
Building on ASSIST: the potential of informal peer led approaches to smoking prevention and cessation

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Presentation

- What is the ASSIST smoking prevention programme?
- What evidence do we have that it is effective?
- Possible extensions to ASSIST and/or informal peer led approaches

What is the ASSIST smoking prevention programme?

ASSIST intervention

- Year 8 (aged 12-13)
- Not a typical 'peer-led' intervention
- Not based in curriculum or classroom
- Influential students nominated by year group
- Trained to be 'peer supporters' to diffuse new norms of non smoking behaviour through social networks
- Similar to Kelly's (1997) sexual health approach
- Developed and evaluated following promising results from feasibility study in mid-1990s

Peer nomination

- Did not want only 'high-achieving' females
- Did want influential students
- Did want a mix (sex, friendship group, behaviour)
- Three questions:
 - Who do you respect in Year 8 at your school?
 - Who are good leaders in sports or other group activities in Year 8 at your school?
 - Who do you look up to in Year 8 at your school?
- 17.5% of students with most nominations invited to be peer supporters

Peer supporter training

- Parental consent obtained
- Peer supporters given two days of training off school premises
- Training delivered by outside trainers
- Peer supporters trained to intervene in everyday situations (e.g. at break-time, after school) to encourage other Year 8 students not to smoke

Training objectives.....

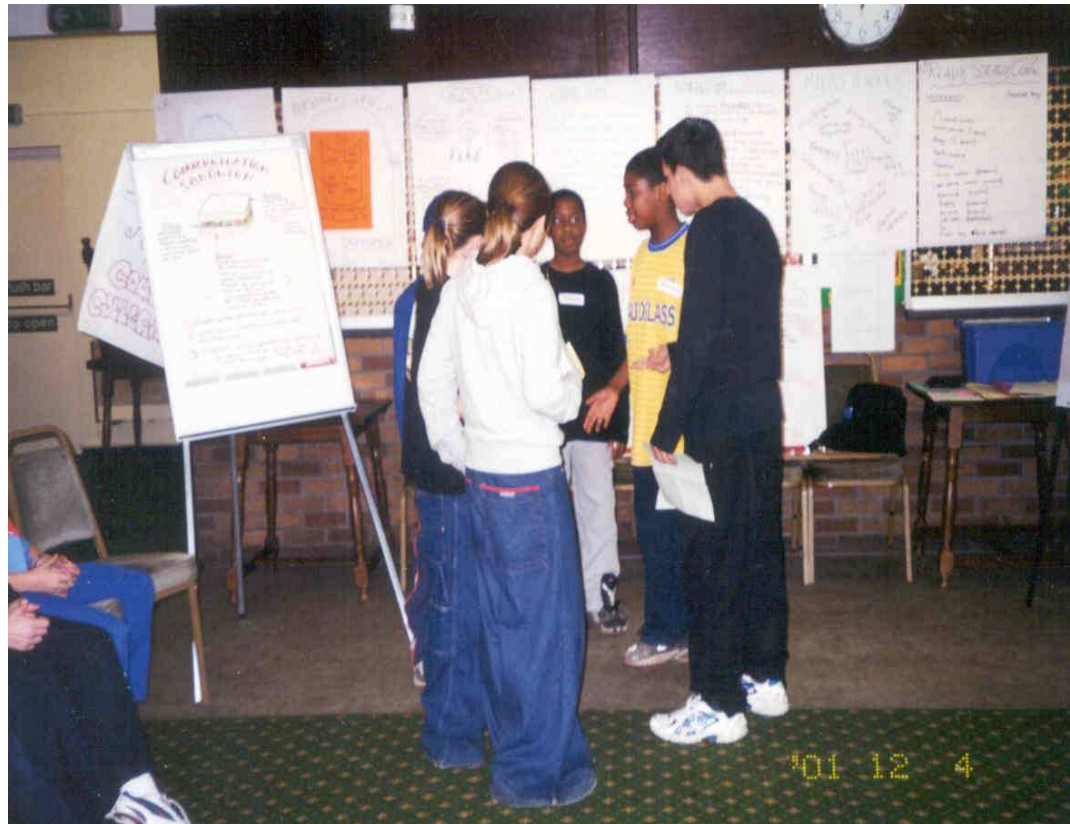
Enhance knowledge of harmful effects of smoking and the benefits of remaining 'smoke-free'



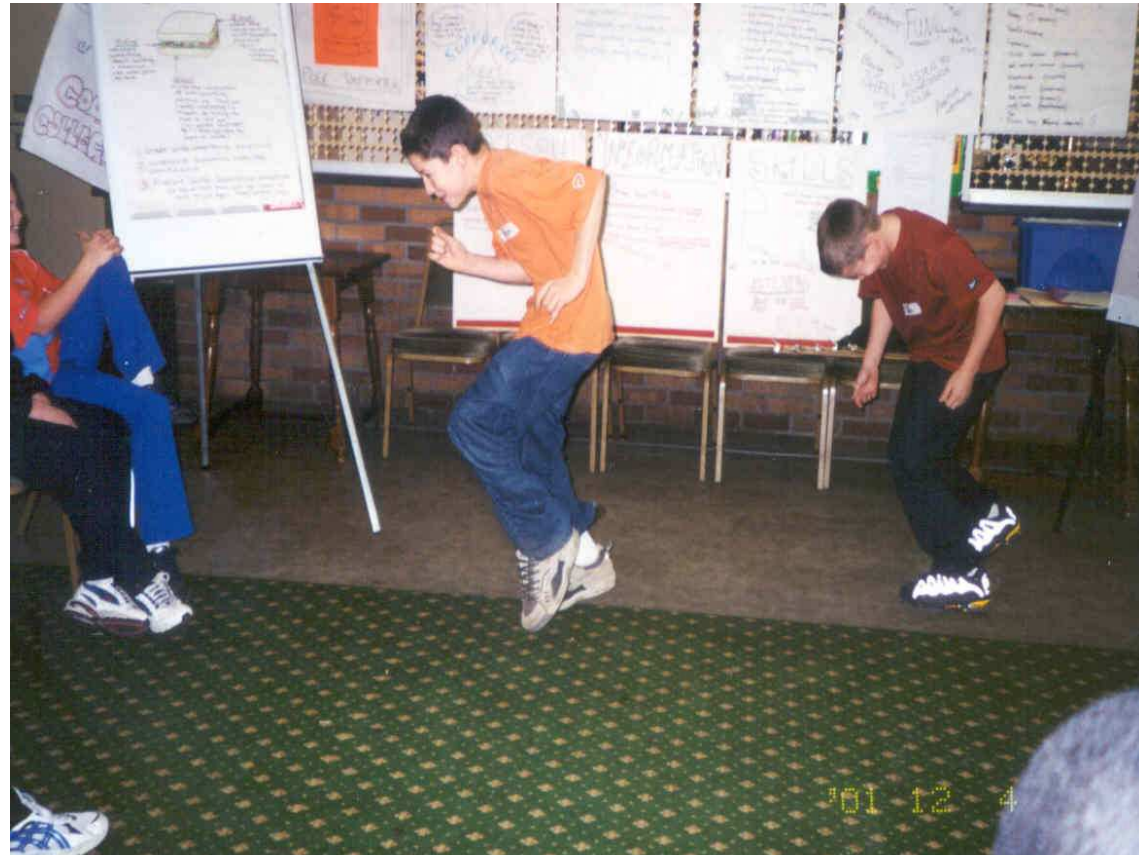
Develop skills
needed to
promote
smoking
prevention
among peers



Develop skills
and practise
intervening in
everyday
situations to
encourage
peers not to
smoke



Have
fun



After the training....

- Peer supporters asked to undertake informal conversations about smoking with other Year 8 students and to keep a record in a simple diary
- Four follow-up sessions took place over subsequent 10 weeks to encourage and support peer supporters
- All peer supporters received certificate of participation
- Peer supporters who handed in their diary received £10 gift voucher

What evidence do we have
that it is effective?

Study design

- Two centres: Bristol and Cardiff
- Cluster randomised controlled trial
 - Process evaluation, economic evaluation, social network analysis
- Outcome evaluation
 - Baseline and 3 follow-up data collections over 2 years to obtain self-reported smoking status and salivary cotinine status
- Outcome measures
 - Prevalence of weekly smoking among 'high-risk group' (baseline ex-smokers, occasional smokers, or had experimented with cigarettes)
 - Prevalence of weekly smoking among all students in year group

School participation and randomisation

	Intervention (usual smoking education + ASSIST intervention)	Control (usual smoking education)
School (n = 59)	30	29
Independent	2	1
Welsh language	1	2
>19% free school meal entitlement	14	12
>199 students in Yr 8	13	14
West of England	15	17

Conversations

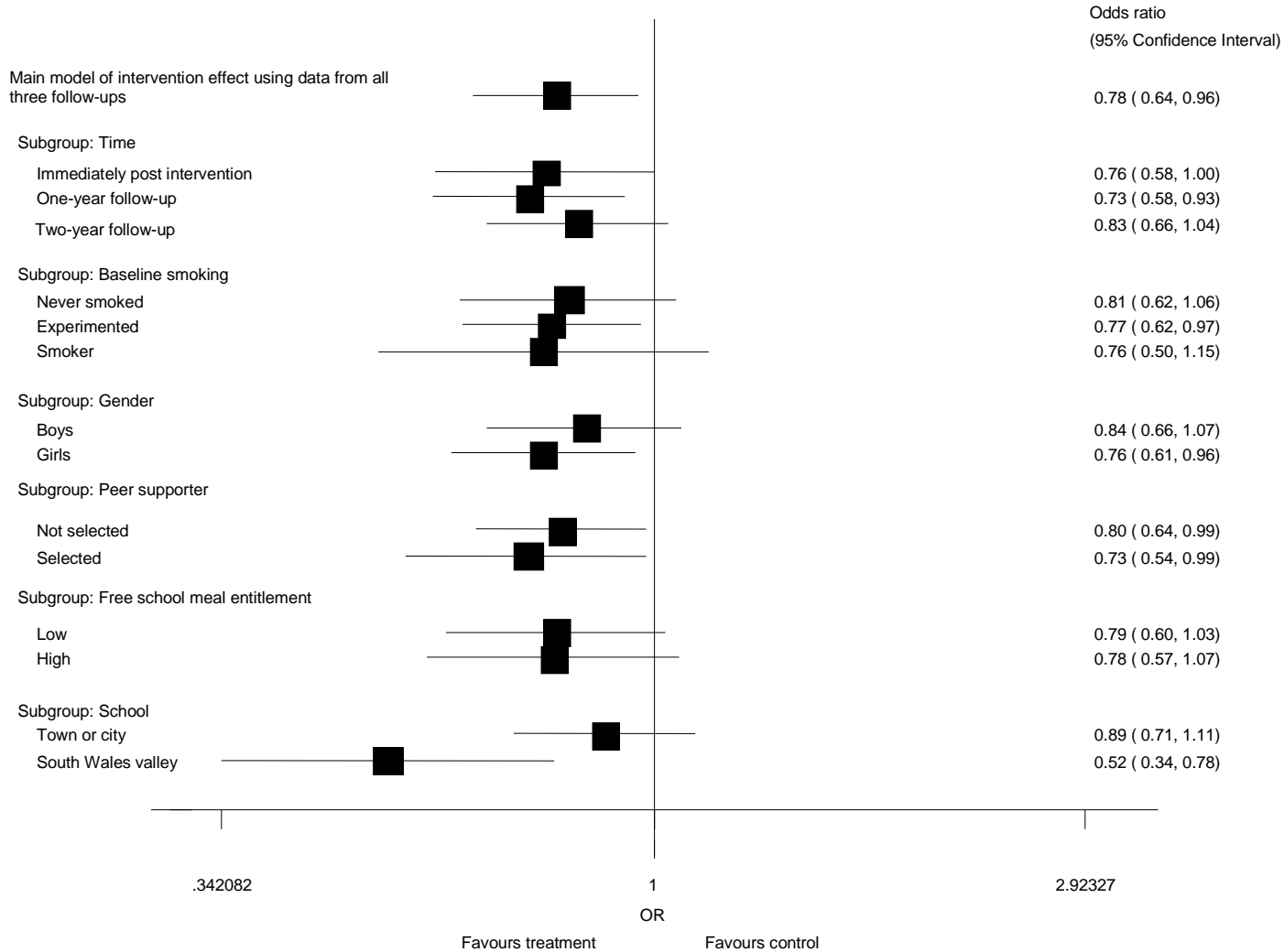
Analysis of process data suggests:

- Majority of peer supporters
 - spoke mainly with friends
 - concentrated efforts on non-smokers, ex-smokers and experimenters ('high-risk' group)
 - were less inclined to intervene with regular smokers and members of 'smoking cliques'
- Most conversations took place during first few weeks after training

Smoking prevalence at each follow-up point

	Prevalence of weekly smoking immediately post intervention		Prevalence of weekly smoking at 1 year follow-up		Prevalence of weekly smoking at 2 year follow-up	
	Control Schools	Intervention schools	Control schools	Intervention schools	Control schools	Intervention schools
All students	8.48% (403/4753)	6.60% (334/5058)	15.13% (736/4865)	12.49% (630/5044)	21.74% (1022/4701)	18.95% (941/4966)
High-risk group	9.80% (168/1715)	8.50% (157/1846)	23.03% (389/1689)	18.84% (338/1794)	34.81% (549/1577)	31.22% (536/1717)

Odds ratios from multi-level model for overall intervention effect & according to time of follow-up, baseline smoking status, gender, peer supporter status, free school meal entitlement and school location



Conclusions

- ASSIST intervention is effective in reducing adolescent smoking
- If implemented on a UK-wide basis could prevent 43,289 14-15 year olds taking up smoking
- Possible to recruit range of influential students to informally promote healthy behaviour amongst their peers
- Findings generalisable to range of schools

Possible extensions to ASSIST and/or informal peer led approaches

Implementation of ASSIST to date

- Have worked in selected areas to roll out ASSIST in Wales, Bristol PCT and Tower Hamlets PCT
- Afforded the opportunity to explore implementation in a variety of contexts
 - » Report completed following first year of implementation in Wales
 - » Member of original ASSIST team observed and feedback on implementation in Tower Hamlets
 - » Detailed process evaluation about to commence of implementation in Bristol PCT
- Rollout in England and overseas under discussion

Assumptions

- ASSIST effective in preventing uptake
- Teacher led interventions poorly implemented
- Situate adolescents at core of service design
 - » Timing and location - flexible
 - » Suitable facilitators – trust, confidentiality
 - » Friend and family support
 - » Link / embed with wider tobacco control
 - » MacDonald et al *Addiction* (2007)

Development / research questions

- Follow up intervention for ASSIST cohort:
 - » Top up training on smoking prevention
 - » Top up training and expand role to include smoking cessation services, QUITEX
 - » Top up with developing peer supporters as a TRUTH campaign group
 - » Expand peer supporters' role re. other risk behaviours, e.g. alcohol, drugs
- Follow up intervention for ASSIST schools:
 - » Expose successive years to ASSIST intervention

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- Comprehensive school tobacco control programme
 - » School smoking policy
 - Promoted, Engaged, Enforced
 - » ASSIST
 - » Embedded peer-linked cessation service
 - QUITEX, sms contacts, flexible, confidential
 - » TRUTH campaign, local tobacco control, sales enforcement
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Contacts / references

- Macdonald S., Rothwell H., Moore L.
 - » Getting it right: designing adolescent-centred smoking cessation services. *Addiction* 2007;102:1147-1150
- Campbell R, Starkey F, Holliday J, Audrey S, Bloor M, Parry- Langdon N, Hughes R, Moore L.
 - » An informal school-based peer-led intervention for smoking prevention in adolescence (ASSIST): a cluster randomised trial. *Lancet* 2008;371:1595–1602
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