



## **NOVEMBER 2015 ISSUE No. 1**

**Wicklow Drug & Alcohol Peer information**

## **COST OF CANNABIS & HEROIN**

So, why is heroin so inexpensive? Currently it is due to the plentiful supply of heroin, this is largely due to an increase in the opium poppy production in Afghanistan. Where there is a glut of a product it pushes the price down. Afghanistan is by far the largest most dominant supplier of opium in the world, producing 90% of the worlds' supply last year. Heroin is also grown in south East Asia, pockets of Central Europe and South America, with Mexico becoming an increasingly large producer and exporter, supplying North America. According to Jim Cusak, Irish Independent, 2012; the heroin trade in Dublin is saturated and the low price of the drug has made it much less of a money earner. A bag of heroin that would have cost up to €100 a bag in the 80's and 90's is now less than €20.

Cannabis is by far the most frequently used illegal substance in Europe .Cannabis in the form of Hash became more widely available during the 1980's and 1990's and usually cost about £200 per ounce, with the price remaining fairly static. However, around the mid 2000's cannabis in the form of grass/weed started to become more widely available and preferred by smokers. As well as becoming normalized. One ounce of grass/weed costs approximately €350 per ounce (28 grams) or €50 for a 2 gram bag, enough for 3-4 joints. Heavy users might smoke this amount in one day and each week spend is €350. This high cost and the ability to get cannabis "on tick" lends itself to issues such as drug debt, intimidation, and pressure to deal.

## WHAT IS ACRA?

The Adolescent Community Reinforcement Approach (A-CRA) is based on the assumption that environmental factors have an effect on the encouragement or discouragement of drug use. A-CRA is a behavioural intervention that a clinician uses to help the adolescent learn to replace environmental contingencies that have supported alcohol or drug use with prosocial activities and behaviours that support recovery.

Therapists choose from 15 A-CRA procedures that address the adolescent's needs and self-assessment of happiness in multiple areas of functioning. Some of these procedures include problem-solving skills to cope with day-to-day stressors, communication skills, and active participation in prosocial activities with the goal of improving life satisfaction and eliminating alcohol and substance use. Role-playing/behavioural rehearsal is a critical component of the skills training used in A-CRA, particularly for the acquisition of better communication and relapse prevention skills. Homework between sessions consists of practicing skills learned during sessions and participating in prosocial leisure activities.

The A-CRA manual provides guidelines for adolescent sessions, individual caregiver sessions, and combined adolescent and caregiver sessions. The goals of each section of the treatment are as follows:

### **Adolescent Sessions**

- Promote abstinence
- Promote positive social activities
- Promote positive peer relationships
- Promote improved familial relationships

### **Caregiver Sessions**

- Encourage participation in the recovery process
- Promote the adolescent's abstinence
- Provide information on effective parenting

### **Treatment Logistics**

**Appropriate Age Range:** 12-18

**Participants:** Adolescent, Caregivers

**Number of Sessions:** The minimum recommended contact would be 14 60 minute sessions over a 3 month period, 10 individual sessions with the adolescent, 2 individual sessions with the caregiver, and 2 joint sessions. Community contact is added on a case by case basis.

There are 12 standard procedures and 3 optional ones. The delivery of the intervention is flexible based on individual adolescent needs, although the manual provides some general guidelines regarding the general order of procedures. Optional procedures are dealing with Failure to Attend, Job-Seeking Skills, and Anger Management. Standard procedures include:

1. Functional Analysis of Substance Use
2. Analysis of Prosocial Behaviour
3. Happiness Scale & Goals
4. Increasing Prosocial Recreation
5. Relapse Prevention Skills
6. Communication Skills
7. Problem-Solving Skills
8. Urine Testing
9. Caregiver Overview, Rapport Building, and Motivation
10. Caregiver Communication Skills
11. Caregiver-Adolescent Relationship
12. Treatment Closure

A-CRA was manualized in 2001 as part of the Cannabis Youth Treatment Series (CYT) and was tested in that study (Dennis et al., 2004) and more recently, with homeless youth (Slesnick, et al., 2007). It was also adapted for use with another manual for Assertive Continuing Care following residential treatment (Godley et al., 2001)

### **East Wicklow Youth Service – Youth Outreach Drug Education**

East Wicklow Youth Service is a regional office of Crosscare and provides youth work services across the East Wicklow area. The post of Youth Outreach Drug Education is funding through the East Coast Regional Drugs Task Force. The aim of this post is to provide drug education and prevention programmes in an out of school setting in the East Wicklow remit area. The worker (Fiona Creedon) is working with groups of young people aged between 10 to 25 years around drug education and prevention, resilience skills, personal development and other related issues. The worker also provides information sessions and programmes for parents and organises related training/information sessions for workers.

Email: [fcreedon@crosscare.ie](mailto:fcreedon@crosscare.ie) tel. 0402 39646/086 7789544

### **Wicklow Travellers' Group (W.T.G)**

W.T.G provides specific services to the Traveller community across the County Wicklow area (excluding Bray). The additional funding provided by the Task Force funds a& Education project, with one full-time and one part-time Outreach workers. The project's aim is to develop the capacity of young Travellers (their families and the Traveller Community), by providing drug and alcohol awareness and education, by promoting healthier lifestyle choices through social and personal development, and by engaging in interagency work affected by addiction are also linked with relevant services and supports. Phone 0404 61878 email: [bip2000@hotmail.com](mailto:bip2000@hotmail.com) tel. 0404 61878

**Drugs, Alcohol & HIV Helpline**

Tel. 1800 459 459 helpline@hse.ie

**CONTINUATION OF CARE PROJECTS**

Rehabilitation & Integration Service

Tel. 085 8603217/ 085 8603326 ecrdtf@gmail.com

Living Life Counselling

Tel. 01 2866729 info@livinglifecounsellin.ie

Wicklow Child & Family Project

Tel. 0404 64725 adminwc&fp@wicklowpartnership.ie

Tiglin Challenge

Tel. 0404 40010 admin@tiglin.ie

**PREVENTION PROJECTS**

Wicklow Travellers

Tel. 0404 61878 info@wicklowtravellersgroup.ie

ISPCC, Childhood Support Service Wicklow

Tel. 0404 66933 wicklow@ispcc.ie

Crosscare Youth Service

Tel. 0402 39646 ewys@crosscare.ie

**UPCOMING SESSION**

**'Harm Reduction— Cannabis &  
Alcohol with Under 18's**

John Craven of Arklow Community Addiction Team will make a short presentation on Harm reduction around cannabis and alcohol use with under 18's.

**Date & Time: To be Confirmed**

**Venue: Wicklow Traveller**

**Centre, CEART, Wicklow Town**

**Where did the Wicklow Peer Information Group Begin?**

The Peer Information Group came about after a group of workers met as a follow on to the Putting the Pieces Together Drug Education Resource training. The group who met that day suggested regular meetings as a Peer Support for workers working with young people around the issues of drugs and alcohol. The group has been meeting for the past 18 months, averaging every three to four months. Speakers from various organisations have been invited to make presentations, including Alcohol Action Ireland, Ballymun Local Drugs Task Force, Daish Project, Yoda under 18 Drug Treatment Service, HSE, Neil Treanor Paramedic.

The sessions are organised by Peter O Reilly of Wicklow Travellers Group and Fiona Creedon of East Wicklow Youth Service, both workers are funded through the East Coast Regional Drugs Task force to provide drug education and prevention programmes to young people in the remit area. In 2016 we will provide a further three information sessions throughout the year and in between these sessions will send out a newsletter to everyone attending the sessions. The newsletters will include information on new related information and will profile a project/worker in the area. If you have any suggestions for speakers/trainings or information to include on the newsletter, please contact us. We hope you enjoy our first edition.