



Successful Healthway Projects

Diabetes – Let's All Find Out

The Diabetes – Let's All Find Out project was a one week diabetes education program in a small remote community northeast of Kalgoorlie.

Case Study
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Diabetes – Let's All Find Out

Organisation:	Paupiyala Tjarutja Aboriginal Corporation
Healthway funding:	\$1,050 (Funded: Stationery and materials for posters and healthy food strategies)
Program Period:	2 months (including planning time)
Target Group:	Remote community of Tjuntjuntjara (northeast of Kalgoorlie)
Year:	2003
Number of Participants:	110 (population of the community)

What was the project about?

Diabetes – Let's All Find Out was a one week diabetes education project in a small remote community northeast of Kalgoorlie. Community health clinic records showed that one in four people, including one in two adults, suffered from diabetes. Clinic staff, together with community members, implemented a diabetes education program to raise awareness about preventing and managing diabetes in the community.

The week long program enabled community members to learn about diabetes and methods of prevention, intervention and maintenance. Numerous hands-on activities were highly successful in engaging the population in a variety of community settings including the women's clinic, the health clinic, the general store, the school and local community radio.

What strategies were used?

A range of strategies were undertaken. In the general store:

- The healthy and unhealthy food items were separated on shelves, and the range of healthy foods was increased.
- The shelves were labelled with a "tick" for healthy foods and a "cross" for unhealthy foods. These basic symbols were easy for all community members to recognise, including those with lower literacy skills.
- Food tastings were organised using healthy foods.

In the health clinic:

- An 'open morning' was held for the entire community to receive a health check, look at diabetes displays and read educational resources.

In the women's clinic:

- Cooking demonstrations, cooking skills education and tasting sessions were conducted throughout the week.

At the community school:

- Children undertook educational activities linked to "Kalgoorlie to Perth Pipeline Challenge" project.

Community strategies included:

- A 4km community walk on the final day of diabetes week, with the opportunity for participants to rest and eat healthy snacks and drinks during the walk.
- Signage displays which were changed every day and hand-painted by community members.
- Promotion of events through community radio.
- A video recording of the week's activities.

What did the project achieve?

The activities were a huge success and 100 out of the total 110 community members attended the walk. The project ensured that every community member became aware of the seriousness of diabetes in their community. The project generated a large amount of interest from people of all ages in the community, particularly children, and sales of and enquiries about healthy foods at the general store increased dramatically.

What Healthway had to say about the "Diabetes – Lets All Find Out" project:

Although the program ran for a single week, considerably more time was devoted to planning it, which involved the entire community. The project was a great success and achieved outstanding results with a relatively small amount of funding.

What Were the Effective Health Promotion Elements?

1

PLANNING

The community was involved throughout the planning and community members requested specific activities that had worked in other communities.

A community planning meeting identified community views on diabetes and related issues.

Consultations included community members, staff in community services, the health promotion coordinator in the Kalgoorlie Public Health Unit and Diabetes WA.

School-based activities were developed using existing resources from the "Kalgoorlie to Perth Pipeline Challenge".

2

IMPLEMENTATION

Strategies aimed to involve all community members throughout the diabetes week.

Activities were all held at different times to enable as many community members as possible to attend.

Community links with the local radio station helped to secure free air time to promote diabetes week. Local radio broadcasts promoted the program and upcoming events.

Community newsletters, including photos, were used to promote the project to other communities and stakeholders.

The entire community was involved in the implementation of the project and participated in the activities.

3

EVALUATION

Surveys were completed when community members attended the health clinic.

A simple self-completed survey was used with school children.

Verbal feedback was sought from community members where possible, such as at the end of community presentations.

Food sales and healthy food enquiries to the general store were recorded.

Requests from 'Meals on Wheels' clients both pre- and post-project were recorded and compared.

4

SUSTAINABILITY

On completion of the Healthway project it was planned to:

- Integrate diabetes awareness into school activities, along with guest speakers and cooking sessions.
- Continue to hold weekly health presentations and diabetes refresher sessions.
- Continue to offer regular exercise sessions in the community.
- Hold further cooking sessions through the women's clinic.

The community planned to undertake regular 'health awareness' days in the future, including physical activity, cooking and health checks to increase awareness and encourage healthy behaviours.

The health clinic planned to continue monitoring health changes in the community.

What lessons were learned?

- The support of community members and community service staff was critical to the success of the program.
- Opportunities to develop skills for community members was a key part of the project.
- Future projects should encourage community members to be more involved in education sessions.
- Timing was essential so the project was planned to commence once the school year had started to ensure all community members had returned home from holidays and were able to participate in the activities.
- Simple, easy to understand store signage is important for people with literacy difficulties.
- Project activities may need to avoid the heat of the day.



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