

DrinkThink: Alcohol Screening and Brief Intervention for Young People in Youth, Social Service, and Healthcare Settings: A Mixed-Method Evaluation and Intervention Development Study

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Background & aim: Young people aged 25 and under report some of the highest rates of hazardous and harmful drinking in Europe. Alcohol screening and brief intervention (ASBI) has been shown to be effective in reducing alcohol intake among adult populations, within clinical settings. However, its effectiveness has yet to be demonstrated in younger populations, outside of clinical settings. “DrinkThink” is an ASBI initiative currently being delivered throughout Bath and North East Somerset, at various organisations within youth, social service, and healthcare settings. The intervention components are threefold: (i) recruitment and training of professionals, via a 3 hour session, to deliver DrinkThink, (ii) subsequent delivery of the ASBI by professionals within their working practice, and (iii) referral of the young person, where deemed necessary / requested.

Our project aims to evaluate this intervention using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study runs from September 2014 until May 2016 and is funded by SPHR’s *Public Health Practice Evaluation Scheme (PHPES)*.

Key research questions: Does DrinkThink show evidence of potential effectiveness in reducing the frequency and/or quantity of alcohol consumed by young people 6-weeks and 6-months post intervention. Is DrinkThink acceptable to young people, and to professionals who deliver the intervention; what are the barriers and facilitators to its receipt/delivery, respectively?

Population: The quantitative before/after study will recruit young people aged 15-19 years from 9 chosen organisations within health, social, and youth settings. The qualitative component will recruit young people aged 15-17 years, and professionals who deliver the intervention, throughout a 6-month period in 2015.

Study design and methods: The quantitative evaluation will collect self-reported data on drinking behaviour, and use of social, youth, and healthcare resources, at baseline (receipt of ASBI), and at 6-week, and 6-months post-ASBI. Qualitative focus groups with young people will assess the acceptability and ascertain barriers/facilitators of receiving DrinkThink. Focus groups with professionals will highlight the acceptability of the training, and subsequent delivery of the ASBI.

Where next? Ethical review is underway via the Social Care Research Ethics Committee. A full-time mixed-methods researcher is to be employed in December 2014 to work on the evaluation, and we expect to commence the evaluation in early 2015, after successful ethical review.

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