Health Skills life improvement courses: initial report

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Health Skills
Life Improvement Courses

INITIAL REPORT

Sallie Newell, Lucille Moran & Rob Sanson-Fisher

July 1995 - June 1996
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**Executive Summary**

**About Health Skills Participants**
- 231 people attended Health Skills courses during the 1995/96 financial year.
- 28% of participants were community members and 72% were workplace participants.
- QUIT was the most popular course, with a total of 117 participants.

**About Health Skills**
- A total of 27 Health Skills courses were conducted during the 1995/96 financial year.
- The majority of courses conducted were QUIT courses: 17 in total.
- A total of $17,555 was raised from course fees during the 1995/96 financial year: this represents an average revenue of $76 per participant.
- Course fees have been restructured to meet the aim of raising $100 per participant during the 1996/97 financial year.
- Running Health Skills cost a total of $47,242 during the 1995/96 financial year.

**Quality Assurance**
- Over 80% of course participants reported a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the Health Skills course they attended.
- 100% of participants believed the Health Skills course they attended represented good value for money.

**Promoting Health Skills**
- A total of $994 was spent on newspaper advertising during the 1995/96 financial year.
- A total of $2,620 was spent on radio advertising during the 1995/96 financial year.
- Radio advertising accounted for 35% and newspaper advertising accounted for 25% of course enquiries from the community.
- The promotional materials aimed at corporate customers have been redesigned and will be circulated during the next quarter.
Goals Summary

- To have at least 350 participants during the 1996/97 financial year.
- To routinely collect basic demographic information about people attending Health Skills courses: this information will be summarised in future Quarterly Reports.
- To routinely record the number of sessions attended by people enrolling in Health Skills courses: this information will be summarised in future Quarterly Reports.
- To develop a brief survey instrument which can be added to the end of community surveys conducted by the HCHA.
- To conduct a community survey by December 1996.
- To offer at least two courses to the community each month.
- To offer at least one course to workplaces every two months.
- Course venues to include at least 3 hospitals and 3 community health centres by June 1997.
- Course venues to be chosen so that participants travel a maximum of 30 minutes.
- To raise at least $35,000 per annum from course fees during the 1996/97 financial year.
- To raise an average of $100 per participant during the 1996/97 financial year.
- To reduce the total costs by 10%, to $42,500 per annum during the 1996/97 financial year.
- To achieve a total cost of no more than $120 per participant during the 1996/97 financial year.
- For all participants to complete an evaluation survey on the completion of their course.
- For at least 90% of participants to report high levels of satisfaction with the courses.
- To routinely collect information indicating whether participants achieved their goals - this information will be included in the routine evaluation survey.
- To conduct 4 electronic media campaigns by June 1997.
- To conduct 6 print media campaigns by June 1997.
- To liaise with local general practitioners about referring patients to Health Skills.
- To liaise with Health Link operators about referring patients to Health Skills.
- To distribute the new promotional materials to workplaces in the Hunter.
- To recruit at least 1 workplace per month during the 1996/97 financial year.
- To provide all participating workplaces with summary reports at the end of each course.
Overview

What is Health Skills?

- Health Skills is a community health education program. It is designed to increase people’s health skills, knowledge and awareness.
- Educators are trained by staff at the Hunter Centre for Health Advancement and provided with a set of materials, which form the basis of each course.
- The Centre organises advertising for the courses throughout the local community.
- The Centre also actively offers the courses to Hunter workplaces.
- When a sufficient group of people, or a workplace, express interest in a course, one of the trained educators then organises an appropriate venue and runs the course, for small groups.

What Courses are Included in Health Skills?

The current Health Skills courses offered are:

- QUIT Smoking.
- Fighting Fat Fighting Fit (FFFF).
- Stress Management.
- Women’s Health.
- Drug Awareness for Parents.

What are the Advantages of Health Skills?

- It offers affordable, evidence-based educational programs to the community: concessions for low income participants are available for all Health Skills courses.
- It offers a revenue-raising opportunity for the Hunter Area Health Service.
- The courses are provided in locations convenient to potential participants.
- It represents a good way to raise the profile of the Hunter Area Health Service and of the Hunter Centre for Health Advancement among the community.
About Health Skills Participants

How many people attended Health Skills courses in this financial year?

- A total of 231 people attended Health Skills courses during the 1995/96 financial year.
- 65 (28%) participants were members of the community and 166 (72%) participants attended workplace courses. The graph below shows the proportion of community-based and workplace-based participants for each course.
- The QUIT smoking course was the most popular course during this financial year, with a total of 117 participants.
- No Women’s Health or Drug Awareness course were conducted during this financial year.
- It should be noted that Gutbusters is no longer managed by the Centre.

Number of Participants for Each Course

GOAL - participation rates

- To have at least 350 participants during the 1996/97 financial year.
**Who Attended the Health Skills Courses?**

- Demographic data about the people participating in Health Skills courses was not in a format suitable for collating during this financial year.

**GOAL - describing participants**

- To routinely collect basic demographic information about people attending Health Skills courses: this information will be summarised in future Quarterly Reports.

**What Proportion of Participants Completed Their Courses?**

- Data about the proportion of enrolled participants who actually completed their Health Skills courses was not in a format suitable for collating during this financial year.

**GOAL - course completion rates**

- To routinely record the number of sessions attended by people enrolling in Health Skills courses: this information will be summarised in future Quarterly Reports.
**About Health Skills**

**Are People Aware of Health Skills?**

- It is proposed to include questions in community surveys conducted by the HCHA to explore the level of awareness of the Health Skills program and the courses offered through it.
- It is proposed to collect this type of data at least once every 6 months.

**GOALS - community awareness**

- To develop a brief survey instrument which can be added to the end of community surveys conducted by the HCHA.
- To conduct a community survey by December 1996.

**How Often are Health Skills Courses Conducted?**

Health Skills courses are conducted when sufficient demand arises. During this financial year, we conducted a total of 27 courses:

- 17 QUIT courses.
- 6 Gutbusters courses.
- 3 Stress Management courses.
- 1 Fighting Fat Fighting Fit course.
- 0 Women’s Health courses.
- 0 Drug Awareness courses were conducted.

**GOALS - course frequency**

- To offer at least two courses to the community each month.
- To offer at least one course to workplaces every two months.
Where are Health Skills Courses Conducted?

- Community courses are conducted in a variety of venues throughout the Hunter, such as community centres, neighbourhood centres, schools and community health centres.

GOALS - course venues

- Course venues to include at least 3 hospitals and 3 community health centres by June 1997.
- Course venues to be chosen so that participants travel a maximum of 30 minutes.

How Much Revenue is Raised by Health Skills?

- Health Skills courses raised a total of $17,555 during this financial year.
- The course fees have recently been re-structured in an attempt to increase both participation rates and the total amount of revenue raised. This has involved raising fees for workplace participants.
- The table below shows the revised course fees, for both community and workplace participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Skills Course Fees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUIT Smoking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting Fat, Fighting Fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Awareness for Parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The lower rate is a concessional rate and is available for Health Care Card holders and pensioners.

# The workplace fees are on a sliding scale depending on the number of participants - the more participants, the lower the cost per participant.

GOALS - raising revenue

- To raise at least $35,000 per annum from course fees during the 1996/97 financial year.
- To raise an average of $100 per participant during the 1996/97 financial year.
How Much Does Health Skills Cost to Run?

• During the 1995/96 financial year, a total of $47,242 was spent on running Health Skills: this represents a cost of $204.51 per participant.
• The table below shows how these costs were incurred.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wages</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Skills Co-ordinator</td>
<td>27,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educators</td>
<td>5,794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administration and Materials</strong></td>
<td>10,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes venue hiring fees, development and production of course materials and basic administration fees.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Miscellaneous Items</strong></td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes mailing costs, stationery, laminating and reply paid account.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advertising</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>2,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL COSTS</strong></td>
<td>$47,242</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quality Assurance

How Satisfied Are Participants with Health Skills Courses?

- Since May 1996, all participants have been asked to complete brief evaluation forms at the end of their courses. To date, data is available for participants having completed 3 QUIT courses (n = 13) and 1 FFFF course (n = 5).
- The graph below shows the proportion of participants reporting a high level of satisfaction with various aspects of the courses at a 3 month follow-up survey.

Do Health Skills Participants Achieve Their Goals

- Data about the proportion of participants achieving their goals from Health Skills courses was not collected during this financial year.

GOALS - course acceptability and effectiveness

- For all participants to complete an evaluation survey on the completion of their course.
- For at least 90% of participants to report high levels of satisfaction with the courses.
- To routinely collect information indicating whether participants achieved their goals - this information will be included in the routine evaluation survey.
Promoting Health Skills - to the Community

How is Health Skills Advertised to the Community?

• Health Skills is advertised in 3 local newspapers - The Newcastle Herald, The Star and The Post. A total of $994 was spent on newspaper advertising during this financial year. A number of press releases were also provided to these newspapers during the year.
• Health Skills is also advertised on a local radio station (2KO). A total of $2,620 was spent on radio advertising during this financial year.
• Other methods of promoting Health Skills include leaving pamphlets in local doctors’ surgeries, neighbourhood and community health centres.

How Effective Are the Different Methods of Advertising Health Skills?

• People calling for information about Health Skills courses are routinely asked where they heard about Health Skills.
• The table below summarises the proportion of enquiries generated by each method since January - more detailed analyses, about the cost per enquiry and the cost per participant, will be conducted for subsequent reports.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Referral</th>
<th>Number of Enquiries</th>
<th>% of Total Enquiries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2KO</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Post</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Newcastle Herald</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word of Mouth</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Star</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Risk Survey - Tocal Show</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown Source</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How Can We Increase Community Participation?

- During the next quarter, a survey will be conducted among people who have recently expressed interest in one of the Health Skills course but have not actually enrolled. The aim of this survey is to gain an understanding of the barriers to enrolment.
- Attempts will be made to address the barriers raised during the above survey.
- The costs of the courses to community members have now been reduced. This loss of revenue is expected to be offset by the increase in the cost of courses for workplaces.
- Further rounds of advertising will be conducted in both print and electronic media.
- General practitioners will be approached and given information about the Health Skills courses and asked to refer any patients they have who could benefit from such lifestyle changes.
- Information will be given to Health Link operators, enabling them to refer any appropriate enquiries to Health Skills.

**GOALS - recruiting community-based participants**

- To conduct 4 electronic media campaigns by June 1997.
- To conduct 6 print media campaigns by June 1997.
- To liaise with local general practitioners about referring patients to Health Skills.
- To liaise with Health Link operators about referring patients to Health Skills.
Promoting Health Skills - to Workplaces

How is Health Skills Advertised to Workplaces?

- The Health Skills coordinator, based at the Centre, will be distributing copies of the imminent, revised promotional materials to all workplaces who have previously conducted courses.
- The coordinator will also attempt to recruit a new workplace each month during the next financial year.

How Can We Increase Workplace Participation?

- New promotional materials are currently in preparation and will be distributed to workplaces during the July - September quarter. These materials stress the high level of satisfaction among previous participants and will incorporate data on each program’s effectiveness, when it becomes available.
- All workplaces conducting Health Skills courses will receive reports summarising the number of people attending the course, their level of satisfaction and the proportion of people achieving their goals from the course.

GOALS - recruiting workplace-based participants

- To distribute the new promotional materials to workplaces in the Hunter.
- To recruit at least 1 workplace per month during the 1996/97 financial year.
- To provide all participating workplaces with summary reports at the end of each course.