

BRAVE

Be Real About Violence

Adolescent Forensic Health Service


Welcome to BRAVE

Be Real About Violence

The Be Real About Violence (BRAVE) program is provided by the Adolescent Forensic Health Service, Centre for Adolescent Health, The Royal Children's Hospital.

BRAVE is for young men aged 15–21 years who have been found guilty of committing a violent offence and placed on a Youth Justice Order. Young people referred to BRAVE have a history of displaying threatening and violent behaviours in a number of settings i.e. familial and/or community.

BRAVE is designed to motivate young people to see both the short-term and long-term gains they can achieve by addressing their violent behaviour. BRAVE challenges violence supportive attitudes and beliefs and provides an opportunity for young people to practice pro-social behaviours. It aims to reduce re-offending and disrupt a pattern of violent behaviour which without intervention may continue through to adulthood.



BRAVE is about
a future
without violence



Our goals

1. To increase participants' intrinsic motivation to change, whilst identifying potential barriers that may jeopardise this process.
2. To increase participants' awareness of and responsibility for their violent behaviour.
3. To help participants understand the link between their thoughts, feelings and behaviours.
4. To challenge participants' beliefs and attitudes supportive of violent behaviour.
5. To teach participants strategies to effectively manage their aggressive and violent behaviours.
6. To develop an individualised relapse prevention plan to assist participants to manage their high-risk situations.
7. To enhance participants' willingness to work towards creating a future without violence.

Program philosophy

The BRAVE program works with young people to identify their individual strengths, capacities and aspirations to assist them to lead healthy lives. BRAVE facilitators work closely with Youth Justice staff to strengthen protective factors in the young person's life to facilitate the development of healthy relationships and meaningful connections in their local community.

SOME COMMENTS FROM PREVIOUS BRAVE PARTICIPANTS

BRAVE has shown me that you always have two choices in what you do and many options for you to try

BRAVE has taught me how to control my anger and what triggers me

I have got a lot out of BRAVE, more than I expected. I will keep the skills that it has taught me because it has opened my eyes to what is worth it and what is not

BRAVE has shown me the effects of crime and the importance of your family

I have learnt that violence isn't the only solution and that there are many options out there might make you look weak in the short term but have a good long-term effect

BRAVE has taught me that a decision without thinking because you are angry lands you in a lot of trouble. Anger can blind you and distract you from what is the real problem

About the BRAVE program

Young people on a Youth Justice Order are referred to the BRAVE program by Youth Justice Case Managers. The BRAVE program takes place over a three month period and follows three distinct phases.

- 1 Assessment
- 2 BRAVE Group
- 3 Follow up and support

1. Assessment

The BRAVE program starts with a 1.5 hour individual assessment. This involves the young person participating in a semi-structured interview and psychometric measures.

The purpose of the assessment is to determine a young person’s suitability for the BRAVE group. It provides important information about their individual presentations and offers the opportunity for the young person to receive information about the program and become familiar with the staff facilitating the group.

2. BRAVE Group

The BRAVE program is a cognitive behavioural therapy program. Group delivery is multimodal in nature, utilising drama, media, music and creative arts. Warm up activities, role-plays and video clips are routinely used. This assists with educating and challenging violent and antisocial beliefs, building pro-social skills and learning coping strategies.

The average BRAVE group size is six participants and groups are ‘closed’, therefore participants cannot join the group once it has started.

The BRAVE group runs over 15 group sessions. The content is divided into four sections, with three or four modules in each section.

Group content

Section 1: Getting to Know What Anger and Violence Really Are

explores the difference between getting angry and acting violently. Time is spent exploring how thoughts and feelings influence behaviour. Topics include:

- The Difference between Anger and Violence
- Why Change? Costs and Rewards of Violence
- Linking Thoughts and Feelings
- Ways of Expressing Your Feelings & Managing Difficult Emotions

Section 2: Violence Doesn't 'Just Happen': Learning How I Become Violent.

Throughout these modules participants begin to identify different factors that increase the likelihood of violence and how to effectively manage these factors to prevent violence. Participants are asked to take responsibility for their behaviour and are encouraged to identify effects of their violence on their victims and others around them. Topics include:

- Social Messages of Violence (Being a Man) and Triggers
- Warning Signs and Thinking Errors
- Offence Cycle and Drugs and Violence
- Victim Awareness

Section 3: Becoming Violence Free

covers topics to assist participants to manage their behaviour in pro-social ways. The young person learns techniques to effectively manage their violent behaviour, as well as strategies for effective conflict resolution and problem-solving. Factors that make a relationship healthy or unhealthy are explored. Topics include:

- Ways to Manage Violence
- Healthy Relationships
- Conflict resolution
- Problem Solving
- Communication and Assertiveness

Section 4: Where to from Here

involves the young person looking at their future and preparing to live without violence. Participants learn how to set effective goals and develop their own relapse prevention plan. Topics include:

- Relapse Prevention
- Goal Setting
- Future Directions

3. Follow up and support

Graduation

To acknowledge a young person's achievement in completing the BRAVE program a graduation ceremony is held at the end of the group program. Family and friends are invited to attend the graduation and certificates are presented acknowledging the young person's participation and achievement.

Post-group assessment

Following completion of the group program the psychometric measures are again administered and the young person is asked to provide feedback on their involvement in the BRAVE program.

Every participant receives a folder of their work and develops their own relapse prevention plan to review with their Youth Justice worker. A Treatment Outcome Report and feedback of each participant's progress is provided to Youth Justice workers with recommendations for individualised follow up and further support.

Contact us

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