

Transcript: 'Ways to Break the Silence around Alcohol'

Introductory Statement

The following is a short discussion with young members of the Mount Druitt community about ways that the silence around alcohol can be broken, with respect to their local community.

Discussion

I = interviewer

S1, S2, S3, S4 = Speaker 1, Speaker 2, Speaker 3, Speaker 4

I: Hey guys. How are you all today?

S1: Good

S2: Good

S3: Not too bad

S4: Good thanks

I: So just to give some context to the people listening to us, I will ask three introductory questions. What country were you born in?

S4: I was born in Australia

S2: Same

S1: I was born in New Zealand

S3: And Australia

I: And what is your cultural background?

S3: Samoan

S4: Samoan

S2: Samoan

S1: Samoan

I: And how old are you?

S3: 22

S4: 22

S2: 16

S1: 18

I: Okay. Cool. So I would like to ask some questions that address alcohol drinking amongst young people from a Pacific background, if that is okay?

S3: Yep

S4: Yep

S1: Yep

S2: Okay

I: The next lot of questions are about alcohol as a taboo subject of conversation in your families and communities.

From some research done by DAMEC earlier in the year, key members of the Pacific Islander community felt that alcohol is a taboo subject of conversation, which makes it difficult for the local community to address the negative consequences that result from alcohol drinking.

In your opinion, do you think members of the community do not openly talk about alcohol, particularly parents with respect to their children?

S3: I agree. I think, even from what I've experienced, I haven't heard or experienced any of...and even, not even just parents... just older uncles, aunties, elders and Church don't talk about alcohol and anything related to alcohol with us younger kids...or younger people I should say...um...it's something that they wouldn't talk about at all. Unless you're in an environment with alcohol, then it'd be a different subject. But outside of like a party environment or even probably a backyard drink up or something, maybe they wouldn't talk openly about it.

I: Why do you think members of the community don't want to talk about it?

S4: Pretty much because they don't want them to do it...like, they don't want their kids doing it. Even us growing up, we're 22 years old, our parents still don't really want us to drink and stuff, so I think that's why they don't really talk about it with us, 'cause they just don't expect it from us. It's just the way, like, our culture is.

S3: I think also like, for them to talk about it might bring up other issues that they have kind of thing. They might not realise, or even us, but they might subconsciously bring up issues that aren't related to what they're talking about because if they bring it up...if they start talking about alcohol and everything else that's related to it. So I think that's another reason why.

I: Do you have any suggestions as to how the community can address this problem?

S3: I think starting small...probably small focus groups, something around that...just getting everyone in...and a bit of a chat. It'd be a challenge 'cause I don't think anyone would turn up anyway.

S4: Mm, that's true.

S3: That's probably the first challenge is...trying to get people to...even with surveys or interviews... Interviews I think would probably be okay, but, I think trying to figure how to address the problem would probably be the first problem in itself. So...that's an honest answer.

I: What if you...because the Church is such a big influence, in the culture, if we got ministers and elders on board, would that help?

S4: That'd be weird.

S3: Yeah, I think that would be weird. I think just having, I dunno, a minister or elders there listening while you're trying to blurt out what you want to say is...its different...it's not...not normal. From a young age, we're told just to listen, not talk...so talking back to...or even sharing problems...we don't even share problems with our parents...so...

I: Do you talk amongst yourselves though... in the youth group?

All: Yeah

I: So I guess that's something. At least you have each other to talk about it with.

S3: But you kind of wish that you did have that...like you could tell them. Like, some people, they can talk to their parents about stuff like that, but, others, not so much.

S1: Sometimes you just can't speak openly to your parents...yeah...so I think that's the problem

I: Well. That brings us to the end of this discussion. Thanks for your time.

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If you need any drug or alcohol support, please contact DAMEC during business hours on 8706 0150. If you need urgent support, please call Lifeline on 13 11 14.