

# Successful Approaches to Adolescents

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# Objectives:

- To remind ourselves why young people think, feel and act the way they do.
- To identify effective communication and engagement skills with young people.
- To review principals of confidentiality in youth health.
- To learn HEeADSss as an essential assessment tool in youth health.

# Definition of Youth

- Developmental period between childhood and adulthood
- Beginning with changes of puberty
- Culminating in the assumption of adult roles

## World Health Organisation (WHO)

- Adolescents = 10-19
- Youth = 15-24 yrs
- Young people as 10-24 yrs

# NZ Youth Health Issues

- What are the important youth health issues these days?



# Youth Health Issues

- Accident and injury
  - Mental distress and illness
  - Risk taking behaviour
  - Sexual health
  - Chronic illness and disability (10-20%)
- 
- Most of these are largely preventable and are related to adolescent development and behaviour.
  - Just as babies are learning to walk, young people are learning to be adults.

# Not such good news for NZ:

*Among highest in the western world for*

- Pregnancy
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Self-harm

*Major cause of death and hospitalisation*

- = Accidents and injury
- Males three times higher than females

*Youth Offending*

- 20% of offences are caused by young people <17 years.

# Not such good news

*Mental health concerns:*

- Dunedin and Christchurch cohort studies have identified rates of 20% in 15yr olds

Such as;

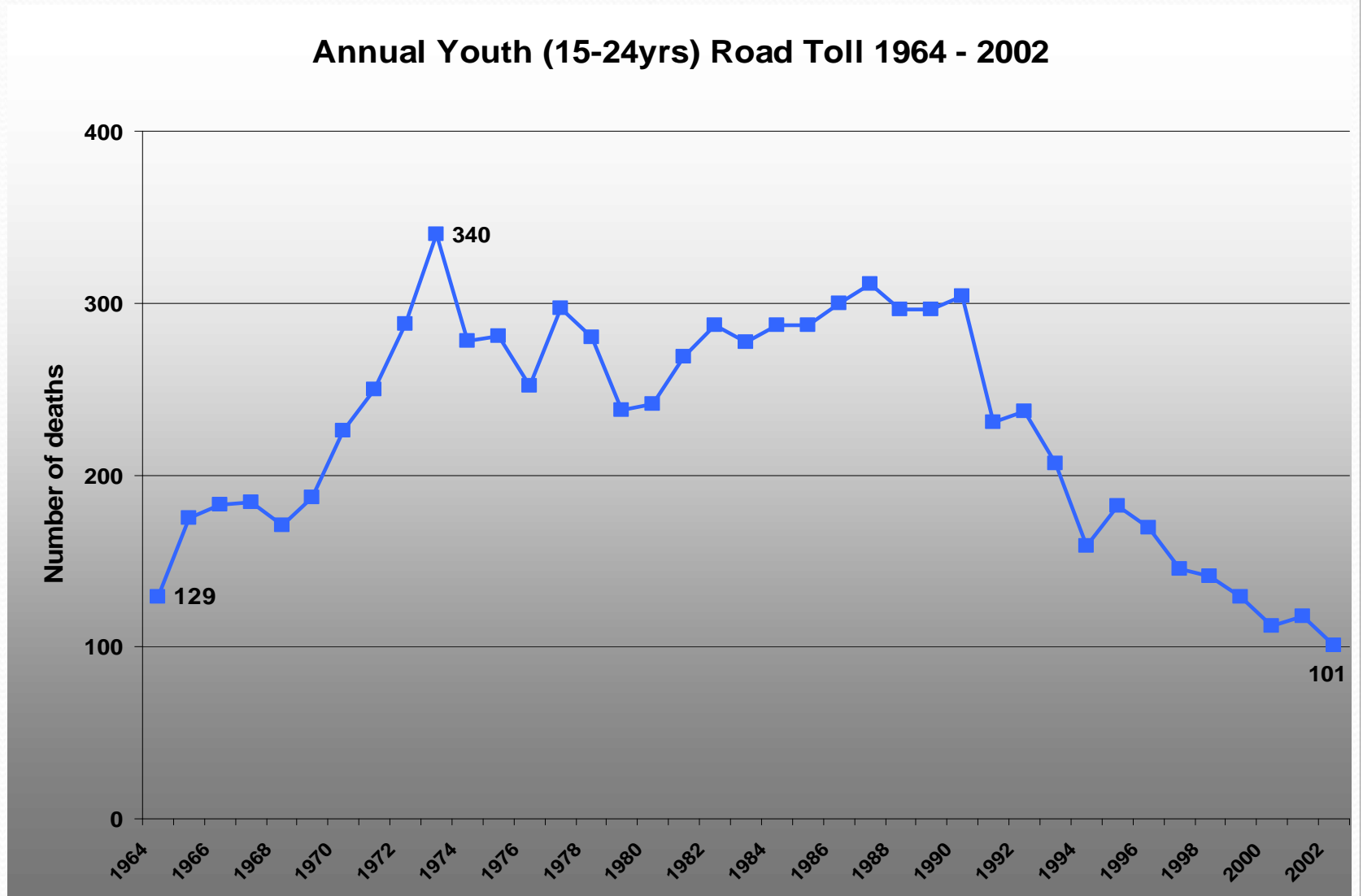
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Substance abuse
- ✓ Conduct disorder

# What's the good news?

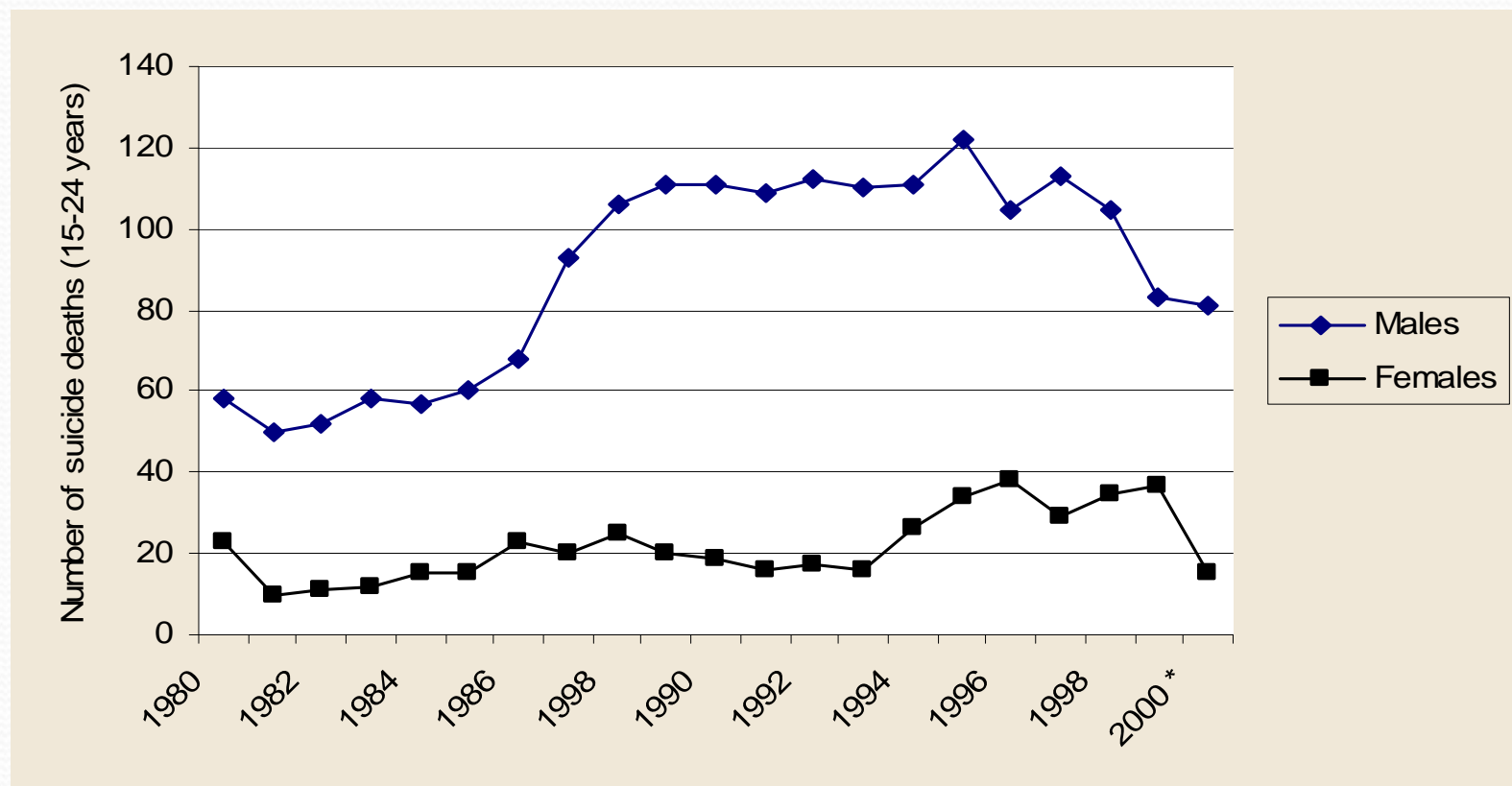
- ✓ Decline in MVC
- ✓ Decline in death by suicide

# Motor Vehicle Crashes

Annual Youth (15-24yrs) Road Toll 1964 - 2002



# New Zealand Youth Suicide Deaths 1980-2000





It helps if to remember that most young people are:

- Are connected to family
- Engaged in school/work
- Have friends
- Are happy and successful
- Listen to parents more than we realise
- Arguments are usually resolved and are around curfews and chores

See youth2000 and youth2007 for NZ data

# Why Youth Development?

- 100 years ago sexual maturity, adult roles, adult opportunities, adult responsibilities, marriage, parenthood all took place at about the same time (15 to 18 years)



# Why Youth Development?

- Now physical and sexual maturity are at 13 years, cognitive maturity at 18 years, finishing education and first baby much later





## Starting the engine without a skilled driver

### **Hypothesis:**

- Earlier timing of puberty results in several years with a sexually-mature body and sexually-activated brain circuits
- Yet with *relatively immature neurobehavioral systems necessary for self-control and affect regulation*

### **Predict:**

- Increased risk for disorders of self-control; difficulties navigating complex social-emotional situations



# Engaging young people

## Skills in engaging young people

- Communication and engagement skills
- Confidentiality

## What makes a youth friendly environment?

- Music/posters/playstation/magazines

# Building a trusting relationship

- Confident welcome
- Respond openly to adolescents initial reactions and feelings
- Clear introductions: yourself, your role, what you'll be doing and why
- Clear boundaries
- Outline confidentiality
- Gain their consent to talk to them



# Definition of Confidentiality:

- is “an agreement between patient and provider that information discussed will not be shared with other parties without the explicit permission of the patient”

Sue Bagshaw

# Confidentiality and the “three harms”

Three exceptions must be made clear to the young person & their parents/caregivers

1. Harm to self
2. Harm to others
3. Others harming you

It is OK to set clear boundaries

- What is negotiable
- What is NOT negotiable (3 harms)

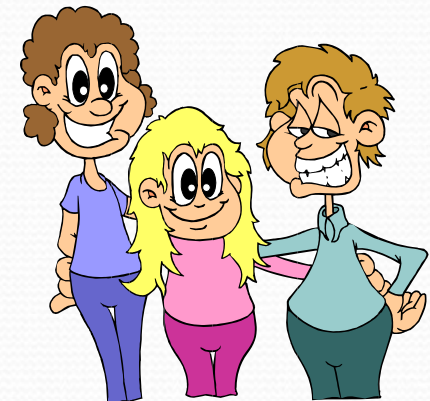


# Why confidentiality is important:

- Provides safe environment for the young person to disclose information
- Helps build trust and honesty
  - Assuring confidentiality indicates respect
  - Maintaining confidentiality is a measure of honesty

# Communication Considerations

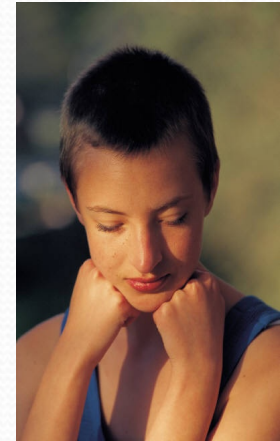
- Balance a receptive non-judgemental style with non-condoning of risky behaviour
- Focus and allow time
- Things to do/fiddle with while talking
- Use humour
- AFFIRMATIONS



# Challenges

## *Adolescent looking bored*

- Often are interested, ask questions, change activity



## *Hostility*

- Speak calmly, acknowledge anger, avoid confrontations

## *Silence*

- Allow time, make questions more specific

# The HEeADSss assessment

- A widely utilised model
- Well known in the New Zealand context
- Adds to, rather than replaces other professional assessment models
- It is a *process*. We use this tool every time we see a young person

# HEeADSss

A developmental appropriate assessment

HEeADSss provides:

- An opportunity to develop rapport
- Develops an overview of the young persons risk and resilience
- Assists the professional to cover their strong areas as well as gaps
- A clinical impression of risk
- Ensures intervention and follow up is appropriate maximally effective

# HEeADSss

## The Adolescent Psychosocial Assessment

- H-Home
- E-Education/employment
- e-eating
- A-Activities (peer group)
- D-Drugs
- S-Sexuality
- s-Suicide/depression
- s-Safety

*Goldenring and Rosen  
Contemporary Paediatrics Jan 2004; 21:64*

# HEeADSss - *do ask*

- *If you don't ask they won't tell* (Bob Blum)
- If you do ask, in the right way at the right time, they usually do tell
- Do ask, even if you think you know the answer
- If you are not convinced, try it out

# Before you start...

Prior to doing HEeADSs we would usually cover

- Greeting
- Introducing our role
- Why we are here and explaining why, also that we might be asking lots of questions and why.
- Outlining confidentiality issues

# Communication: *asking questions*

- Offer explanation for, ask permission for questions
- Normalise
  - There are some questions I ask all young people, because they are important to their health
- Or follow the cue (if there is one)
  - I notice that... I'm worried that...
- If you get a positive...
  - Tell me about that.

# Essential Questions-HOME

- **Home**

- ✓ Who lives with you?
- ✓ Where do you live?
- ✓ Do you have your own room?
- ✓ Who are you closest to at home?
- ✓ Who can you talk to at home?
- ✓ Is there anyone new at home? Has someone left recently?
- ✓ Have you moved recently?
- ✓ Have you ever lived away from home? (Why?)

# Essential Questions-EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT

- **Education/employment**

- ✓ What are your favourite subjects at school?
- ✓ Your least favourite subject?
- ✓ How are your grades? Any recent changes? Any dramatic changes in the past?
- ✓ Have you changed school in the past few years?
- ✓ What are your future education/employment plans/goals
- ✓ Are you working? Where? How much?

# Essential Questions-EATING

- **Eating**

We need to remember to ask about eating, however there is little evidence based interventions that work when dealing with young people and obesity or eating disorders

- ✓ What do you like and not like about your body?
- ✓ Have there been changes in your weight?
- ✓ How much exercise do you do in an average week?
- ✓ Have you dieted in the last year. How? How often?



## Essential Questions-ACTIVITIES

- **Activities**

- ✓ What do you and your friends do for fun? (with whom, where and when?)
- ✓ What do you and your family do for fun?
- ✓ Do you participate in any sports or other activities?
- ✓ Do you regularly attend a church group, club, or other organized activity?

## Essential Questions-DRUGS

- **Drugs**
  - ✓ Do any of your friends use cigarettes? Alcohol? Or other drugs?
  - ✓ Does anyone in your family use cigarettes? Alcohol? Or other drugs?
  - ✓ Do you use cigarettes? Alcohol? Or other drugs?
  - ✓ Is there a history of alcohol or drug problems in your family?
  - ✓ Does anyone at home use cigarettes?

# Essential Questions-SEXUALITY

- **Sexuality**

- ✓ Have you ever been in a romantic relationship?
- ✓ Tell me about the people you have dated? OR tell me about your sex life?
- ✓ Have any of your relationships ever been sexual?
- ✓ What does the term 'safer sex' mean to you?
- ✓ Have you ever been touched sexually by someone when you didn't want to be?

# Essential Questions- SUICIDE & DEPRESSION

- **Suicide and Depression**
  - ✓ Do you feel sad or down more than usual?
  - ✓ Do you find yourself crying more than usual?
  - ✓ Are you 'bored' all the time?
  - ✓ Are you having trouble falling asleep?
  - ✓ Have you thought a lot about hurting yourself or someone else?

## Essential Questions-SAFETY

- **Safety**
  - ✓ Have you ever been seriously injured? (How?)  
How about anyone else you know?
  - ✓ Do you always wear a seatbelt in the car?
  - ✓ Have you ever ridden with a driver who was drunk or high? When? How often?

# Essential Questions-SAFETY

- **Safety**
  - ✓ Do you use safety equipment for sport or other physical activities (eg bike helmets)
  - ✓ Is there any violence at your school? In your neighbourhood? Among your friends?
  - ✓ Have you ever been physically or sexually abused? Have you ever been raped, on a date or at any other time? (If not previously asked)

# Scenario

Sarah a 14 year old young women present with her mum for her 1<sup>st</sup> HPV vaccination.

Sarah has been with the practice since she was a baby, her family are all enrolled.

Would you incorporate HEeADSs into your practice?



# Scenario continued

- See her on her own
- HEeADSss
- Discuss safer sex
- Anticipatory guidance

*You need to ask the questions*

# What do you do with the information

- Document and build up the picture
- Know your local resources

Child, youth and family services

School Nurses /Public health Nurses and other community nurses

Youth specific providers and youth workers

- Know legal implications

Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion Act 1977

# Principles of Intervention

- Based on adolescent's level of risk
- Decrease risk factors; increase protective factors
- Possible foci: environment and social context, family, individual
- Acceptable to the young person
- Part of a comprehensive approach (beyond health)

# Summary

- Give HEeADSs a go
- If you don't ask they won't tell
- Young people trust their general practitioner and practice nurse



*“I’m bored with pooh sticks .....*  
*lets go get a tattoo !*  
*said Christopher Robin*