

Resourcing Students to Manage Challenges Using a Bystander Education Programme

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Aim

This paper examines the use of a bystander education and training programme as a key resource to enable students to manage their challenges in a better way



Context

- Concern regarding a lack of coping skills to manage challenges
- Impacting student engagement and progression
- Need for increased awareness & training to address challenges
- Collaboration: Students Union / Student Services / Chaplaincy
- Bystander Model - Education and training programme



Kitty Genovese



Led to Bystander Intervention Model



Methods

- Qualitative approach
 - Literature review
 - Focus Groups
 - Staff & Students
 - External voluntary and statutory groups
 - Pilot programme - 56 student participants
- Data collection
 - Pre and Post-evaluation exercise
 - Online questionnaires
- Thematic Analysis (TA)



Findings

The Big Issues

- Mental Health Issues
- Suicide
- Substance use
- Relationships and sexuality
- Academic challenges



Findings

- Underdeveloped coping skills
 - Deficit of awareness / insight
 - Dearth of knowledge / confidence in managing challenges

- Consequences
 - Personal lives
 - Student engagement
 - Progression in the University



The University's Reponse

- Bespoke Model of the Bystander Education Programme
- A series of educational and training sessions
 - Mental Health
 - Addiction
 - Intervention Skills
 - Suicide Prevention
 - Sexual Consent





Promoting Health and Wellbeing in NUI Galway



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Programme Objectives

- Develop insight about challenging issues
- Knowledge and confidence to address the issue
- Increase wellbeing
- Improve engagement and progression of students
- Increase motivation to help fellow students
- Competence to respond - intervene safely or refer
- Expand a culture of support in the University community



Seas Suas – Programme Content

- Training Sessions
 - Mental Health
 - SafeTalk - Suicide Prevention Training
 - Drug and Alcohol Interventions
 - Relationships
 - Online Wellbeing - Internet Safety & Cyberbullying
- 4 Training Sessions / Additional
- Reflective Journal
- Accreditation – ALIVE Presidential Certificate



Trainers / Partners

- School of Psychology - NUI Galway
- Mental Health Ireland
- Western Region Drug and Alcohol Task Force
- Suicide Prevention Office, HSE
- An Garda Síochána
- Galway Waterways Patrol



Results

Increased

- Awareness
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Confident and willing to respond
- Resourced



Development of Seas Suas

- 2015: Pilot programme: 56 students
- 2015-16: Year One: 130 students
- 2016-17: Year Two: 180 students
- 2017-18: Year Three: 250 students



An Example Entry in a Student's Reflective Journal

- 1. Context:** My friend drowned last year. He was my housemate and the rest of us didn't talk about it much.
- 2. Observation:** My other housemate began to stay in the house all the time without hardly going home and avoiding contact with the rest of us.
- 3. Intervention:** After partaking in Seas Suas I finally realised I had to say something...I spoke about our deceased friend and how it affected me. I asked how he felt and empathised with him as he described how upset he was...I reassured him, gave him a hug and suggested we get help.
- 4. Learning:** I learned that we are given signs which we often ignore ... Ignoring these signs could lead to more problems. My friend was feeling depressed meaning that there was a risk I'd lose another friend. We should always respond to the signs we see ...



Participants Later Engaged in:

Exam Support



**New Student
Orientation**



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Conclusion

Bystander programme provides a framework to:

- Increase awareness
- Reflect on personal and peer experience
- Skill development for managing challenges
- Safe intervention
- Student engagement
- Partnerships



Questions and Thank You



SEAS ^{Stand Up} SUAS
You Can Make a Difference



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