

DRUMBEAT
BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH RHYTHM

Report into
DRUMBEAT at
Alice Springs
Prison 2010

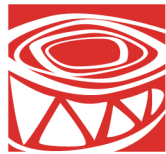
Report into the Implementation
of the Social Development Program

DRUMBEAT
***Discovering Relationships Using Music,
Beliefs, Emotions, Attitudes & Thoughts***

with prisoners from
The Alice Springs Correctional Facility

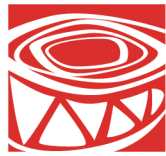
2010





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1. Summary of Results

1.1 Evaluation Questions

This evaluation sought to answer the following question:

Does participation in the Holyoake DRUMBEAT program reduce the intensity of known 'risk factors' associated with prisoner recidivism? These factors include low self-esteem, low levels of self-responsibility, poor emotional regulation, poor relationships with peers, unstable mood, and a sense of alienation.

1.2 The Program

The Holyoake DRUMBEAT program was delivered four times at the Alice Springs Correctional Facility as part of the Prison In-reach project funded by 'Congress' Safe and Sober Program. Two men's groups and two women's groups were successfully concluded – each group running for ten sessions across ten weeks. Participants in the group included 16 men (13 Aboriginal and 3 non-Aboriginal) and 12 Aboriginal women. Participants varied in age from 24 to 52 and were actively engaged in the program's activities across ten sessions. Participation was based on pre-group interviews facilitated by staff from both the 'Safe & Sober' program and the Alice Springs correctional facility.

1.3 Main Findings

The outcomes for those participating in the Holyoake DRUMBEAT program were positive with high levels of engagement leading to positive outcomes. The program proved popular with all participants and the level of engagement was evidenced by regular attendance, active participation in the drumming and long dialogues on the relationship themes of the program.

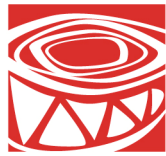


Levels of self belief and confidence rose commensurate to the individual's success in the group, both with the music (drumming) and their exploration of the programs relationship themes. Quantitative feedback reported an average increase of 65% in self esteem over the course of the program.

Prison participants showed high levels of responsibility within the group – taking ownership of group boundaries and mediating to solve or neutralise inter-personal problems that arose throughout the course of the program. For example, one participant shared that he felt he spoke a lot and sometimes had difficulty regulating his dialogue. His awareness grew to understanding he was part of a team and therefore the potential impact he could have on the group. As a result he began to self regulate dialogue with support from the other participants. The group also individually supported him to master the skills of drumming over the course of the program which appeared to increase his confidence.

Several prisoners made affirmations during the program to change their behaviours in the future, in light of new found self awareness and self-belief. One participant realised that he needed to make the changes in himself before he could help to create change in his community. Another shared at week 5, that she felt that the drumming was good for her, and subsequent to the performance at week ten shared that “now I can do anything”. These affirmative statements demonstrate an increase in self belief critical to implementing behavioural change (Bandura, 1982).

The DRUMBEAT program targets the areas of self-esteem and emotional control in an effort to assist people develop healthy and supportive relationships. In these programs it was evident that participants worked well together, were able to exercise restraint and emotional regulation when stressful situations arose in the group and



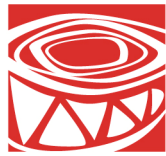
had fun. Independent feedback showed the average increase in emotional regulation over the course of the program to be in the order of 40%. The participants were also noticeably happier when engaged in the music making part of the DRUMBEAT program, even though several individuals had histories of anxiety and depression.

Participant interactions with both prison staff and fellow prisoners was markedly improved over the course of the programs. Prison staff, offered support through their presence at the group performances, their applause, and positive feedback given to participants. On occasion, prison staff actively participated in the program, joining in the rhythms. The DRUMBEAT groups also involved both Aboriginal and non Aboriginal members who interacted and communicated in a positive and empathetic way. Cultural barriers dissolved through the trust engendered in the group process. Statistical feedback also indicated significant levels of improvement in both relationships between fellow prisoners and relationships between participants and prison staff.

Prisoners took ownership of their DRUMBEAT groups and felt a strong sense of connection through their participation. The DRUMBEAT group became a safe and supportive community for all participants.

2. Background

The prison in – reach program at the Alice Springs Correctional Facility was put in place to assist prisoners with their rehabilitation from the use of drugs and alcohol. The introduction of the DRUMBEAT program came out of a combined Federal and Northern Territory Government strategy to enhance Social Support Services in and around the Alice Springs region, to “Make fundamental and lasting improvement to the lives and opportunities of the residents of the Alice Springs town camps, and for



homeless Aboriginal people in, and visitors to Alice Springs” (Alice Springs Transformational Plan, 2009).

The Alice Springs Transformation Plan addresses three key strategies of which the first priority - Enhance Social Support Services includes alcohol rehabilitation, family support, community connections, life skills support and safety and security, all of which are addressed by the DRUMBEAT program. The ASTP includes funding of over \$25 million to enhance social support services. Gaps in service delivery are being identified and social support services in the community strengthened.

As a result of The Alice Springs Transformation Plan, Holyoake has been funded by the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress’ Safe and Sober program to deliver DRUMBEAT as part of the prison in-reach program. DRUMBEAT is in use in a range of prison environments across Australia and has been specifically designed to engage Aboriginal people.

3. Confronting Issues

3.1 Recidivism rates / repeat offences

The Alice Springs Correctional Facility has a capacity of approximately 500 prisoners of which 75% have sentences of six months or less, and of those, 75% are alcohol related. The female prison population is increasing at a faster rate than for men (Australian Institute of Criminology, 2010).

Issues facing aboriginal prisoners chosen for inclusion for the DRUMBEAT program are consistent with confronting issues facing Aboriginal people across Australia and include:

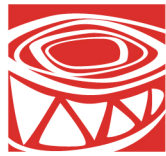
- Cultural discrimination
- Lack of engagement in employment
- Problem Alcohol use
- At risk of repeat offence
- High levels of disconnection
- Family violence

The program was primarily implemented to assist the participants to avoid re-incarceration in a correctional facility as a result of committing alcohol fuelled crime. The DRUMBEAT program addresses key risk factors (Andrews & Bonta, 2003), associated with criminal behaviour, recidivism and drug and alcohol misuse.

These risk factors include:

- Alienation,
- Low self esteem,
- Family breakdown
- Associates with deviant peers
- Poor peer relationships
- Poor social skills including problem solving and emotional regulation
- Aggression
- Difficult temperament
- Hyperactivity
- Poor use of recreational time
- Previous arrest

It is recognised that programs that seek to address 'recidivist risk factors' do impact upon rates of recidivism (Holtfreter and Morash, 2003). In general these risk factors are similar for men and for women, (Andrews & Bonta, 2003). A majority of



participants attending the DRUMBEAT program had significant literacy or numeracy difficulties, with thirteen of the sixteen participants having English as a second or third language making integration into mainstream social services and programs difficult. Low academic attainment, and poor literacy are also recognised risk factors for criminal behaviour (Bonta, 2002). The DRUMBEAT program has been designed to engage participants who face challenges with communication because of cultural issues.

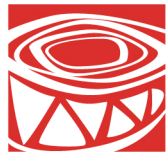
3.2 Previous attempts to deal with the same issues

The program coordinator at the Alice Springs Correctional Facility has tried or currently utilises a number of strategies to engage Aboriginal inmates including Arts programs, Numeracy and literacy programs, Case Management, Prison release programs, Work parties and other prison in-reach programs such as the 'Family Well-being' initiative. No current evaluations are available on the success of these programs.

It is recognised however that certain interventions are more successful than others in engaging Aboriginal prisoners in social development initiatives and that these programs involve experiential learning approaches in keeping with traditional modes of learning in Aboriginal society (Trugden, 2000).

4. Previous Research

There is a growing body of research supporting the use of music based therapies as a complimentary addition to mainstream cognitive based strategies that seek to aid rehabilitation and social integration for persons in detention (Clements, 2004). Music based programs have been successful at engaging prisoners who are reluctant to engage in education and other therapeutic services offered by corrective agencies

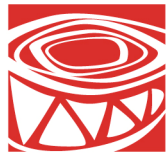


and have been associated with a range of psychological benefits to personal mental health (Digard, Graf von Sponeck & Liebling, 2004).

In these programs the music therapy goals mirror the goals set by the client's psychotherapists and include opportunities for pro-social connection, social skill development, self-awareness, increases in feelings of self-worth and an opportunity to express emotion in a constructive way. These goals reflect the areas of need required to reduce recidivism, (Watson, 2002).

A group setting allows participants to practice pro-social behaviours, to understand one another's perspectives, to increase empathy, improve communication and interpersonal skills and increase self-confidence. Music itself satisfies a curiosity and need to explore life values and other relationship issues and it provides opportunity for experiences with others that are successful, creative and motivating – experiences that they urgently need given the negativity with which their lives have been imbued so far (Gardstrom, 1999).

A similar program to DRUMBEAT called “The Good Vibrations – Gamelan in Prisons” Project (www.firebirdtrust.org.uk/) has been run in 11 UK prisons ranging from maximum security adult offenders to young offender institutions and secure hospitals. This involved 5 day workshops using “gamelan” or Javanese percussion instruments and drums, a methodology very similar to the DRUMBEAT program. An evaluation of the “Good Vibrations” Program (Digard, Graf von Sponeck & Liebling, 2004) found that there were great changes in participants through moments of insight, reflection, growth and group cohesion. The participants were able to reflect upon their lives without the potentially intimidating context of formal therapy. They reported feelings of calm, peace and connection and were provided with opportunities to



develop trust and confidence in their own ability to make meaningful and valid decisions,

In this same program participants increased their ability and willingness to communicate which, in an environment where prisoners constantly have to hide their emotions, is particularly healthy. The creation of an environment where communication was welcomed was psychologically beneficial. These experiences were noted to be a useful preparation for entering into mainstream educational and therapeutic groups, (Digard, Grafin von Sponeck & Liebling, 2004).

Drumming has also been linked to effective emotional control or anger management in a number of studies. The fact that the instruments are struck allows members to “commit small acts of controlled violence”. This was seen as a means of helping participants release feeling constructively and learning to manage their emotions (Watson, 2002). The music appeared to have a calming effect on participants and gave them the opportunity to vent unresolved frustrations, (Digard, Grafin von Sponeck & Liebling, 2004). These programs also offer opportunities for presenters to role-model effective problem solving, respectful communication and empathy.

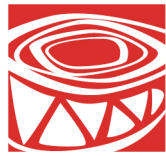
In the ‘Good Vibrations Program’, after the completion of the program, a significant degree of loss was reported by some participants (Digard, Grafin von Sponeck & Liebling, 2004). Participants acknowledged the creation of a more supportive and relaxed environment for the duration of the program but commented on the return to ‘prison as normal’. Many indicated they would like to continue with the music program.



Despite a wide range of initiatives, drug use and drug induced mortality has been increasing (Spooner, Hall, & Lynskey, 2001). Many of the programs introduced to combat these trends have been less than successful (Spooner, Hall, & Lynskey, 2001). For Indigenous people the likelihood of problematic drug use, anti-social behaviour and detention is particularly sobering with rates up to 20 times that of non-aboriginal persons (Charleton & McCall, 2004). Research from a range of fields has identified the social environment as a key influence on health and development.

There is a need to acknowledge a broader range of socio-economic factors that can mitigate the negative behaviours associated with alienation, including the importance of family, community and other social networks (Spooner, Hall, & Lynskey, 2001). To focus on 'protective factors' that include social competence, a sense of belonging, opportunities for success and recognition of achievement, and in so doing move from a focus on the negative to a positive perspective in order to highlight the benefits of social integration (Spooner, Hall, & Lynskey, 2001).

In particular it is recognized that the move to a more individualistic society, since the onset of industrialization, has had costs in terms of social cohesion and levels of disillusionment and alienation. Drug use problems as well as other 'risk' behaviours are exacerbated by an increasingly complex social context and in particular by various forms of cultural disadvantage including poverty, racism, and trauma. For those people who go on to problematic drug use, crime and other anti-social behaviours a number of 'risk factors' are prevalent. These include a lack of social bonding, alienation, negative communication patterns, poor family relationships and negative peer influence (Silburn, 2002).



The results of this increasingly complex social environment can be seen in the increase in the presentation of people with both drug addiction issues and mental health disorders (dual diagnosis), particularly associated with amphetamine and marijuana use, which has created a new area of concern that is challenging traditional treatment practice and forcing health providers to look at new ways to meet the complex, medical, emotional and social needs of these people.

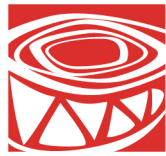
Prison populations are recognized as having a high percentage with one or both of these conditions. Seventy five percent of the Alice Springs prison population are there due to a drug related offence whilst up to 75% of all prisoners have a recognized psychiatric illness, with even higher rates for women prisoners.

Recent studies of brain bio-chemistry have pointed to the difficulty of using talk-based therapies with these clients (Dyer, 2004). The DRUMBEAT program provides a new avenue for engaging and working therapeutically with those whose cognitive functions are impaired.

5. Connotations for Aboriginal Detainees

"A significant challenge is the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the justice system. A decade after the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, Aboriginal people continue to be over-represented in the system - both as victims and as offenders.

The statistics are grim," (Ferrente, 2000).



In the Northern Territory, Aboriginal people make up 31% of the adult population but make up 84% of the prison population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). Indigenous offenders are three times more likely to return to prison within two years than non-Indigenous offenders (45 per cent compared to 15 per cent). At 30 June 2009 the NT continued to have the highest crude imprisonment rate in Australia at 658 prisoners per 100,000 adult population, almost four times higher than Australia's overall rate of 175 prisoners per 100,000 adult population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010)

The Indigenous female imprisonment rate has increased by 34 % between 2002 and 2006 while the imprisonment rate for Indigenous men has increased by 22%. Indigenous women are also 23 times more likely to be imprisoned than non-Indigenous women while Indigenous men are 16 times more likely to be imprisoned than non-Indigenous men (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008).

Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory were four times more likely to be victims of violence than non-Aboriginal people. Aboriginal arrest rates were ten times the comparable rate for non-Aborigines, adult imprisonment rates were 26 times the comparable rate, and juvenile detention rates were more than 30 times the rate for non-Aboriginals (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

Aboriginal people also had a much higher recidivism rate of around 80%. Their length of stay in prison was generally short term – 63% of Aboriginal prisoners will stay for less than 6 months (Dodson, 1991). A recent review into recidivism and education in prisons found that straight numeracy and literacy programs would not generate or sustain the interest of indigenous prisoners (Kinnear, 2000).



5.1 Mental Health and Indigenous Incarceration

The correlation between problematic drug and alcohol misuse and mental health disorders is well established (Andrews, Henderson & Hall, 2001). The high level of alcohol misuse by Australia's Indigenous population carries with it the likelihood of increased levels of mental health conditions. Although the level of research into Aboriginal mental health in prisons is low there is evidence to show that levels inside prisons far exceed the levels of the general community with mood and anxiety disorder amongst the most common issues (Butler et al, 2006). Aboriginal inmates demonstrated higher levels of mental health problems and alcohol and drug dependency with Aboriginal women having far greater rates of psychopathology than Aboriginal men (Karina, Butler & Levy, 2007).

In addition nearly 50% of prisoners had previous thoughts of suicide with 30% attempting suicide at some stage of their lives. Although generally suicidal thoughts decreased whilst in prison, for Indigenous women these thoughts increased significantly (Kraemer, Gately, & Kessell, 2009).

6. About The DRUMBEAT Program

The Holyoake DRUMBEAT program was developed to specifically target several of the factors that contribute to the level of exclusion and accompanying health risks faced by members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Holyoake DRUMBEAT program was developed in 2003, in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia and developed in immediate response to the difficulty of engaging young Aboriginal people in talk based therapies.

DRUMBEAT is an acronym for *Discovering Relationships Using Music – Beliefs, Emotions, Attitudes & Thoughts*. Raising awareness of the fundamental skills and values that support healthy interaction between people in relationships is the central tenant of the program. Social relationships are critical in a wide range of areas that allow for healthy personal development including providing the necessary support for times of emotional stress or general hardship. Relationships are vital for our need to maintain a sense of community and belonging, for improving or maintaining self-esteem and for our sense of identity. Relationships also provide us with a context in which we develop moral judgments and social values and promote interpersonal competence (Smith-Christopher, Nangle, & Hansen, 1993). This emphasis on relationships extends directly to an individual's quality of life and the success or otherwise of any community, large or small.

In keeping with traditional modes of learning in Aboriginal communities the major emphasis in the Holyoake DRUMBEAT program is through the experiential process – observing, trialling, experimenting (Trudgen, 2000). In DRUMBEAT the music created by the group serves as a direct reflection of the participant's teamwork and social skills. The program deliberately avoids any opportunity for competition and instead focuses strongly on teamwork and the benefits of working with others to achieve things unobtainable as an individual. This then transfers into skills and consciousness that support that same individual in a range of other group situations, including family and workplace relationships.

6.1 DRUMBEAT – Goals and Objectives

The DRUMBEAT program is primarily a teamwork program assisting participants with the social skills and self belief to work with others in a wide range of team or community situations, including community, workplace and family.

Specific Objectives include:

- Increased levels of cooperation & collaboration
- Self responsibility for behaviour
- Improved emotional regulation
- Greater levels of tolerance and empathy
- Increased self – esteem
- Improved communication skills
- Awareness of the importance of healthy values in supporting healthy relationships and lifestyle choices
- Increased levels of focus, concentration, perseverance and commitment.
- Improved connection and sense of belonging with the community

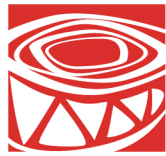
6.2 Activities

These outcomes are achieved by one of the four different elements of the program:

1. Core rhythms that develop teamwork skills and focus and concentration.
2. Rhythm games that support teamwork and lead to introspection on a range of life issues including communication, peer pressure and social responsibility
3. Discussions which relate the experiences of the drum – circle to other ‘real life’ experiences
4. The performance which offers recognition for achievement, builds self confidence and links participants to their community.

6.3 Frequency

DRUMBEAT is delivered once a week for two hours across a ten week period, culminating in the performance on the tenth week. The first six weeks focus on a specific topic related to a relationship issue. Themes include Harmony, Emotions,



Teamwork, Identity, Relationships, and The Rhythm of Life. Each session includes time for playing the drum as a group and time for reflection and discussion on the relationship themes of the program. In particular there is a strong focus on linking these themed discussions to real life situations.

The final sessions are devoted to preparation for the performance, but still provide opportunities for reflection on the main themes of the program and individual experiences. The performance itself provides an opportunity for the group members to celebrate their achievements, for the demonstration of the potential for group collaboration and for recognition of the skills they have mastered.

Participants also complete a number of questionnaires (written or oral) designed to assess their learning.

7. Participants

The DRUMBEAT program was delivered to 16 men (13 aboriginal and 3 non-Aboriginal) and 12 Aboriginal women at the Alice Springs Correctional Facility as part of the Prison In-reach project funded by Congress' Safe and Sober Program as part of the Alice Springs Transformational Plan.

Participants varied in age from 24 to 52 and were actively engaged in the programs activities across ten weeks each. The prisoners came from a number of differing language groups including, Luritja, Warlpiri, Arrente, Anmatjerre, and Pitjatjarra. One of the men in the group had been diagnosed with bi-polar disorder.



7.1 Length of Stay / Attrition

Over the course of the program 9 participants failed to complete the course. The program began on 8th July 2010 and the prisoners attended weekly sessions up until December. A number of factors can be attributed to the rate of attrition, such as release from prison (N:4), clashes with alternative programs, compulsory appointments and prison work commitments.

8. Facilitation Staff

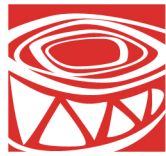
Heather McIntyre, a Holyoake Counsellor with over 6 years experience and Alyson Welch, Holyoake Counsellor delivered the two DRUMBEAT program with Brian Zoch, a Holyoake Group facilitator attending the second program. All three facilitators had completed the DRUMBEAT Facilitator Training Program.

9. Evaluation –

9.1 Central Questions

This evaluation sought to answer the following questions:

1. Did the prisoners engage readily with the DRUMBEAT program?
2. Did participation in DRUMBEAT lead to higher levels of confidence to make positive changes in their lives?
3. Did participation in the DRUMBEAT program lead to increased levels of responsibility and self discipline?
5. Did DRUMBEAT participant's interaction with peers and staff within the correctional facility improve over the course of the program?
6. Did participants in the DRUMBEAT program lead to improvements in self esteem, emotional control and overall mood?



9.2 Methodology

The evaluation used a range of data collection techniques including informal discussions with facilitation staff and participants; observation of the program activities, written questionnaires to participants, case study and a third party behaviour observation scale completed by Correctional facility staff, independent of the program.

The evaluation was conducted over the course of the 2010. Prior to the program beginning pre-group interviews, resource organisation and the evaluation methodology were established.

10. Results

10.1 Statistical Information

Levels of engagement were reflected in higher than average attendance rates for the sessions. The average group size over the course of the four programs was 6 with most absences being accounted for through pre-existing medical appointments or prison discharge. Less than 20% of absentees were unexplained. Participation in the program required a degree of organisation and self-motivation as participants were often not called to attend.

Finding from the 3rd party scale (see appendix A), reported by an independent prison program officer with no direct connection to the DRUMBEAT intervention, are detailed below:

Over the ten week duration of the program prisoners involved in DRUMBEAT improved the levels of their:

Relationships with fellow inmates – by an average of 80%

Relationships with adult authority figures – by an average of 45%

Emotional Control – by an average increase of 40%

Participation in group activities – by an average increase of 75%

Self Confidence – by an average increase of 65%

Focus and Concentration – by an average increase of 65%

General Mood – by an average increase of 55%

10.2 Qualitative Data

Due to the participant's lack of confidence with the English language – written evidence was limited. The use of data collection templates common in mainstream program evaluation was not possible due to validation concerns. Instead the program staff utilised qualitative data collection techniques including group feedback sessions at the conclusion of each program and individual interviews with random participants from each group.

Feedback from these sessions was divided into five categories:

1. Self Confidence
2. Social Skills
3. Self-responsibility
4. Personal insight
5. Community Connection

Self Confidence

In the interviews and through observation it was clear that levels of confidence for each of the participants had risen dramatically. Several participants had originally been reluctant to join the group and talked about the shame involved in that involvement – these same participants however completed the sessions including a



public performance. Mastery over the instrument and the support of other group members contributed to increased levels of self-belief and this was used to support participants in new resolutions for changed behaviours on the outside.

Comments included:

"I have learnt about myself that I can do anything!"

"I have learnt that I can do anything and that there are people out there who can help me"

"DRUMBEAT builds confidence, and I want to take it to my community"

Social Skills

Social skills include the ability to share, work with others to achieve a common goal, problem solve, compromise, tolerate differences of opinion, empathise with another's position and communicate clearly and openly. Additionally the DRUMBEAST program focused on helping people gain control of their emotions with specific exercises aimed at looking how to calm themselves in times of stress.

In the group the participants demonstrated each of these skills on a regular basis and this was reflected in the complexity of the music they made by the programs end. Members showed a great amount of support to each other. One member often had difficulty grasping the rhythms, the other members showed support by suggesting ways of assisting him. This demonstrates empathy for peers and an ability to assist others to problem solve. Facilitators also observed that through the process of reflecting, participants were able to move from high intensity emotions such as anger and frustration to a place of calmness.

"I've learnt to relax, be patient; I've learnt direction, and to try more"



Group participants often took responsibility for group discipline, the running of the group, discussion themes etc They were able to manage differences of opinion in a constructive way as well as respecting cultural differences between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members of the group. Comments included:

“I have had the privilege of being part of this great Drumbeat experience expressing ourselves physically and mentally whilst making harmony amongst ourselves at the same time. It’s all been part of working as a team; we bind together as a whole. You learn to take control within yourself by playing Drumbeats. You learn patience, guidance and direction. We as a group feel a great sense of pride and achievement for what we have accomplished in such a short time. It’s all been such a huge lift for ones self esteem”

Self Responsibility

The DRUMBEAT program promoted self responsibility – participants were responsible for their own attendance and for the rules of the group – determining the boundaries that would support a healthy group interaction and linking them to the boundaries that support healthy relationships in their lives generally. The group members were encouraged to take ownership for past mistakes in their lives and a policy of ‘No Blame’ was current throughout the length of the program.

Over the length of the program participants displayed increased confidence and creativity by introducing suggestions for new exercises and rhythms as well as participating in open discussions. One participant wrote a poem about how the program has impacted on him. He also wrote a speech which he presented at the performance in front of an audience of 30 staff (Appendix B). The group members also choreographed the entire performance working hard to manage and overcome their feelings of nervousness and anxiety, culminating in an excellent performance on the day. The challenge of a public performance is linked to the challenges ahead in turning their lives around – having to confront things that make them uncomfortable and having the self-belief and support to achieve these new goals.

Personal Insight

The DRUMBEAT program includes key conversations about relationship themes. In an average two hour session half the time is spent in discussing the themes of the program. Facilitators of the program noticed an unusual willingness by the Aboriginal participants to enter into these discussions where in other programs they would remain silent. The drumming provides a safe introduction to non-judgemental communication.

Inner reflection increased with extended periods of discussion on the relationship themes of the program and their personal relevance. Discussions regularly looked at the impact of behaviours on personal health and family relationships. No matter what the theme participants were open, interactive and responsive in discussion, particularly on the topic of feelings and emotions. Comments included:

"I know what this is about, it's about searching within yourself"

"I feel like I've come out of myself today"

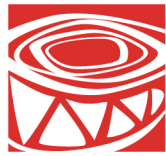
"I want to be more confident and get to know myself better before I can be a teacher to other people in my community"

Facilitator: "How has the DRUMBEAT program given you new skills to help you stay out of jail when you go home?"

Participant: "It helps me focus"

Facilitator: "How does it help you focus?"

Participant: "Because I can stop and evaluate before a mistake is made. My awareness will be made with clearer judgement. I've got more awareness amongst my peers. I feel eager, I feel happy, I feel like being around other people, and I love the tranquillity associated with the DRUMBEAT."



Personal insight is at the heart of psychological growth and DRUMBEAT is about asking people to consider the impact of certain behaviours on their relationships in general and how that affects the quality of their lives.

Community Connection

A primary focus in the DRUMBEAT program is helping participants reconnect with their communities (family, friends, work-place, town members etc) in a healthy way. In the program participants are given an understanding of the importance of healthy values, patience and good communication skills to this process.

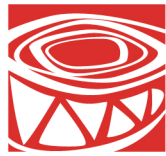
The DRUMBEAT programs foster safe connection to others through the recreational medium of music. The team spirit is strong in the DRUMBEAT group and trust builds quickly. Participants showed a real loyalty to the DRUMBEAT group and several said they looked forward to that each week.

“I look forward to coming each week, and I’m telling all my cousins to join DRUMBEAT next term”

“The DRUMBEAT program gave me a reason to live a more healthy lifestyle, with better understanding of other peoples feelings”.

10.3 Case Study

One participant appeared slightly introverted at the beginning of the program. He showed closed body language, often hitting drums very hard, avoiding eye contact, and out of rhythm with the group. Early in the program he stated that the drumming made him feel good. By week seven of the program, he brought attention to how far the group had travelled together, and he realised how important it was for him to learn to listen. He could recognise that not only was listening an important part of building rhythms together within the DRUMBEAT context, he also realised how



important it was in relating to other people. He spoke about creating a collage promoting DRUMBEAT to other inmates and about wanting to gain training in DRUMBEAT so he could take it back to his community on release from prison.

10.4 Limitations to Findings

A number of factors present limitations to the findings. These include:

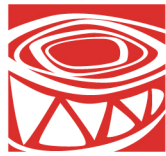
1. The non-random assignment of participants
2. The potential for other factors (the facilitators themselves) to have influenced change.

10.5 Unforeseen problems

Early release of prisoners was a significant challenge in the first two programs. This improved into the 3rd and 4th DRUMBEAT groups as communication between coordinating agencies increased. Greater understanding and emphasis was placed on the need for participants to be able to complete the full ten week program.

The prisons capacity to support sessions with prison staff. This was a problem, particularly for the women's groups. As a result of staff shortages in the prison the women were unable to carry out the performance in week 10. It had been cancelled at late notice.

Communication between coordinating agencies and between agency staff meant that at times prisoners spoke about not being allowed release from work duties because the supervising officer was not aware of the DRUMBEAT program.

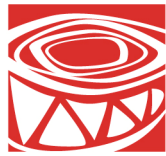


11. Conclusions

The overriding finding is that the program is a useful and effective addition to existing prison programs aiming to reduce recidivism rates of people committing alcohol related crime. The DRUMBEAT program was used to target a range of known 'risk factors' associated with problematic drug and alcohol use as well as criminal behaviour and recidivism. Each of these risk factors was shown to have been addressed by the program and the participants made clear progress in both recognising these risks and reducing them.

DRUMBEAT was also shown to be a program particularly useful for engaging Aboriginal prisoners for whom other programs, with literacy and higher level communication requirements, might be confronting. In several prisons in other states the DRUMBEAT program is being used as a gateway program for other mainstream therapeutic or educational courses. The programs use of music to engage and transfer learning assists with accessibility and reduces the barriers between cultures and different world views.

Another key benefit of the DRUMBEAT program is its impact on mental health. The DRUMBEAT program is used widely by mental health services across Australia and there is supporting evidence to show it can help reduce levels of anxiety and improve overall mood (Featherstone, 2008). Both anxiety and mood disorders are common mental health issues with Aboriginal prisoners, (Butler et al, 2006), and feedback from the programs run in Alice Springs point to significant improvements in these areas for participants.



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Finally the DRUMBEAT program introduces music as a positive social and recreational pastime. For many people the potential to play music is limited, but DRUMBEAT provides them with a medium and the efficacy to do so. The poor use of recreational time is a significant 'risk factor' for recidivism, (Andrews & Bonta, 2003). Holyoake, in conjunction with other agencies, is supporting the use of music making to strengthen community. It is significant that several participants commented that they would like to take the DRUMBEAT program back to their communities and there are plans to provide pathways for that to happen in the future.



Appendix B

*Searching within ourselves
Searching within one self
Searching within your self
Searching to find one self
Exploring ones soul*

*The beat of ones soul is in our heart
Harmony is what it's all about*

*Don't play rock or even sing
Just let the DRUMBEAT do its thing*

*Fast or slow it doesn't matter
Being ourselves is much, much better*

*With the DRUMBEAT we're nearly there
All it takes is a little care*

*Over some time just let it in
Then when it starts, then you'll begin*

*Open up, you will get there
Don't let it leave you in despair*

*Express yourself, we're here for awhile
Don't let yourself be in denial*

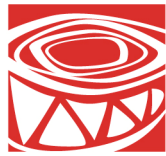
*Throw in your body as well as your mind
Do this together and you'll be in time*

*As the beat becomes a whole
Then everybody knows you've scored a goal*

*Opening up, we will deliver
Then everybody will know,
And be a believer*

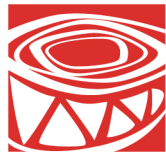
*Everybody asks what DRUMBEAT can do
Just look closely, and it could be you*

BY DAVID GRANT
November 2010



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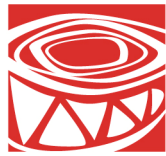
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