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Doncaster College 'Hub': Evaluating the drop-in sexual health service

The sexual health 'drop-in' clinic, based in Doncaster College 'Hub', opened its doors in January 2006 with the intention of providing access to sexual health services for 3000 young people. The purpose is to provide a conveniently located service which will enable students, who are registered at the college, to access a comprehensive youth friendly service.

By raising awareness of sexual health issues and providing a local service the intention is to help reduce the numbers of unintended conceptions and sexually transmitted infections. A professionally trained sexual health nurse, who will discuss sensitive issues confidentially with individuals, will help young people to develop a positive and responsible attitude to sex and relationships.

Monitoring progress

In order to monitor progress I evaluated the service in its early stages of existence and provided this information in a written report to the key stakeholders.

To determine its effectiveness so far it is my intention to employ three elements of assessment to evaluate the service: -

- ~ Review numbers of attendees
- ~ Obtain opinions of service users
- ~ Consult further with the student population of Doncaster College

Methods

Collating the numbers, ages and genders of those who had used the clinic was a simple process, as accurate records had been maintained from the first day of opening.

Results were encouraging as 55 students had used the service, all from the 16-18 and 19+ age groups, and a slight bias was observed in favour of females to males.

None of the male-dominated courses had received any sexual health education from the outreach team during the academic year. Plans are in place to address this during 2008, with personal and professional development sessions planned into the timetable for a mutually convenient time. This will enable equity in provision of sex and relationship lessons for all courses.

Although 'Your opinion counts' forms have been distributed to students who have used the clinic, currently no responses have yet been received. I will continue with this practice and encourage responses.

When conducting the initial consultation exercise with students at the college, time was very limited. In addition to this, student motivation to complete questionnaires or attend focus groups was questionable. In total, 45 students were approached.

The time scale to complete this service evaluation was very limited. It was also at the time in the academic timetable when students were taking exams so any additional distraction was unwelcome.

The survey style interview/questionnaire approach proved to be acceptable and effective on previous occasions. I therefore decided to use this design again.

Students were contacted in the cafeteria during their break times and told about the survey. This successful method had been used in the previous needs assessment

exercise. This approach also avoided placing additional pressure on the participants.

What do I want to know?

After consulting with 'Doncaster Medical Audit Advisory Group' I developed relevant questions, which would provide unambiguous replies enabling effective analysis.

Results

1. Are you aware that there is a sexual health clinic in the college?
YES - 13 BOYS 8 GIRLS NO - 8 BOYS 12 GIRLS
2. Do you know where the clinic is situated within the college?
YES - 5 GIRLS NO - 15 BOYS 15 GIRLS
3. How did you find out about the clinic?
12 - TV SCREENS 9 - POSTERS 8 - OPEN DAY
8 - LECTURER IN CLASS 4 - FRIENDS 3 - STUDENT MAGAZINE
4. Have you attended the clinic?
No - 21 BOYS 19 GIRLS No yet - 1 BOY
5. If you have not used the clinic can you give a reason why?
20 - NO REASON / NO BARRIER 5 - PREFER TO USE GP
5 - DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT IT 4 - HAVE NO NEED TO USE SERVICE
3 - CONCERNS OVER CONFIDENTIALITY 1 - EMBARRASSMENT
6. Do you know of any friends who have used the service?
No - 15 BOYS 23 GIRLS

Discussion

The major barrier was and remained - motivating the students to participate in consultation, which required formal structure, or written response.

To continue and develop the service it is essential to include service users opinions and recommendations. This evaluation has been based on the responses to the survey style questionnaire and analysis of numbers of students who have used the service and the nature of the service requested and provided. Unfortunately no written responses, from the student 'Your Opinions Count' forms, were received although

students did take several forms away with the intention of providing anonymously recorded opinions of the effectiveness of the service received.

This evaluation has been problematic to facilitate, as was the initial needs assessment consultation, reflected upon in the written account of learning. A total of 45 students were approached to answer the survey questions, all were happy to participate. This number can only be viewed as a snapshot of opinions and not represent the views of the whole student population.

I realise more time to approach a larger number would increase the validity of the the responses. In addition, alternative ways to attract student participation in the evaluation process need to be considered. Results show that TV screens were the most popular method of promoting the service and a number of different methods e.g. posters, open day and via Lecturers were also useful. Further marketing is paramount to promote the service to new and existing students. Responses have also revealed that few barriers exist to prevent use of the clinic.

Analysis of the numbers of clients who actually used the service revealed that 55 students (40 females and 15 males) accessed the clinic between January and April 2007. The services provided were:-

- Contraception pills supplied - 15 Emergency contraception - 1
- Treatment for STI - 2 Condom supply - 55
- Pregnancy testing - 10
- Treatment for STI - 2
- Sexually transmitted infection screening - 4
- Advice about sex and relationships - 40

Conclusions

An excellent opportunity now exists to build upon initial, limited but encouraging success. The PCT and Doncaster College staffs have given their support to ensure this project is successful in providing a vitally important service for the young people attending the college.