

Community-wide alcohol and other drug intervention with Norfolk Island

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Introduction: The Norfolk Island Community voiced concerns about alcohol and drug (AoD) use and related harms, raising the opportunity to pilot the SUSTAIN approach to co-design.

Aims: To pilot a four-step co-design approach to estimate the extent of AoD use and related concerns on Norfolk Island, then design an Island-specific, best-evidence community-wide strategy to address these concerns.

Methods: The SUSTAIN co-design approach involved four steps: 1: Identify the evidence base. The research team reviewed published evaluations of community-wide responses to identify the evidence base. 2: Partner with local experts to localise and tailor strategies. A project management group was established, and local experts were identified. 3: Implement strategies into existing practice. An online survey, interviews and focus groups were organised to gain an understanding of local AoD related concerns, determine existing strategies to reduce these concerns, and to discuss potential strategies and evidence for their effectiveness. The survey was advertised throughout the Island to obtain data on four domains (demographics, health, AoD use, and related concerns). In-depth interviews were conducted with community members to prioritise their concerns, discuss ways that the concerns could be monitored, and what may or may not work to address these concerns. Focus groups with community members, professionals and young people were convened where survey and qualitative data and research evidence relating to effectiveness of community-wide AoD strategies were presented. Participant discussion of the data and research evidence was facilitated and potential components of community-wide strategies to reduce AoD use and harms were prioritised. 4: Measure impact with sustainable co-designed outcomes. Routinely collected AoD data sources low resource opportunities to monitor AoD use at a community level were identified.

Results: The SUSTAIN co-design approach produced a pragmatic implementation and evaluation plan. The project management group was heavily involved in the co-design process. Considerations regarding difficulties with recruiting community participation, requirements for survey questions, and the importance of a mixed methods design will be discussed. The process of identifying and demonstrating research evidence was resource intensive and provided insight for future community co-design efforts.

Implications: Working with the community is crucial to ensure AoD strategies: address local priorities; are acceptable to those intended to deliver and receive them; are integrated into existing services and processes to promote enduring change.

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