

Model answers from a successful grant application to establish a SMART Recovery group

What is SMART Recovery

SMART Recovery is a voluntary, not-for-profit self-help program that assists people recovering from alcohol, drugs and other addictive behaviours. In free, weekly, 90-minute meetings, SMART Recovery teaches practical skills to help people deal with problems. The program uses evidence-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques to help people change their behaviour.

Project Description: what activities are you planning?

While there are well-attended SMART Recovery groups in Northcote and Preston, there are currently no SMART Recovery meetings taking place in City of Yarra, despite much evidence to support the need for one. We would like to establish one new meeting in City of Yarra in 2016, with the aim of providing a regular, reliable, long-term meeting place for City of Yarra residents and people from other areas who can benefit from its central location. In the course of the year, we would like to encourage regular participants to undertake SMART Recovery Facilitator Training and to become volunteer facilitators, eventually establishing their own groups. We would greatly appreciate the financial support of the City of Yarra in the form of an Annual Grant for \$#,###, so that we can provide a safe, stable, regular support group in Fitzroy.

How does the project align with the program's funding priorities?

Establishing a new SMART Recovery group in Fitzroy will fill a gap: there are currently no evidence-based addiction support groups running in the area. The Community Plan describes the vision: "We provide the opportunity to embrace healthy lifestyles, feel safe and to have access to healthcare facilities and services." A SMART Recovery self-help group represents a practical, proven step in achieving this vision. With the kind support of this community grant, we would be able to get a new group established and running successfully in 2016. The grant would act as seed funding, enabling us to invest in advertising, to publicize the new group and its benefits.

Furthermore, it would help us connect with other community groups, to encourage young people with addiction issues to participate; to promote the public-health benefits of our evidence-based approach and to improve access for people with mental-health issues and other disabilities to this type of service.

Once the group is established, it will enjoy positive recognition within the community, enabling us to explore sources of donations and sponsorship from local business and allied organisations.

SMART Recovery groups welcome participants from every socio-economic and cultural background. They are free of any religious restrictions or affiliations and attract participants

aged from mid-teens to post-retirement. Participants help themselves and help each other, while also learning how to use proven CBT techniques for changing maladaptive behaviours. These skills are not limited to dealing with addiction: they help participants live a more balanced lifestyle, solve problems, manage emotions and stay motivated.

Who will benefit from the project and how they will benefit?

Posters and brochures, plus active social-media outreach, will attract people who want to change (or are thinking about changing) their behaviours around drugs, alcohol, gambling or other addictive problems. Our good relationships with Drug & Alcohol (D&A) and other health services in Fitzroy will ensure that we also get referrals from a very broad range of communities. People who come to a meeting of the SMART Recovery self-help group in Fitzroy will benefit immediately from being warmly welcomed into the group, and sharing their experiences with other people who understand what they are going through. As they participate in the meetings, they will benefit from training in proven CBT techniques for staying motivated, resisting urges and cravings, solving problems and building a more balanced lifestyle. They will benefit from the gentle encouragement of the facilitator and other participants to make the small, incremental steps that lead to lasting change.

We know from experience that there are extensive direct and indirect effects on participants' lives when they successfully free themselves of addictions. When a person recovers from addiction, it also improves life for:

- Partners
- Family members
- Friends
- Colleagues
- Employers
- Healthcare workers
- Police and first responders

In this regard, our project will involve many people in the community and deliver measurable, positive benefits to many times the number of people who actually attend the meetings.

Project Evaluation

How will you evaluate the project? Include ways you will measure success and how will you capture lessons learned

Goals:

1. By the end of 2016, we want SMART Recovery to be known within the Fitzroy community as a reliable, welcoming, well-attended and effective peer support group.

2. We want to see people freeing themselves of the life-limiting restrictions that come with addiction.
3. We want to be recognised as a source of practical, evidence-based support for people with a wide range of issues: from quitting smoking or reducing alcohol consumption, to overcoming long-standing addictions to alcohol, methamphetamines or opiates.
4. We want to be well-integrated in a network of D&A and mental-health services.
5. We want to encourage participants who benefit from the group to volunteer, in turn, to train as facilitators and run their own groups.

Evaluation targets:

1. Group profile: average meeting size of eight to ten people throughout the year, with an upward trend.
2. Evidence of change in individuals' lives: participant statements during meetings, describing definite, positive change; feedback from participants in letters, text messages, postcards and cards; reflections from other group members about positive changes in participants' lives.
3. Wide range of issues: Provide help for people with a wide range of addiction issues (substance abuse, gambling, other problem behaviours).
4. Integration into the D&A network: active relationships (e-mail, telephone or face-to-face communication) with at least five other related organisations in the greater Fitzroy area. Referrals from many different sources - health clinics, psychologists, rehab facilities, peers as well as self-referrals via the SMART website or word of mouth promotion.
5. Volunteer facilitators: at least one person on track to complete the SMART Recovery Australia facilitator training.

How does this project address a community need?

As the Yarra Health Plan 2013-2017 notes, "Alcohol was the most widely used drug by Victorians in 2007, particularly among males. Yarra residents were significantly more likely to have purchased alcohol in the previous week compared with the Victorian average. The proportion of 15-17 year olds in Yarra who reported drinking alcohol in the last 30 days was 66.6%, one of the highest recorded of any Victorian Local Government Area. The percentage of persons at risk of short-term harm from alcohol consumption in Yarra was 16%, compared to 10.2% for Victoria." Also: "Yarra was one of five LGAs in metropolitan Melbourne with the highest number of non-fatal benzodiazepine-related ambulance attendances in the period 2007 to 2010. Yarra was ranked second highest LGA in Victoria for offences related to drug usage and possession, at 8.1 per 1,000 population, compared with 1.9 per 1,000 population for Victoria.

How will you promote or market your project?

The new Fitzroy group will be listed on the SMART Recovery Australia website, showing the location, times and the phone number of the facilitator. SMART Recovery Australia will promote the new group amongst their networks throughout Melbourne. It will be promoted on the SMART Recovery Australia Facebook page. At a local level, brochures promoting the

SMART Recovery Fitzroy group will be distributed to health clinics, psychologists, rehab facilities, allied-health locations, entertainment venues, libraries, and other public places. Networking with other D&A services will encourage referrals. Importantly, participants engage in peer referrals; word-of-mouth marketing is a very effective avenue of promotion for SMART Recovery groups.