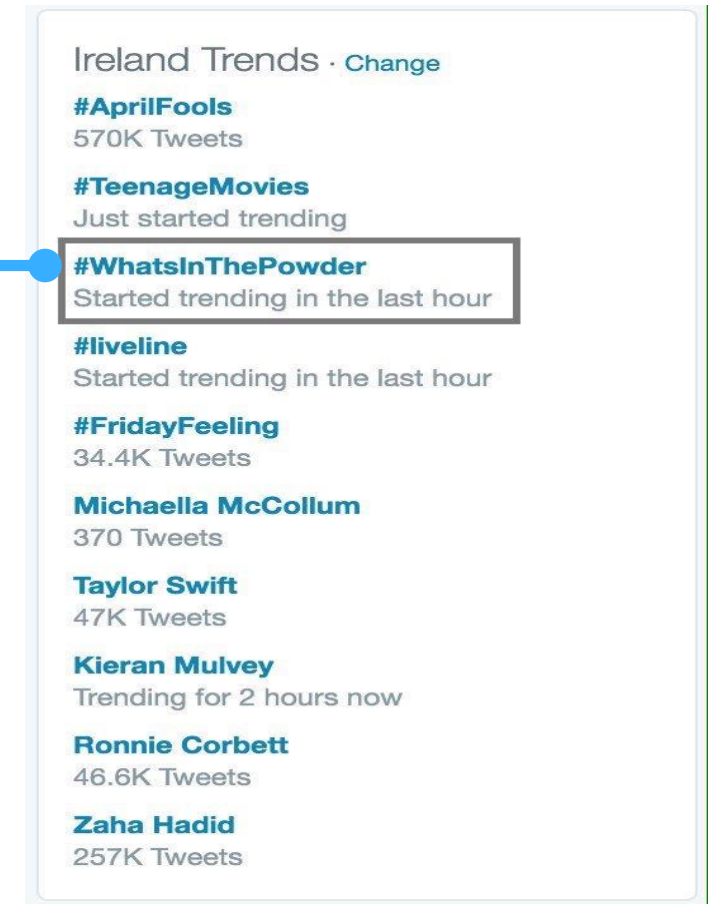
DRUGS.ie
Drug and Alcohol Information and Support

#Whatsinthepill

#Whatsinthepowder

#Whatareyoutaking

USI app 2016



Ireland Trends · [Change](#)

- #AprilFools**
570K Tweets
- #TeenageMovies**
Just started trending
- #WhatsInThePowder**
Started trending in the last hour
- #liveline**
Started trending in the last hour
- #FridayFeeling**
34.4K Tweets
- Michaela McCollum**
370 Tweets
- Taylor Swift**
47K Tweets
- Kieran Mulvey**
Trending for 2 hours now
- Ronnie Corbett**
46.6K Tweets
- Zaha Hadid**
257K Tweets

Media Coverage

THE IRISH TIMES

campus.ie
THE STUDENT HUB



Dublin
People

Independent.ie 

Irishhealth
.com



RTE

BROADSHEET 



Motley

EILE Magazine
Time for *another* view. Podcast

rabble

ut


Irish
Examiner

DUBLIN'S
Q102

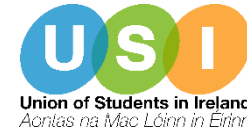
thejournal.ie
READ, SHARE AND SHAPE THE NEWS



newstalk
106-108FM

VICE

Partners



ncadsu



INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY TRALEE
STUDENTS' UNION



Profile



Evaluation and feedback

- Nightlife setting-college bars, pubs and clubs
- Trinity Ball 2016
- UCD 'How to survive UCD' booklet 2016
- Belong To Youth Service party packs for Pride Parade 2016
- Life Festival 2016
- Drug and Alcohol Task Forces, low threshold settings, sexual health services
- Feedback from welfare officers, students college medical staff and counsellors

Conclusion

- Successful collaboration
- Public health campaigns, with harm reduction focus
- Students involved with design, messaging & distribution
- Appealed to students
- Harm reduction delivered directly to the target audience