



RUSH Mentoring Program - Connecting youth and community

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Brief of RUSH Mentoring



- Why program was started
- RUSH Mentoring
- The Referral Process
- Community Volunteers
- Mentor Screening Process
- Retaining Mentors & keeping up morale
- Expected outcome
- RUSH Funding Model
- Observations during the visit

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What is “RUSH” ?



- RUSH = “Reducing yoUth Self Harm”
- a mentoring program mobilizes caring volunteer adults and qualified youth workers to make a valuable contribution back into the community by mentoring struggling young people.

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Why program was started: The Statistics



- Suicide rates have halved since 1998 – 17.1 in 100,00 young people to 8.3 in 100,000 young people.
- BUT: Suicide is still the leading cause of death for Youth in Australia.
- 1 in 4 young people aged 16-24 (26%) have a mental disorder in any given year
- Leading mental disease: Depression

Why program was started: The Statistics



- 23% of Australians aged 14-19 had used illicit drugs.
- 75% of adult mental & substance abuse use disorders begin in childhood or adolescences.
- In 2006, there were 51,375 divorces. 52% of these involved children & youth – leaving fewer positive role models in homes

RUSH Mentoring: A unique model



- RUSH mentoring is centred on the community, school and family working together – for the benefit of the young mentee and the wider community.
- Prevention rather than cure.
- Destructive to constructive life path.
- “At risk” youth, aged 12 -16
- Local high schools – welfare department.
- Meet once a week for 12 months (1-2 hrs a week)

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RUSH Mentoring: A unique model (cont'd)



- Outside of school hours – youth are at most risk.
- RUSH term activity e.g. Luna Park, Camp
 - Helps the mentor/ mentee relationship
 - Helps build RUSH Community
 - Social & Communication Skills for young people
 - Friendships formed
 - **“3F” - FOOD, FUN, FRIENDSHIP**

Definition : “At risk”



- Early adolescent students – aged 12 to 16
- Students attend local high school
- At risk of: suicide, homelessness, early school leaving, alcohol and drug abuse.
- Student may not be involved in such activities; but are showing early signs that they will participate in the future. E.g. truancy, behavioral troubles, social troubles at school, etc.,.

The referral process



- The triangular relationship of school – RUSH – student/family is critical to success of the program
- Identified by school teachers – referred to welfare teacher
- Welfare teacher – approaches students & parents
- Student completes student form
- Form sent to mentor co-ordinator
- Mentor co-ordinator pairs student up with community volunteer

Community Volunteers



- All volunteers are from the local community.
- Source volunteers through
 - volunteer drives in local churches
 - Media/marketing campaign in wider community

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Mentor Screening Process



- Potential Mentor registers interest
- Application Form
- Interview with coordinator
- Working with Children Check
- 3 Character References
- Ready to be paired

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Retaining Mentors & keeping up morale



- Term mentor meets – shout tea/coffee
- Term mentoring excellence award
- Christmas, birthday & special events: send out card
- Regular SMS contact
- Call once a fortnight/month from Mentor Coordinator

Expected outcome



- An increase in the resilience in young people who are at risk of harmful drug-use, leaving school early, homelessness and self-harm
- Reduced truancy rates
- Increased self-esteem
- Positive change in class-room behavior
- Development in stronger family and community relationships
- Youth are provided with the opportunity to develop and improved skills in leadership and communication

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RUSH Funding Model



- Tax deductible status
- Host 2 annual fund-raisers
 - Annual auction: for wider community
 - Annual business breakfast
- Regular Donators – commit to weekly, fortnightly or monthly donations
- Philanthropic & Corporate grants
- Occasional government grants

Observations during the visit



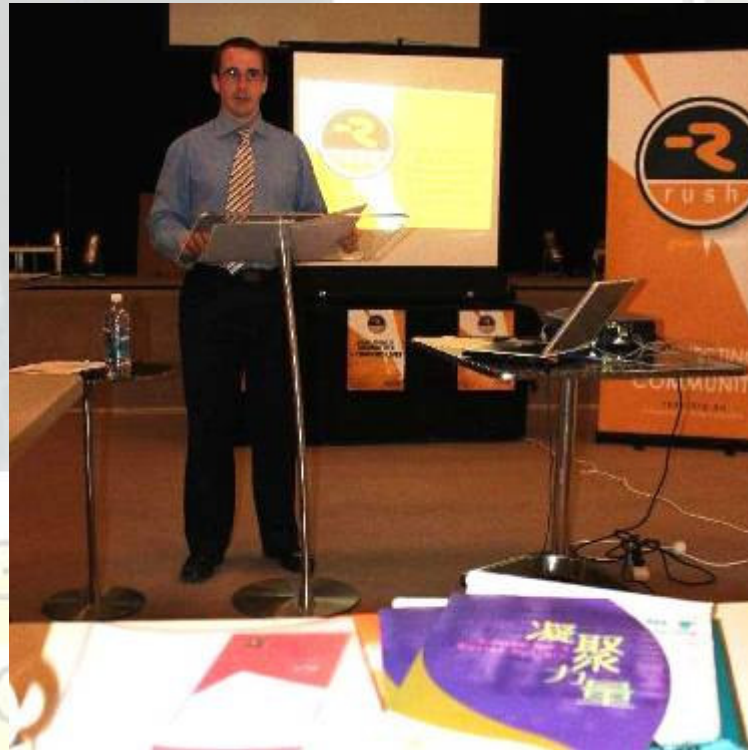
- Strong culture of volunteerism in Australia
- Clear and screening mechanism of applicants
- Comprehensive training materials & package
- Reasonable staff-to-case ratio (3 staff vs < 60 cases) to good mentorship development
- Mentoring as a means for children regardless of economic status
- Facilitation of mentoring network among different regions

Snapshot



- Mr. Rick Prosser, the regional director of RUSH Mentoring services, introduced the mission and the underlying values of the services during the visit.

Snapshot



- Mr. Matt Schultz, the mentor co-ordinator, introduced the content and the operation of RUSH mentoring program during the visit.



Snapshot



- The mentor of RUSH Mentoring shared her mentoring experience with delegation members.

Snapshot



- Training materials and information for volunteer mentor of RUSH Mentoring program

Snapshot



- The delegation members exchange their views with the staff of RUSH and the executive of the Hunter Youth Mentor Collaborative (HYMC)

Snapshot



- The delegation members presented the souvenirs to the representative of RUSH mentoring services and the representative of Hunter Youth Mentor Collaborative (HYMC)