

University of Melbourne Student Union
Meeting of the Harm Reduction Working Group
Minutes
Meeting 1
2:00pm, 4th of April 2017
Location: OB Space, Level 1, Union House

Meeting opened at 2:07pm

1. Procedural Matters

1.1 Acknowledgement of Indigenous Owners

So acknowledged

1.2 Welcome

Gulsara welcomed everyone to the first meeting. At the initial preliminary meeting, a timeline was put together. This meeting is about getting the specifics hammered out, and the next meeting will be to clarify the proposal.

1.3 Attendance

Fernanda Trecnti, Sally Meikle, Gulliver Mclean, Yen zhi Ng (Monash SSDP Chapter), David Raphael, Stephanie Tzanetis (DanceWize), Nicholas Kent, Gulsara Kaplun (UMSU Clubs & Societies Officer), Penny Hill (SSDP Australia, On Skype), Yasmine Luu (UMSU General Secretary), Yan Zhuang (UMSU President)

1.4 Membership

Membership is flexible for all students, as well as anyone interested in being apart of the conversation in a respectful manner.

2. Correspondence

Nil

3. Items for Discussion

3.1 Working group Terms of Reference

Gulsara showed the written Terms of Reference to the group, these were initially written by Yasmine, modeled after a standard Terms of Reference that she uses in her working groups at UMSU. Stephanie

asked if the membership was inflexible and should external stakeholders should be added to the group to the membership list. Gulsara pointed out that the Terms of Reference only point out that these people are strongly encouraged. Gulsara moved to accept the Terms of Reference and the group all agreed to it.

3.2 Working group goals

This working group was established under Students' Council's endorsement. The goals of this working group should reflect the educational and activist side as well as tackling the procedure of drug testing kit distribution.

3.3 Discussion over proposal

3.3.1 Harm Reduction Principles

Gulsara talked about Harm Reduction vs. Harm Minimisation, and how this should be outlined heavily in the principles section of the proposal. We need a clear set of Harm Reduction Principles for UMSU and University of Melbourne. Yasmine spoke that she was researching them to put in the document, but unfortunately couldn't find a clear list of defining principles for this movement. Different organisations seem to have different opinions on what is Harm Reduction.

Stephanie said that Harm Reduction Victoria can provide reference to documents for this section. As a general rule, we should look at the WHO and not OEDC.

Stephanie asked if UMSU did a parliamentary enquiry, UMSU couldn't due to inquorate meetings. But SSDP did. This submission should stay consistent with policy.

After travelling in the USA, Nick has uncovered some interesting information from the Universities there. This info can provide some loose policy context.

Penny says there might be some documents on the goings on at the University of Newcastle.

Gulsara asked what is best practice to ask the government to rally for. What is the high level reform that we're asking for? Should we reference the Portuguese model? What exactly is the end goal?

Nick said that this conversation is basically an existential question, and what are we aiming for isn't entirely paved.

Penny said it was important to call for University's to do testing with their equipment in labs.

Stephanie said that there are potentially 2 helpful sources, they are; EMCDDA, which have a best practice for drug checking guide, as well as MAPS which has done work in lobbying, which provides the commentary on the limitations of research. This information is from Burkley.

Gulsara said a research focus is good, and that we'll look at these organisations to come up with some context.

3.3.2 Examples from other University's or Organisations

This proposal will provide context with examples from other Universities. The University of Newcastle should have some information.

David said he has a detailed pdf that he can circulate.

Gulsara said if anyone had any documents, if they could send it to Yasmine.

3.3.3 Cleanup of Procedure

Nick said he walked into Off Ya Tree, and they don't sell kits anymore. Nick said they've come up with a new idea.

Gulliver says there is a local community health centre (Co-Health, Carlton), it is already doing needle exchanges, and drug and alcohol counseling.

Stephanie says it's a primary health care network, and they were going to be the supervised safe injecting spaces initially, but when that plan was shot down, they became a 'one stop shop' for drug and alcohol related services. They would be

awesome to approach to do this as they are in the area of the University of Melbourne.

Gulliver says there are multiple locations though. Stephanie says she can do a warm referral to Yasmine.

Nick said an early warning system, like in the Netherlands, where an organization would release information on when a bad batch has come out is important to implement. This is where Monica Barrett would come in. This would mean a data collection process would be made public. Stephanie says DIMMS is used in the Netherlands. This program triangulates more than one source. Using police seized samples, and amnesty bins. In the UK they test sewerage. Penny says this has been done here as well. Nick says it's important to have data collection and to survey pill testing reports. Gulsara asks if there can be civilian liaison with Victoria Police to get triangulation on drugs in Victoria. Nick says that would be against legislation though. Gulsara said that it would be positive information, so why wouldn't the police want to work with us if it saved people.

Yasmine asked if they could talk about the procedure in more depth and work it out step by step.

1. Info session, which would be a monthly seminar and maybe every 2 weeks
2. Only flash your student card, no identity taking
3. Session would be worked through with Dancewise and Welfare
4. Get a coupon at the end of the session (Like a coffee card), and get it stamped
5. How many times can you access the service (4 times a month – every weekend)

Question arised over this process. Fernanda asked whether or not you get a new coupon or do you need to attend a new information session? This was quickly rectified to say, if you've received a coupon in the passed, you're able to get a new coupon automatically. Gulsara suggested colour coded coupons to know how many coupons someone is on.

Stephanie interjected that Harm Reducation Victoria's headquarters could also be a pick up zone too.

Yasmine asked if there was any literature on how often people use kits and Stephanie said it was difficult to collect information on frequency of kit use. Fernanda said it would be stigmatizing to have follow up sessions to receive new coupons. Yasmine worried that there are only limited union funds, and that this process will be difficult if there is now follow up. Stephanie spoke about what happens currently in other places, where talking is up to their own discretion. If a regular user comes in, they will generally help themselves, but if anyone has questions, that's the time where more engagement can be had.

It was decided that a student can receive 4 free packs with a coupon, which equals 8 kits every month.

Stephanie suggested a survey component for those that are consistent users. This survey can be included in the pack, and when the student wants a new coupon they are strongly encouraged to give in the survey. Yasmine said that the survey questions should be put into the appendix of this proposal.

It was requested that Dee establish a memorandum of understanding with the external providers we may be working with.

It is to be noted that none of these plans are confirmed as of yet. Penny and Stephanie will look into the external providers.

4. Other Business

The action points established are:

- David to send the pdf of information he has to Yasmine to circulate to the rest of the group
- Anyone else to send information they have on other organisations' policies or procedures.
- Potentially ask USA based programs to submit what they do to this proposal
- Stephanie to start a dialogue with Yasmine and Gulsara to refer onto Co-Health.
- SSDP to send in Survey questions for the appendix of this proposal
- Yasmine to write up draft of procedure
- Stephanie and Penny to investigate external providers
- SSDP to decide on what the Harm Reduction principles to be

5. Next Meeting

11th of April at 2PM

Meeting closed at 2:59pm