

SPEAKEASY WORKS...

Case Study: Speakeasy (taken from Teenage Pregnancy: Accelerating the Strategy to 2010)

What it is and what it does

Speakeasy offers a non-threatening group based opportunity for parents to learn together and acquire the confidence and skills they need to talk to their children about sex and sexuality.

Aims

Speakeasy has 4 broad aims:

- To increase parents' factual knowledge around sex and sexual health;
- To increase parents' confidence and communication skills with their children;
- To provide a step towards further learning and personal development for excluded groups of parents;
- To enable health and educational professionals to give higher priority to work with parents and carers, with the backing of accredited Speakeasy training so that large numbers of parents throughout England will have access to a Speakeasy course.

How it works

Recruitment takes place through established parent centres in partnership with local staff who will often help facilitate on the courses. The reach of Speakeasy has been greatly increased as a result of the accredited training offered to parenting professionals. This enables the work to become embedded in local Teenage Pregnancy strategies, Sure Start Children's Centres, Healthy Schools and Extended Schools and other health promotion work.

Backed up by fpa's training resources and expertise, the course offers a flexible and relaxed way for parents and carers to gain greater confidence in an area that can cause embarrassment and awkwardness for them. The emphasis is on making the courses as accessible as possible for those who will benefit.

Following initial training from fpa, groups of Speakeasy 'competent' staff continue to deliver courses for parents and to train more staff from a variety of backgrounds, with the aim of delivering the programme through a wide range of local community and school based parenting support initiatives, including Sure Start.

Speakeasy

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Evaluation

The project was externally evaluated in September 2004 and June 2006. The evaluation found that the Speakeasy programme has enabled large numbers of parents and carers to talk with more confidence about sex and relationships with their children. It is estimated that there have been 12,000 direct (parents and children) and 20,000 wider beneficiaries such as extended family members (including children) and other social contacts the direct beneficiaries have in the community.

The positive outcomes include increased knowledge on topics such as contraception, STIs and puberty changes. These have been sustained for 2 years and more following the course. fpa has cascaded the model by training staff from health and community backgrounds to deliver the programme in parent settings. Trained parenting professionals report a greater priority being given to sex and relationships education in their work settings. Parent peer educators and Parent facilitators have furthered the work through local networks.

The Cornwall Healthy Schools Programme in partnership with the Teenage Pregnancy Coordinator and the School SRE Advisor has brought Speakeasy to Cornwall as part of our programme of support for schools engaging with parents and carers within the Healthy Schools Programme...

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