

UWE Rugby Union Club Culture: A behavioural change intervention

Rationale

In 2016 – 2017, The Students' Union at UWE saw a rise in alcohol and sport related incidents, particularly around match day and Varsity 2016. These issues resulted in disciplinary action for rugby club members. There were 17 students sent through disciplinary procedure due to their involvement in incidents associated with drinking excessive alcohol during the 2016 Varsity Series.

We are aware that nationally there is a culture of alcohol within Rugby. Incidents have impacted the UWE Rugby Club, firstly with their University reputation as an ambassadors and secondly in the quality of their sporting performance.

Objectives

Disciplinary action, resulting from the above described behaviours, and the beginning of the new academic year has presented us with a unique opportunity to engage with Rugby club members in an attempt to change the current adverse drinking culture.

This intervention aims to:

- Improve the attitudes, perceptions, control and norms towards drinking by Rugby club members.
- Reduce the frequency and quantity of alcohol consumed by Rugby club members in line with other similar sports groups.
- Reduce the number of reported behavioural incidents from Rugby club members.
- Increase knowledge of the effects of alcohol on sports performance.

Partnership Approach

We have engaged with the Rugby Union Club Coaches, who are keen to support, develop and embed this initiative. We know from relevant sector interventions, that it is crucial for activity to be driven from trusted individuals within the club, the messages are powerful and more likely to be taken on board.

We are working with the Rugby Union Executive Committee, the student leaders of the club are fully involved and on board with the scheme, a really positive energy to create an inclusive culture where all students can thrive. Club Representatives have been part of the ISM behaviour mapping, devising the intervention and activity, and are supportive of the process. Interventions will only work if the students are co-creators and genuinely championing the behaviour change outcome, we are lucky that this is the case within the UWE Rugby Club.

Other Interventions

Members from the Rugby Club have taken a public approach in dis-associating themselves with the "initiations culture". A member from the Rugby Union club spoke on Radio 1 Newsbeat, audio clip

can be supplied on request. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/41755960/uni-rugby-initiations-totally-unacceptable-says-rfu>

Pre-Intervention

Rugby players to complete an online questionnaire to investigate alcohol consumption, consequences, attitudes, perceptions, control and norms.

Intervention

The intervention will comprise of a number of workshops, training and activities spread throughout the academic year. The sessions will run after training, in the new sporting facilities for the club, run by club coaches. The sessions will offer free food post training as an incentive for taking part. The sessions will start late November 2017 and run until March 2018.

Summary

ISM Model

- The ISM model will be used to unpack the problematic rugby club behaviours that occurred during the previous academic year.

Resilience and Active Bystander training

<http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/bl/research/interventioninitiative/thetoolkit.aspx>

TIGER training (Teaching Individuals Gender Equality and Respect)- with an emphasis on lad culture

<http://www.tigerbristol.co.uk/about.html>

Focus Groups

- In groups of 4-8, players will discuss their experience with alcohol, its positive and negative impacts and how being a part of the rugby team influences their relationship with alcohol. Their experience with alcohol at university will be compared and contrasted with their experience before coming to university.
- Statistics for the annual Alcohol Impact survey will be used to generate discussion, particularly around social norms.

Sport Psychologist

- Members of academic staff and students from the MSc Sports Psychology will use various techniques to explore players relationship with alcohol, set goals and inspire positive change.

Club Contract

- Coaching staff and players will work together to co-create a club contract that explicitly states their expectations of one another, including alcohol-related behaviour, with clearly defined consequences.

Professional rugby player talk and dinner

- A professional rugby player will be invited to give a talk at the end of season dinner that includes a reflection on their experience with alcohol and the positive and negative impacts it may have had on their career.

Late Night Do It Right

- Rugby players will assist the Late Night Do It Right team in running the intervention at one of the popular calendar events.

Behavioural Change Techniques applied

The following are BCTs that will be applied during the allocated intervention sessions:

ISM Model

1) Problem solving

Definition: analyse, or prompt the person to analyse, factors influencing the behaviour and generate or select strategies that include overcoming barriers and/or increasing facilitators.

Applied: In groups get players to think about the individual, social and materials aspects that may have influenced the disciplinary behaviours.

2) Re-attribution

Definition: Get client to review what they think causes their behaviour and suggest alternative explanations.

Applied: Try and shift causes of behaviour from external to internal.

3) Information about antecedents

Definition: Provide information about things that trigger the behaviour. This can include events, situations, thoughts and feelings.

Applied: Identify the triggers to specific behaviours and suggest how they can be identified to prevent behaviour escalating.

Resilience and Action Bystander training and TIGER training

1) Avoidance/ reducing exposure to cues for the behaviour

Definition: Advise on how to avoid exposure to specific social and contextual/physical cues for the behaviour, including changing daily or weekly routines.

Applied: link to current resilience training by SU.

2) Identification of self as role model

Definition: Inform that one's own behaviour may be an example to others.

Applied: Explain that as key players in the team their behaviour effects how other players behave. Empower them to be active bystanders when disruptive behaviour occurs.

Focus Groups

1) Pros and Cons

Definition: Advise the person to identify and compare reasons for wanting (pros) and not wanting to (cons) change the behaviour.

Applied: Get players to list the pros and cons of drinking too much.

2) Information about others approval

Definition: Provide information about what other people think about the behaviour. The information clarifies whether others will like, approve or disapprove of what the person/team is doing.

Applied: This could come from other player's views on varsity and missing out next year. Could also include results from MSc research regarding the perception of rugby club culture and how potentially good players are put off from playing.

Sport Psychologist

1) Imaginary regret/punishment

Definition: Get the person to imagine performing the unwanted behaviour in a real-life situation followed by imagining an unpleasant consequence.

Applied: Get the players to think about going out, having a good night, drinking too much and behaving inappropriately, followed by stated consequences i.e. rugby club banned.

2) Imaginary reward

Definition: Advise to imagine performing the wanted behaviour in a real-life situation followed by imagining a pleasant consequence.

Applied: This could include playing in varsity and winning the game.

3) Focus on past successes

Definition: Advise to think about or list previous successes in performing the behaviour.

Applied: This could include thinking about past games where they played exceptionally well- did this follow a period of focused training or nights out drinking? They could also think about the best nights that had out- are they the ones where maybe they didn't drink so much and remembered what happened?

4) Identify association with changed behaviour

Definition: Advise the person to construct a new self-identity as someone who 'used to engage with the unwanted behaviour'.

Applied: The start of a new academic year presents the players with a unique opportunity to modify previous identity.

Club Contract

1) Information about consequences

Definition: Provide information about the consequences of performing the behaviour. This can be self or others.

Applied: Explain what the previous consequences were for specific behaviours.

2) Behavioural contract

Definition: Create a written specification of the behaviour to be performed, agreed on by the client, and witnessed by another.

Applied: Co-creation of club behavioural contract between players, coaches, and relevant SU staff. Expectations and consequences must be clearly stated.

3) Commitment

Definition: Ask the client to confirm their commitment to changing their behaviour.

Applied: Get players to sign "I will" statement in front of other players, coaches and SU staff.

4) Reward

Definition: Inform that a reward will be provided for agreed behaviours.

Applied: Could possible include kit, trip to a game etc.

5) Punishment

Definition: Inform that removal of reward and future punishment will be a consequence of performing the unwanted behaviour.

Applied: Removal of above reward plus contractual punishment.

6) Restructuring the social environment

Definition: Change, or advise to change the social environment in order to facilitate performance of the wanted behaviour or create barriers to the unwanted behaviour.

Applied: Some of these may already be in place, i.e. not drinking on the bus, but not strictly enforced.

Professional Rugby Player talk

1) Credible source

Definition: Present verbal or visual communication from a credible source in favour of or against the behaviour.

Applied: Ask professional player to touch upon their experience with alcohol and its effect on their or others professional development.

2) Social comparison

Definition: Draw attention to others performance to allow comparison with the persons own performance.

Applied: Highlight that heavy drinking doesn't define position within club but performance does. Could possibly draw upon examples within the club.

3) Incompatible beliefs

Definition: Draw attention to discrepancies between behaviour and self-image, in order to create discomfort.

Applied: Highlight that they believe they are good players, yet professional players do not share the same alcohol consumption patterns.

Late Night Do It Right

1) Vicarious consequences

Definition: Prompt observation of the consequences (including rewards and punishments) for others when they perform the behaviour.

Applied: Watching other student's behaviour during nights out, seeing the consequences and imagining how they may behave in similar situations

Post-Intervention

Players will be followed up 1 month, 3 months and 6 months post-intervention and asked to complete the questionnaire highlighted previously.

Players will also be invited to attend focus groups at these points. Incentives to be provided.