

ANNEX

1

WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THIS MANUAL?

Help us improve!

Please fill out this form and send it to us. Your comments will help us improve this manual. We are looking for new ideas for activities and materials to include in a revision of this manual.

Name

Profession/position

Institution

Address

Country

Telephone

Fax

Email

Are you a volunteer?

Please base your responses to the following questions on your experiences with this manual. Please be as honest as possible.

Overall, how helpful was this manual in assisting you to plan materials and/or activities with young people?

none very little somewhat very much extremely

Overall, how helpful was this workbook series in assisting you to implement materials and/or activities with young people?

none very little somewhat very much extremely

Is there anything missing from the manual that you think should be included?

What were the good aspects of the manual?

What was not as good?

The manual was:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Clear to understand					
Easy to use					
Useful for our local needs					
Covered all relevant information we needed					
Terminology was easy to understand					
Writing style was clear					

Would you recommend this manual to a colleague?

no

yes

Why or why not?

Which material/activity did you produce with the help of this manual?
(Type/Date/Purpose/Target group/Distribution)

Where did you get the funds to produce your material?

WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THIS MANUAL?

Did the costs match the indications of the manual (e.g., were the activities indicated as inexpensive, really inexpensive)?

What difficulties did you find when producing your material?

How did you get young people involved?

To whom would you recommend this manual?

Are you planning to distribute the materials you produced to other communities/groups? Which ones? How?

Would you recommend this manual to a colleague?

Thank you for your cooperation. We would appreciate receiving a copy of each of your materials, regardless of whether or not you produced them with the help of this manual.

Please send us this form by fax or mail to: Substance Abuse Department
World Health Organization
20 Avenue Appia
1211 Geneva 27 - Switzerland
Fax: (41 22) 791 48 51

This same address can be used to send your materials.

E-mail your comments and questions to PSA@WHO.CH.

ANNEX

2

FOCUS GROUP METHOD

The focus group is a method for collecting data on a specific group or population. It is useful for:

- assessing a situation,
- determining the needs and attitudes of that population,
- planning appropriate interventions and responses. It is easy to organize and can provide quick and relevant answers to specific questions.

A focus group consists of a small group of participants, preferably 6-10 people. It is coordinated by a facilitator who can propose open-ended questions on a chosen topic (like tobacco use, drug injection - see some suggestions below in relation to substance use). These discussions then can serve as the basis for developing a storyline on the specific topic that is appropriate for the target group (for example, adolescent users of psychoactive substances) or to deciding on a health message.

The storyline should include some of the problems and possible solutions raised by the group. It can then be used for the production of educational materials, using a variety of techniques, as described in the various sections of this guide.

Depending on the activity being planned (for example a TV commercial or a play), it will be necessary to hold a number of focus groups to obtain the desired information, sometimes using the same group of participants to discuss other issues on the same topic, and sometimes different groups of participants to discuss different views on the same topic.

Decide what you want to know

Before convening a focus group, the organization (for example, the school, community centre, nongovernmental organization, or health care facility) in association with the facilitator, must determine the nature and extent of the information that they require.

Lists should be prepared of the questions and issues that need to be addressed. The list will remind the facilitator during the discussion of all the aspects that need to be discussed.

At this point it is a good idea to consult with a few people from the target population you will be working with, whom you already know. Show them your plan and the list of questions, and ask them whether they think the questions are relevant and appropriate.

Identify the participants

Participation in the focus group discussion should be voluntary. One good way to get a mixture of participants to attend a focus group is to use a technique called “snowballing”. Ask two to three people whom you already know to introduce you to some of their friends. Then ask these new participants to introduce you to other children whom the first group does not know.

Depending on the objective of your activity and the issues you will be discussing, there should be separate focus groups for girls and boys.

The type of participant you select will determine many other aspects of the focus group. For example, the facilitator may need to be more active and to reduce the number of questions if the invited participants include regular substance users.

In order to attract individuals to attend the discussion, you could consider offering an incentive. For example, you could provide food during, or at the end of, the session. This may, or may not, be a good idea, depending on the group expectations and any future activities you are planning.

The facilitator

The facilitator should have some training and experience in group activities and also be familiar with the problems related to substance use, particularly as regards the target group or community with whom he or she is working. The facilitator must be familiar with the dialect or slang of the group.

It is also important that the members of the focus group feel that the facilitator cares about them and their problems. The main tasks of the facilitator are:

- to create an atmosphere of safety;
- to help the group focus its energy on the task by suggesting methods and procedures;
- to make sure all the members of the group have an opportunity to participate;
- to help participants present their ideas to the group;
- to protect members of the group from personal attacks, put-downs, and criticisms.

Depending on the activity you are planning and the characteristics of the group, you may consider having two facilitators if the group has eight or more participants.

Select a documenter

You need a documenter to record the discussion of the group. This person should always:

- ask the permission of the group to record the discussion, and any other information;
- record the discussion accurately (writing and/or recording, photographing, filming, etc.) and keep it confidential;
- take care not to influence the record with her or his own opinions;
- be familiar with the dialects and slang used by the group; and
- observe and record non-verbal information about the group discussion (for example, the emotional tone of the discussion, important hand gestures, unusual behaviour).

Confirm attendance and follow-up meetings

The facilitator should:

- keep in contact with the participants until the time comes when he or she can confirm their attendance;
- select an appropriate meeting place, date, time;
- arrange all the materials necessary for the discussion, including those specific for the creative workshop;
- inform the participants about the time and place of any follow-up meetings.

Conducting a focus group discussion

The facilitator should:

- arrive at the location ahead of time, check that everything is in order, including tape recorders, batteries, etc., as required;
- welcome the participants;
- introduce yourself (and others assisting you) and explain what you will be doing, and who is recording the proceedings (asking their permission to do so);
- arrange an introductory activity to help participants get to know each other and relax before they start discussing the actual topic; it could be a song, a prayer, or a brief game, including an opportunity for people to introduce themselves;
- start the discussion by stating the general purpose of the activity and the primary topic of the focus group;
- explain the procedure of the discussion;
- ask the group for questions, suggestions, and their expectations;
- begin the discussion with a general, open-ended question about the topic.

Facilitate the dialogue

The facilitator must pay attention to the process as well as the content of the discussion. The process includes issues such as:

- 1) who speaks and who does not,
- 2) what topics are avoided,
- 3) what issues upset the group,
- 4) whether the pace of the discussion is slow or quick, and
- 5) how the participants interact with the facilitator.

The facilitator should also:

- encourage participants to share as much information and as many insights as possible;
- try to maintain an atmosphere in which people take each other seriously, but humour is still welcome, and help to make it safe for people to share the feelings behind their opinions;
- show genuine interest in everything that is said, and comment on special contributions of members and on accomplishments of the group;
- deal politely with irrelevant information;
- encourage the expression of different viewpoints; the more important the decision, the more important it is to have all relevant facts, feelings, and opinions;
- take care not to judge responses nor make long comments;
- control over-talkative members and ask for comments from quiet ones;
- use different kinds of questions to increase participation and interest; search for all possible answers to a problem by changing the perspective of the discussion;
- keep the discussion focused on the subject;
- summarize the discussion at frequent intervals;
- try to hold the participants attention by, taking a break, stretching, switching seats, saying something humorous, or playing a brief game;

- postpone a scheduled break if the group is absorbed in its work;
- defuse personal arguments between members;
- keep the emotional atmosphere of the discussion at a level that can be tolerated by all the participants; if any of the members becomes too distressed, consider addressing his or her feelings immediately, or letting the whole group take a break;
- as the discussion continues, check that all the issues you listed have been properly covered.

Conclude the focus group discussion

Towards the end of the session, the facilitator should restate the objectives of the discussion, and try to pull together the main points made by the participants.

The facilitator should also:

- ask the participants whether the discussion has missed any important issues or questions;
- express sincere appreciation for the participants' attention, time, and contributions;
- inform the participants of subsequent activities, if any; and
- end the focus group discussion with a feeling of togetherness - sing a song, shake hands, or do a similar activity that affirms the group and puts a sense of closure to the time spent together.

List of issues and questions on substance use

This list may give you some ideas for questions you may use in a discussion on substance use. They are only suggestions and you may change them according to the theme you will be discussing with the group, the characteristics of the group, and what you know about substance use problems in the community the participants are from.

Normalization of substance use

- Is substance use a problem in your community? What are the problems of substance use?
- Is substance use a problem for you?
- What do the people in your community think of your substance use?
- What substances are legal to use and which substances are illicit to use? What is the most harmful substance?
- Where do you get your illicit substances from?
- How easy is it for you to get them?
- Do you just use certain substances depending on their availability?
- How much does the cost of substances influence the type and amount that you use? Has there been a change in the cost of those you use?
- Are substances easy to get on the streets? Is it easier there than elsewhere?
- Do you use the same substances as your friends? Do your friends encourage you to use substances? If so, why?
- Do you get hassled by the police, or others, because of your substance use?
- Do you think that you are influenced by advertising, sponsorship, or marketing of alcohol or tobacco?

Substance use and its effects

- What substances do you use? What is your favourite? You may prompt from the following list:
 - alcohol
 - tobacco
 - cannabis (e.g., marijuana, hashish resin/oil)
 - natural opioids (e.g. heroin, opium, morphine, codeine)
 - synthetic opioids (e.g. methadone, pethidine, omnopon)
 - cocaine (e.g. coca paste, cocaine salt, crack)

- amphetamine-like stimulants (e.g. methamphetamine, MDA, ice)
 - stimulants/hallucinogens (e.g. PCP, MDMA, bromo-DMA)
 - other stimulants (e.g. ephedrine, caffeine, methylphenidate)
 - hallucinogens (e.g. LSD, psilocybin, peyote, mescaline)
 - hypnotosedatives (e.g. barbiturates, benzodiazepines, methaqualone)
 - analgesics (e.g. paracetamol, aspirin)
 - antihistamines
 - major tranquilizers
 - antidepressants
 - volatile substances and aerosols (e.g. petrol, glue, benzene)
 - other (e.g. khat, kava, pitchuri, nutmeg, betel nut)
 - other prescription substances.
- How often do you use these substances?
 - What are the health and economic costs of smoking, drinking or other substance use?
 - How do you take them?
 - Why do you take them? Do you enjoy them?
 - Did you enjoy when you first tried them (including cigarettes and alcohol)?
 - Do people like you more when you are using substances?
 - With whom do you use these substances? Do you ever use substances alone? Do you share substances with others?
 - Where do you prefer to go to use substances?
 - How do the substances affect you? What do you find is good about taking substances? What do you find is bad about taking substances?
 - What effects does substance use have on your health?
 - What effect does substance use have on the way that you feel about yourself?
 - What does your family feel about your substance use?
 - How does your substance use affect your friendships?

- How does your substance use affect your study or work?
- Have you been in trouble with the police because of your substance use?
- Have you had to leave the place you were living in because of your substance use?
- Do you go without things such as food or clothes so that you can buy substances?
- Does substance use affect your sex life? Do you usually have sex when you use substances?
- Have you ever been in an accident after using substances?
- Have you ever been in fights during or after using substances?
- Do you feel guilty about using substances?
- Do you need help because of your substance use? Would you like help to do something about your substance use?
- Have you ever been treated for a substance use problem? What kind of problem was it, and what treatment did you receive? Who told you about it? How helpful was it?
- Do any of your friends have a substance use problem?
- Where would you go for help for a substance use problem? Are there enough places to go for help?
- Can a person with a substance use problem be helped or cured?
- How do you feel about people who sell substances?
- Do you sell, or have you sold, substances?
- Do you still use substances when you are sick? Do you have to use substances to stop you from feeling sick?

Risk behaviours

- What do you do for a risk?
- How do you show off to your friends?
- How do you prove yourself?
- What do you need to do to be accepted by your friends/peers?
- Do you get involved in fights?

- Do you use a knife, gun, or other weapons?
- Do you do risky things to earn money, food, clothes, shelter, etc.?
- Do you break the law for fun, to be accepted by others, or to survive?
- Are you sexually active?
- Have you any children or have you been pregnant?
- Have you ever had an abortion? If so, where?
- Have you ever had a sexually transmitted disease? What are sexually transmitted diseases? What is AIDS? Are you at risk of catching such a disease?
- Do you use any form of contraception? What type? How often?
- Have you ever been forced to have sex? Do you provide sex to survive?
- Have you ever had sex with a person of your same sex?
- How many sexual partners have you had/do you have now?
- What is “safe sex”?
- Do you experiment with different combinations of substances? What combinations do you use?
- Do you ever do risky things after using substances, such as committing a crime, climbing buildings or trees, swimming, having sex with strangers, or walking across a busy street?
- Do you use your substances alone or with other people? Where do you use these substances?
- Do you ever take substances that you don’t know about?
- Have you ever injected a substance? How did you inject it?
- If so, did you share the needle, syringe, water, or any other utensils with someone else? Who used it first?
- Where do you get your clean needles and syringes from? Do you reuse them? How do you clean them and with what?
- Who would you ask to find out more about the substances you use and how you could protect yourself from any harm?