



Guidelines for delivering DRUMBEAT effectively in Schools and other service centres.

A lot of research has gone into understanding what are the barriers to effective DRUMBEAT program delivery and how can facilitators predict these and take measures to minimise their impact. This list is compiled to assist facilitators and the organisations who contract them, to create a positive environment that maximises the potential of the program in the interests of those participating.

- 1. Keep organisational and personal frustrations from DRUMBEAT participants** – It is inappropriate and unethical for facilitators and contracting staff to discuss with participants any frustrations they have with the other party. Your positivity is vital to the success of the program and your ability to negotiate conflict is also critical.
- 2. Work within your expertise** – The Holyoake DRUMBEAT program is a psycho-education program designed to increase awareness of the factors that support or undermine healthy relationships, build self-esteem and increase social connection and belonging. DRUMBEAT is not a psycho-analytical therapy and personal issues should not be explored beyond the capacity of the facilitator. Sometimes facilitators can team with trained clinicians to explore underlying issues but extreme care must be exercised to ensure re-traumatisation is avoided through this process.
- 3. Strong support from the sponsoring organisation** – Often contracting services like schools are managing hundreds or even thousands of clients, many with competing interests and priorities. It is important that both sides understand their responsibilities in organising and delivering a DRUMBEAT program and work together in the interest of the participants. Before the program starts facilitators and contracting staff (principal or clinical supervisor) should meet together to agree on a timetable for action and the delineation of responsibilities.
- 4. Clear understanding by all staff of the aims of the DRUMBEAT intervention** – Many DRUMBEAT programs are undermined by a lack of understanding by other staff from the contracting organisation. It is imperative that staff are educated about the purpose of the program and how it achieves its goals using drumming prior to the start of a course. At this meeting the outcomes of participation in DRUMBEAT (improved behaviour, relationships and levels of cooperation) can be mentioned as a further incentive to support the program.
- 5. Consistent group leaders/facilitators** – Many of the people we support through DRUMBEAT lead lives filled with uncertainty and inconsistencies. DRUMBEAT facilitators need to become a stable and consistent presence in order for trust to build. Co-facilitators should be chosen for their strengths and must bring a positive demeanour into the room. Changing facilitators should be a last resort and if necessary the reasons for this should be explained to participants prior to the change occurring.

- 6. Suitable and consistent venue for the program delivery** – DRUMBEAT is a drumming program and the impact of drums can be heard from far away. Thought needs to be given well in advance to the space allocated to the program, so that it will not unduly impact others. Outdoor venues are not appropriate due to the number of distractions. Changing venues adds to a sense of instability and should be avoided where possible. If finding a consistent venue is difficult then a reserve venue should be identified prior to the course beginning so that time is not wasted when the original site is no longer available.
- 7. Facilitator input into group composition – who will attend.** DRUMBEAT is a group behavioural intervention but group composition can be critical to the success of the program. The following should be avoided if possible:
- Too many young people with challenging behaviours that will likely reinforce each other
 - People with a history of violence between each other
 - People whose developmental capacity differs widely from others in the group
 - Mixed gender groups where one gender dominates.

It is important to understand that not all people are suited to group interventions – people with significant social phobias or defiant personality disorders may need individual support before being ready for a group program like DRUMBEAT. Facilitators should work closely with contractors to help find the right mix of participants prior to the course beginning.

- 8. Group size should not exceed 12 (including two facilitators).** Small groups allow for the development of trusting relationships more readily than larger groups. The greater the behavioural challenges the more important a small group size becomes. This can be inconvenient for schools and other services who may have to break up classrooms etc. It is important that facilitators work with contractors to help minimise normal class disruption.
- 9. Regular session timetable (once or twice a week) – consistency without breaks.** Again this is an issue of consistency and relates to individual stability and trust. Scheduling should be once or twice a week, every week until the program is completed – gaps for holidays, staff leave and other activities should be avoided. Proper planning prior to commencing the program can ensure this does not become an issue.
- 10. In mixed groups - Balanced group membership– adults/children, boys/girls.** DRUMBEAT can be effective with multiple group types but if mixed gender groups are formed then there should be an equal representation from each sex. Similarly if adult/child groups are formed the adults should not outnumber the children present.
- 11. Commitment to attend all sessions by participants and follow up by staff.** Most DRUMBEAT groups are ‘closed groups’. Closed groups have the same membership present each session and do not allow people to come and go. Closed groups are like most teams which have a relatively stable memberships and bonds are built between members over the course of their participation. Participants should be advised of the importance of their

commitment to attend all sessions and the implications for the team if they drop out – other contracting staff should encourage participants to live up to that commitment. An ‘open group’ format of DRUMBEAT is available for situations where stable group membership is not practical.

- 12. An understanding from all staff not to make participation in DRUMBEAT conditional on good behaviour in other areas.** DRUMBEAT is meant to be a fun program and as such it may become something students look forward to. Sometimes other staff use the threat of denying that participation as a means to motivate good behaviour in their own classes. Contracting organisations should ensure that does not happen.
- 13. Provision of an opportunity to perform that meets the comfort level of the participants.** The performance is a key part of the DRUMBEAT program. Facilitators discuss with participants options for the performance until agreement is reached on a platform that meets their comfort level. Schools and other organisations contracting DRUMBEAT should work to assist the facilitators find an appropriate opportunity for the performance at that level.
- 14. Consultation between facilitators and co-facilitators, prior to the beginning of each session, about the manner of the facilitation, behaviour management strategies, objectives, individual group member issues, inter personal dynamics etc.** Meeting for 5-10 minutes prior to each session to discuss issues and strategies etc. is critical in allowing facilitators to working together as a team and this time should be built in as a standard part of the program format along with debriefing time.
- 15. Debriefing between facilitators after each session.** Discussion post-session between facilitators is critical in problem solving any issues that are arising in the group, as well as helping cement and improve the facilitators co-working relationship; again this time should be built into the session timetable rather than be seen as an added luxury.
- 16. Extending the program and the relationship.** Facilitators need to discuss with the school or contracting service, options for maintaining the positive outcomes of the course once the program has finished. The manual provides ideas for this – it is critical that facilitators don’t just walk away after the performance and not put in place opportunities for the participants to continue with their drumming.