



Positive Stories, Positive Outcomes: Promoting Therapeutic Communities through proactive media liaison

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Positive stories, positive outcomes

- Why proactively engage with media?
- Odyssey House media relations strategy
- Preparing for media liaison
- Working with the media
- Measuring success
- Our results
- Q&A



Why engage with the media?

Odyssey House's vision:

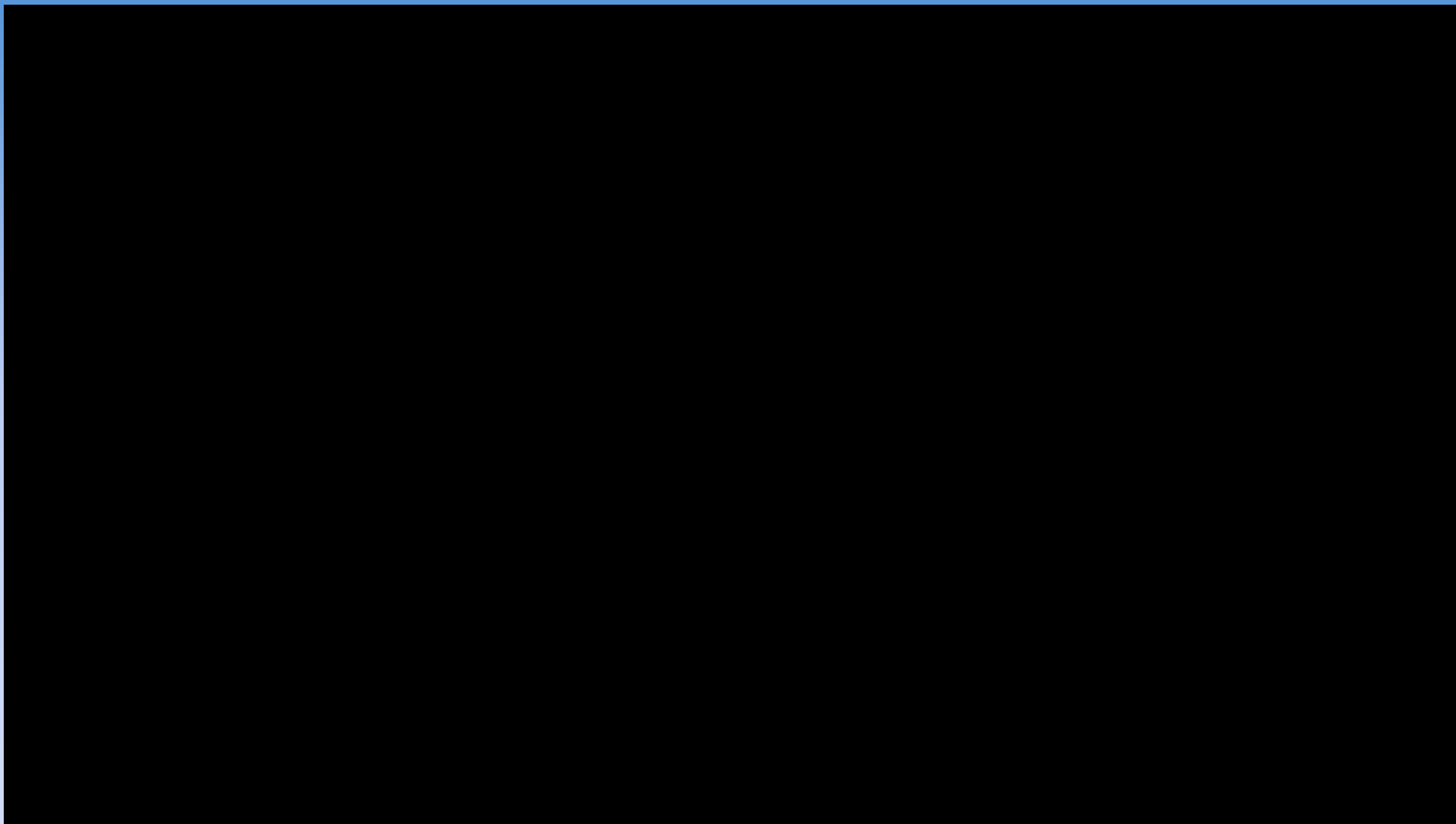
To save and improve the lives of people dependent on alcohol and other drugs

...people like Stephen:



*'A Calm in
the Sea of
Addiction'*

Stephen's story, Studio 10





Why engage with the media?

- To achieve our vision of helping people we need to promote:
 - Awareness of our services
 - Positive reputation among potential clients, referrers, donors, funding bodies
 - Appreciation that TC rehab delivers outcomes
 - Supportive public environment for:
 - TCs (“social licence”, goodwill)
 - Clients (foster access and recovery)



Why engage with the media?

- TCs have many positive stories to tell, **but we need people to hear them, to be *moved* to:**
 - THINK positively about us
 - FEEL AOD rehab is worthwhile
 - DO something positive (or at least not criticise) e.g. fund, donate, refer, seek help, tell others, support people in recovery
- Fostering positive media coverage (and limiting negative media) helps communicate our stories, successes, issues; overcome misconceptions



Long-term media relations campaign

Odyssey House's media relations strategy:

- Promote client success stories and good news, emphasising the human side of AOD
- Position CEO as an AOD expert, face of the Odyssey House 'brand'
- Emphasise positive key messages about treatment, dependence, funding ROI



Preparing for media liaison

- Research and get to know your media
- Develop internal media liaison protocols
 - Select appropriate spokesperson/s: articulate, credible, knowledgeable, available
 - Process for handling media enquiries
 - Guidelines for assessing media opportunities
- Prepare key messages, 'must says': e.g.
 - *Two-thirds of a sample of Odyssey House clients were drug-free three years after completing treatment, according to the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre's 'Australian Treatment Outcome Study'*



Preparing for media liaison

- Develop guidelines for client media involvement
 - Privacy
 - Ensuring informed consent
 - Support before, during and after interviews
- Consider possible issues/risks to reputation
 - Take action to address if necessary (issues mgmt)
 - Prepare just-in-case media responses



Working with the media

- Proactive media contact/releases

- Events e.g. fundraising activities, open day
- Achievements/news e.g. grants, awards
- Client stories



TIP: “Package” stories to increase media take-up

- Newsworthy information
- Authoritative spokesperson
- Latest data, statistics
- Compelling quotes/key messages
- Client story to emphasise impact, positive outcomes



Working with the media

- Foster media relationships to become a valued source of information and stories
 - Regular media communication
 - Backgrounders e.g. What is a TC?
 - Newsletters
 - Website news/comment
 - Site tours, meet-and-greets for key media
- Be available for interview, expert opinion, commentary on 'news of the day'

Local media coverage



Outdoor learning: Odyssey House chief executive James Pitts is pictured in the area with the centre's school principal Kerry Waters.
Picture: Luke Fuda

Area offers more room to learn

A NEW outdoor learning area at Odyssey House's Ingleburn centre was unveiled on Friday.

The drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre received a \$250,000 federal government grant under the Building the Education Revolution program.

The grant allowed for the construction of a covered outdoor learning area, as well as under-cover ramps linking classrooms, a dining room, dormitories, withdrawal unit, wastewater management system and a wheelchair-accessible toilet with baby changing facilities.

The area will be used to hold group therapy meetings, cultural gatherings and to entertain patients' families during weekend visits.

It will also be a place for the centre's residents to learn remedial English and maths, computer skills, visual arts, personal development, parenting skills and relationship skills.

Odyssey House chief executive James Pitts officially opened the area, along with centre school principal Kerry Waters, Campbelltown MP Graham West and Werriwa federal Labor candidate Laurie Ferguson.

Thousands helped

ODYSSEY House opened its doors to celebrate its 33rd anniversary on Sunday.

The drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre at Eagle Vale has helped more than 33,000 people overcome their problems since 1977.

The open day recognised graduating clients, thanked staff and supporters and educated the public about the centre's work.

About 100 clients currently live at the centre, which includes a withdrawal unit, non-residential counselling, after-care and a unique program which allows families to live together in self-contained cottages while parents undertake rehabilitation.

There was also a multicultural art display on the day and a sausage sizzle.

Odyssey House chief executive James Pitts said the open day was a great way for the public to find out what rehab entails.

"There are no easy answers to the problems of drug misuse and the reality is that alcohol and other drug problems are not confined to an isolated few," he said.

"However, research and experience has consistently shown that drug rehabilitation can work.

"Seventy per cent of a sample of Odyssey House residents were drug-free and crime-free three years after completing treatment."



Open to the public: Eagle Vale drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre, Odyssey House, held its open day on Sunday. It also celebrated 33 years of service.

Pictures: Michael Szabath

CAMPBELLTOWN

Future beckons for Steve

LIGHT AT END OF DARK TUNNEL

Vera Bertola

STEPHEN P (surname withheld by request) is a survivor.

He survived abandonment and abuse as a child and crime and addiction as an adult.

And now, after 11 months at Campbelltown's Odyssey House, he's enthusiastically working towards graduating from the recovery organisation's survivors group, which assists clients who have endured trauma in their lives.

Stephen lived on the precipice and believed his future, if he had one at all, was bleak.

Odyssey House now showcases the 50-year-old as a

role model: the current face of drug dependence (older, male, amphetamine-dependent), but someone who has a fierce determination to reclaim his life.

Stephen holds tightly to his therapeutic gift presented to him by the Odyssey House staff. It's the tale of *The Prince and the Frog*.

"There was a horrible frog and he couldn't do anything," Stephen says.

"But the frog thought, 'I can change this. It's not like

what they say.' And he changed it and turned into a prince."

Abandoned as a baby, Stephen was a Barnardo's boy until he was seven and adopted.

But the loving family he so craved wasn't forthcoming, and instead Stephen was abused and vulnerable.

"I used to sell newspapers and one day when I was selling papers on the pub steps a man put his hand on my

shoulder; I confided in him and I became part of his organisation."

From there, he spiralled downwards in a life of crime and addiction.

"I wanted to belong. I grew up in an era where men didn't show their emotions, feelings were subdued and you were in a pressure cooker. When a predator gets you, there's no self-worth."

Nowadays, Stephen has literally put his young self – the baby – to bed.

"The baby is happy. He understands it wasn't his fault."

Nowadays, the adult Stephen is delighted with the person he has developed into, the person he didn't know existed.

"I'm great with words, infectious and motivated," he said. "I'm passionate with a lot of wisdom."

But he is also realistic.

"I will always be an addict but I now choose not to hurt myself."



Former addict Stephen P has reclaimed his life with the help of Odyssey House.

Picture: ROBERT POZO

MACARTHUR
PEOPLE



SAFE HAVEN

■ Two thirds of a sample of Odyssey House residents were drug-free when followed up three years after completing treatment

■ On average, clients had nine previous attempts at treatment before entering the Odyssey House program

■ "This isn't a cure, it's a foundation to handle life outside and grow."

- STEPHEN P

Pitts puts in a 30-year stint

ODYSSEY House NSW chief James Pitts recently marked 30 years as head of the drug and alcohol rehabilitation organisation.

Over the years Mr Pitts has assisted more than 30,000 people overcome alcohol and drug dependence.

Mr Pitts celebrated the milestone with staff and clients at a barbecue at the main residential rehabilitation facility at Eagle Vale.

He then attended a tribute dinner held by the Odyssey House board at NSW Parliament House.

Special guests included Campbelltown state Liberal MP Bryan Doyle and Wollondilly state Liberal MP and Mental Health Minister Jai Rowell.

Board chairman Doug Snedden also announced the creation of the annual James A. Pitts Perpetual Lecture Series.



James Pitts at Picton High School last year.



Minister impressed: Health Minister Jillian Skinner inspects some of the artworks created by participants in Odyssey House's drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs during a visit on Friday. **Picture: Jonathan F**

Programs please minister

STAFF at local drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre Odyssey House hope a visit from the state health minister last week will help it secure funding for future programs.

Jillian Skinner visited Odyssey House's facilities in Eagle Vale and Minto on Friday and said she was impressed by what she saw.

"It's inspiring seeing how they motivate people who feel that they've really almost hit rock bottom and then they've come to the point where they're creative and they've got a future," Ms Skinner told the *Advertiser*.

"It's a wonderful approach to getting people their sense of self-esteem, confidence and building up their understanding of their own worth."

Odyssey House chairman Doug Snedden said he was pleased to see how interested Ms Skinner was in their work and hoped it would lead to continued funding of their programs.

"Government funding is by far and away our largest source but philanthropy and other fund-raising is a significant component as well," Mr Snedden said.

"If the minister has familiarity with the organisation and understanding of what we do, that can only sit well when it comes time to decide on funding projects."

Chief executive James Pitts said the minister's visit demonstrated the viability of Odyssey House's programs.

"She recognises as she's going through and talking to the residents just how impressive a program we have and the benefit it provides to the people that participate in it," Mr Pitts said. "I think that this will verify the worthiness of any programs that we put forward."

For more information about Odyssey House, visit odysseyhouse.com.au.

Grants win for drug, alcohol rehab service

EAGLE Vale drug and alcohol rehabilitation service Odyssey House has secured four federal government grants to continue providing its comprehensive range of treatments.

Chief executive officer James Pitts (pictured) said the funding ensured the immediate future of the Withdrawal Unit, the Parents' and Children's



Program, the Janus Program (tailored treatment for clients with co-existing mental health and drug problems) and the After Care Program.

"These grants from the Health Department will enable us to continue providing high quality professional care for our clients and deliver excellent outcomes," Mr Pitts said.

"It's also a welcome acknowledgement that Odyssey House delivers profound and proven results. Rehabilitation saves and helps rebuild lives; it also saves society and the government significant amounts of money."

Families set out on Odyssey of hope

Kate Sikora
Health Reporter

A CHILD'S scooter sits abandoned on the front porch. Behind the screen door, a little girl's laugh is heard. The walls are dotted with drawings by a pre-schooler and in the corner lies a basket overflowing with toys. Young mother Brigitte is nursing her newborn daughter Ruby, who has just woken for her feed.

Across the hallway a little girl, no older than four, is yelling out for her mummy as she throws up from a stomach bug.

It is a typical house that can be found in any Australian suburb.

But this home in a quiet cul-de-sac in Campbelltown, in Sydney's west, is anything but ordinary.

Brigitte, 27, is a recovering drug addict and already has two children who are being cared for by their dad. All the women staying in this

cottage are recovering drug or alcohol addicts trying to rebuild their lives and keep hold of their most precious thing — their children.

Odyssey House is a residential rehab centre, one of few in Australia that can accommodate parents, allowing them to live with their children as they undergo therapy.

"I feel completely safe and comfortable here," Brigitte said. Brigitte has been addicted to "everything" since she was 12.

Due to leave Odyssey House by Christmas, she is hoping to move into her own home and resume visitation rights with her daughters Monique 10, and Crystal, 8.

In a rare insight *The Daily Telegraph* spoke with families who call Odyssey home. Some stay for just three months but others will stay up to a year as they learn to live sober.

The non-religious and not-for-profit home boasts a success rate of 70 per cent. It can house up to 113 people, including eight single-parent families, in purpose-built cottages that resemble an average home.

It is a "therapeutic community" residents are expected to live and work together by helping to run and maintain the cba facility, as well as cook and attend therapy.

"The first thing to say about people who come to Odyssey House is that they have been involved in drug use for a significant time," CEO James Pitt said.



New life: Brigitte with her baby daughter Ruby

Pictures: Cameron Richardson

"They are socially disadvantaged. They probably have been involved in criminal activity, their families may have reached a point that they no longer can cope. They probably have had eight previous attempts at rehabilitation."

"These are people whose lives are really out of control."

For the past 30 years, the

house has been treating addicts from around NSW and interstate. In recent years, alcohol has increasingly become the principal substance of addiction for most residents, followed by amphetamines.

It is well known in the drug-taking one of the toughest, with residents taught a work ethic and expected to wake at 7am every day.

They live by five cardinal rules: No drugs or alcohol, no sex, no stealing, no violence or threats, or knowledge (of anyone abusing the rules).

"They come here and they don't have the No. 1 thing they used to cope with in life," Mr Pitt said.

"They get here and they think 'What have I got myself into?'"

But it is the Parents and Children program that makes Odyssey House unique. While parents attend their sessions, including counselling and parenting

workshops, children are expected to attend the local primary school or day care facility.



New start: Andrew and Karen Kelly

with children Dean, Marcus and Jacob and (below) James Pitt

AT NIGHT, mums and dads are encouraged to have play sessions with their children and are in charge of their own budgets — a novel concept for some whose sole purpose until then has been to score drugs.

The cost of attending the program is taken out of their government benefits and the rest is kept in account for them to use to buy incidentals, or to save.

Libby searched for months for a place like Odyssey before leaving her life in Queensland and moving interstate with her four-year-old daughter Jasmin.

"I am scared to think where we would be if I hadn't found this place," she said.

"It was a really big move for us but, as I have gone through the program, I realise it was the best thing I could have ever done."

"Jasmin is really blossoming. She is doing so well and she is confident. 'I have started to getting excited about what she can achieve.'"

One family which has gone through Odyssey and made it to the other side are the Kellys.

Four months ago, Andrew and Karen completed almost a year at the rehabilitation centre with five of their seven children.

Added to ice and speed since they were 17, the couple had spent the past decade "in a blur".

Throughout her pregnancies, Karen would limit her drug intake, but couldn't kick the habit.

"All the time I wanted to give up. I even left Andrew and went to a women's refuge twice to try and get clean," she said.

Then, one day, Karen woke up and found there was no food in her house. That was after she had already started stealing groceries to feed her growing family.

Desperate to get out of a cycle of poverty and crime, Karen finally took a big step towards redemption.

She walked up to her children's school in Newcastle and told the teacher, "I need to go to rehab."

Within 24 hours, she, her husband

and family found themselves at Odyssey House.

"I knew I had hit rock bottom," she said.

"The main priority was to be a better provider to my children."

"I always wanted to get off the drugs. It was motivation for me to be a better mother."

The couple now live in Campbelltown and are starting a new, healthier life.

The children go to school and Karen and Andrew are preparing themselves for TAFE, with steady jobs the end goal.

"I want people out there to know that there are places they can go to," Karen said.

"There is help available and if my story helps just one family, then it's worth it."



Kate Sikora is *The Daily Telegraph's* Health Reporter. If you have an interesting health-related story to tell, contact Kate on 02 9288 2711 or email sikoraki@dailytelegraph.com.au

Inspired by love: Reformed addict Libby plays with her newly-confident daughter Jasmin



Finbarr Heather used alcohol to combat low self-esteem but is now comfortable with who he is thanks to his rehabilitation.

“Recovering is something everyone can do if they persevere

Seventeen months sober, 32-year-old Finbarr Heather was brought back from the brink when he moved into Odyssey House, a rehabilitation centre designed to help addicts help themselves.

Interview by Joanna Tovia
Photography by Mel Koutchavlis

With the amount I was drinking, I would be dead if I hadn't gone into rehab. I drank six litres of cask wine a day and whatever I could get hold of on top of that. I worked the night shift in the back dock of a department store and I'd drink during my shift, then get progressively drunker when I got home until I was relaxed enough to go to sleep. When I woke up I'd drink until I felt I could face my next shift. I barely ate. I'd get so sick that what I did manage to eat I'd throw up.

I grew up in Durham, a UK mining town. My dad was a geography teacher and my mum a barrister. My mother was also an alcoholic – I can barely picture her without a drink in her hand – and the drinking exacerbated her volatile personality. To

my younger brothers and me, drinking seemed like something all grown-ups did; I was accepted as part of life. But as Mum's career took off my parents divorced and the drinking escalated. Mum died of cirrhosis the liver two years ago.

I was a very nervous child. I was always slightly eccentric in my behaviour and sense of humour and was labelled an oddball. When I got to uni, drinking allowed me to feel accepted socially, but when it started to take priority over my studies I dropped out. I took whatever casual labouring or be jobs I could find to get by. I used to be a role model for my brothers – somebody to look up to – but that disappeared as my drinking got worse. I felt like I'd really let them down.

As my position in life deteriorated, I lost the means to support myself, and my self-esteem suffered accordingly. It was a

downward spiral. The worse things got in my personal life, the worse my drinking got, and the worse my drinking got the worse my personal life became. When you're a serious alcoholic, you don't think very far ahead. You're so ill and shaking so much of a morning that it's all you can do to get the glass to your lips. It's all consuming. I spent a lot of time homeless. My thoughts were all about how I was going to scrape together enough money to get my next drink.

I met my wife, Elissa, on the internet, talking about music. We became friends and over a few years our online conversations turned into phone calls. She came to stay with me for a month in England, and two weeks after she left I moved to Australia to be with her. She knew I was an alcoholic but could see the person I was underneath it. I couldn't have gone through rehab without her; she has supported me every step of the way. She's had to become stronger without me and vowed to make changes in her own life while I made changes in mine. It's pretty amazing; she's become a gym fanatic and has lost 46 kilos. I've seen her take all sorts of strides and she's over the moon with how far I've come.

THE HEALING BEGINS

When I first arrived at the rehab centre, Odyssey House, I was 32 years old and terrified. I felt lost without my wife, and intimidated by the strange environment and all its rules. I spent the first week in the detox unit. It was a medically assisted detox program that made drying out much easier to bear. I'd done a home detox twice before and the symptoms were horrible – shaking, cold sweats, hallucinations, and you get very anxious and confused. And I didn't address the underlying reasons of why I drank. I'd soon convince myself I could handle the odd drink and before long I was back to where I was.

At Odyssey, you develop coping mechanisms and learn to love yourself. I've learned to embrace my eccentricity and care about the person that I am, which is something that took a lot of doing. I've learned to live with the fact that I'm quite an anxious person; I don't feel the need to compensate for it anymore by taking drugs and drinking. It's a massive achievement and not something I ever thought I'd be

able to do. It was like an insurmountable cliff face when I first got here and saw how much work had to be done.

As you progress through the program, you take more responsibility for the day-to-day administration and running of Odyssey House. You do everything from cooking and cleaning to requisitioning and gardening. You earn privileges as your recovery progresses, not just because of how long you've been here. I'm in the final level of the program now, Level 4, and am one of the most senior residents in the program. I'm studying to become a librarian at TAFE and spend Saturday nights at home.

It's flabbergasting when I look back at the nervous wreck I was when I first got here. I was sharing a dorm room with five guys, but was too nervous to talk to anyone. When I did speak it was something just above a mumble. Now I walk around with basic confidence and poise, and have a sense of happiness within myself. I'm running groups, addressing the whole community, and working alongside the staff. It's a pretty amazing change.

You see yourself in everyone who comes into the program; you can see how emotionally raw they are. The new residents look up to me as a role model, just as I looked up to the more senior residents when I arrived. You have to fulfill that responsibility by giving them something to work towards, and letting them know this place actually works. Recovering is something everyone can do if they persevere; it's just a question of if they want to recover badly enough.

I cringe when I think back to how my drinking made me feel. Your senses are completely dulled; you're disconnected from what's going on around you. I just wasn't living. I was alive but I couldn't remember half of what went on and I couldn't understand the other half. The sharp edges of life were brutally sanded down by alcohol, but once you get used to living without it, life is actually pretty wonderful.

MORE AT MINDFOOD.COM



READ Discover some of the positive steps that can be taken to help overcome alcohol abuse.

KEYWORDS: MESSAGE, BOTTLE

“It was like an insurmountable cliff face when I first got here and saw how much work had to be done.”



Odyssey House

Odyssey House, based in Eagle Vale in Sydney's west, uses a therapeutic community approach to drug and alcohol rehabilitation. Rather than spending their time alone in a hospital-like setting, residents live and work together as a community of about 100 people and actively participate in all aspects of the program. Rehabilitation takes place in a highly structured environment where underlying personal problems are addressed. Specialised programs cater to young adults, parents with dependent children, people with co-existing mental illness and indigenous clients. Odyssey House is a charitable, non-religious organisation funded by the government and private contributions and donations.

The Odyssey House Admissions Centre can be contacted on 02 9281 5144 or visit odysseyhouse.com.au

'News of the day' commentary

Warning over ecstasy use

BOY'S COLLAPSE PROMPTS POLICE ALERT ON DRUG DANGERS

Tarik Elmerhebe

CAMDEN Police have warned residents about the dangers of illegal drug use after a 14-year-old boy almost died after using ecstasy last week.

The boy was rushed to hospital suffering from a seizure after allegedly snorting a crushed ecstasy pill.

Camden Police crime manager, detective Inspector Jayne Doherty, said that illegal drug use was a serious issue.

"The problem is that illegal substances have no quality control. Drug users always have to consider that

drugs may be adulterated and when people think what they're taking is ecstasy, it may not be," she said.

James Pitts, chief executive of Odyssey House, a Campbelltown drug and alcohol rehabilitation organisation, said although

ecstasy use did not often present as many problems as drugs such as methamphetamine, ecstasy users could never be sure what was in a pill.

"There can be all kinds of crazy stuff in there and you don't know what you're tak-

ing," he said. "That's why we try to persuade young people not to try these drugs at all." Police said the boy was found unconscious at Memorial Park in Camden.

He was taken to Campbelltown Hospital and has been released.

HEALTH RISKS

"This is the first instance we've dealt with in which an individual has had this kind of reaction. We suspect it may be because of the way he took the drug and personal health reasons, but the bottom line is it could happen to anybody."

– Inspector Jayne Doherty

'Cool' drug triggers paranoia

ICE is seen as the drug that's cooler than cocaine and more potent than viagra – perfect for pumping up your confidence and making you dance all night long.

But the reality is stark.

James Pitts, chief executive of drug rehabilitation centre Odyssey House, has had to retrain staff to handle ice addicts because they are so much more dangerous and difficult to deal with than other drug users.

"With amphetamine-type stimulants, particularly ice, there is a completely different action because it acts on the central nervous system as a stimulant," he said.

"So the users initially have a heightened sense of wellbeing and confidence. They have an, 'I can rule the world', feeling.

"The problem with ice is that kind of wellbeing, that sense of confidence, converts after a period of time into paranoia, agitation and feeling that people are trying to do things to you."

Ice users were unable to sleep for two or three days at a time, he said, leading to psychiatric problems.

"Experts say there has been a nationwide spike in the use of the drug ice, which is in the spotlight following the arrest of the youngest daughter of Neville Wran, former NSW Premier, for a murder charge. James Pitts, head of rehabilitation service Odyssey House, has stopped short of calling of it a pandemic but says there has been a significant increase in users."



■ Amphetamines up, heroin down Drugs of choice change

PEOPLE seeking help for amphetamine dependence continue to account for more admissions to rehabilitation centre Odyssey House than those addicted to other substances.

Clients addicted to amphetamines such as ice, speed and ecstasy have surpassed those battling alcohol, cannabis and heroin dependencies — for the second year running.

Figures from the centre's recently released annual report show a third (33 per cent) of all admissions during the 2013 financial year were people with an amphetamine dependence, a 120 per cent increase since 2003 when just 15 per cent of admissions had an amphetamine problem.

But alcohol dependence was not far behind, with 28 per cent of people seeking help citing it as their main drug of concern.

Odyssey House at Ingleburn is one of Australia's largest rehabilitation services. It treated 652 people last year.

The organisation's chief executive James Pitts said while statistics showed usage of other drugs had decreased, the availability of amphetamines and alcohol was a concern.

"Ten years ago Australia was in the grip of a very serious heroin problem, when 45 per cent of our clients were admitted with opiate dependence," he said.

"This has fallen by 56 per cent to its lowest point ever, representing 19 per cent of admissions in 2013. While this reduction is good news, it's due mainly to heroin supply issues.

"People have turned instead to ice and speed because it's more readily available and

affordable. It's an unfortunate reality that people's life problems stay the same; it's just the drugs they use that change."

Mr Pitts said the report found many of those who checked in to the rehabilitation centre had begun to use drugs in their early teens.

"Odyssey House clients now report that their average age of first intoxication, usually involving alcohol or cannabis, was 12-13 years of age, compared with 16-17 years of age in 2003," he said.

"They may spend their school-age years drunk or stoned, which means that as adults they come to us needing not only drug rehabilitation, but also life rehabilitation.

"[Here they] learn practical living, job and social skills to help . . . avoid relapse."

■ Details: 9281 5144, odysseyhouse.com.au.

OUR ADDICTIONS

■ Amphetamines and stimulants such as ecstasy, speed and ice: up 10 per cent since last year, up 120 per cent since 2003

■ Alcohol: down 3.4 per cent since last year, up 33.3 per cent since 2003

■ Cannabis: up 13.3 per cent since last year, up 6.3 per cent since 2003

■ Heroin and opiates: down 20.8 per cent since last year, down 55.8 per cent since 2003

Source: 2013 Odyssey House Annual Report, Rehabilitation Admissions by Primary Drug of Concern

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"While this reduction is good news, it's due mainly to heroin supply issues.

"People have turned instead to ice and speed because they're more readily available and affordable. It's an unfortunate reality that people's life problems stay the same; it's just the drugs they use that change."

Mr Pitts said the age at which clients were introduced to drugs and alcohol was also alarming.

"Odyssey House clients now report their average age of 'first intoxication', usually involving alcohol or cannabis, was 12-13 years of age, compared with 16-17 years of age in 2003," he said.

Mr Pitts said the effect amphetamines had on mental

health was a "major issue".

"These drugs deteriorate mental health because of the lack of rapid-eye movement sleep and problems that brings," he said.

"It doesn't matter if you are or are not prone to mental health issues."

Mr Pitts said the numbers would be the same next year.

"Until the authorities tackle the importation and supply and children are educated about the severity of amphetamines, we will see similar statistics for a while," he said.

Ice takes over from heroin

THE 2013 Odyssey House annual report found:

■ 33 per cent of clients cited amphetamine-type stimulants such as ice, speed or ecstasy as their principal drug of concern — an in-

crease of 10 per cent on 2012 figures and a 120 per cent rise since 2003

■ In 2003, 45 per cent of clients were admitted with heroin dependence, but this has fallen by 56 per cent to its lowest point ever, representing 19 per cent of admissions in 2013

■ Alcohol was the primary drug of concern for 28 per cent of clients

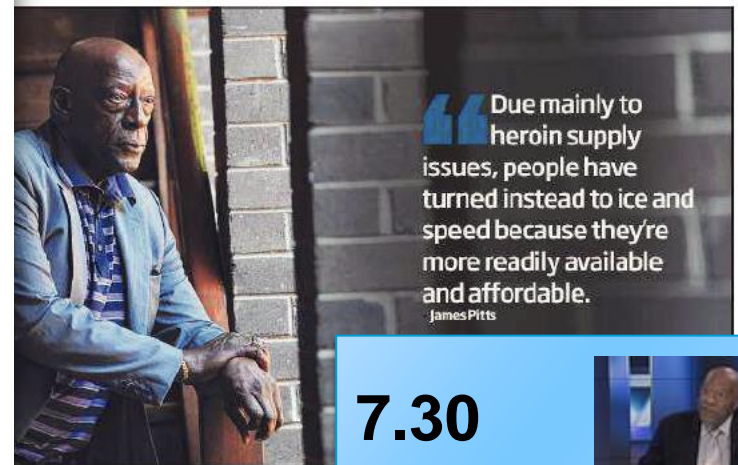
■ 51 per cent of clients had a mental illness, such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder or schizophrenia — compared with 19 per cent in 2003

■ The average age of first intoxication, usually involving alcohol or cannabis, was 12-13 years — compared with 16-17 years of age in 2003

■ Cannabis admissions accounted for 17 per cent of clients in 2013

“Due mainly to heroin supply issues, people have turned instead to ice and speed because they're more readily available and affordable.”

James Pitts



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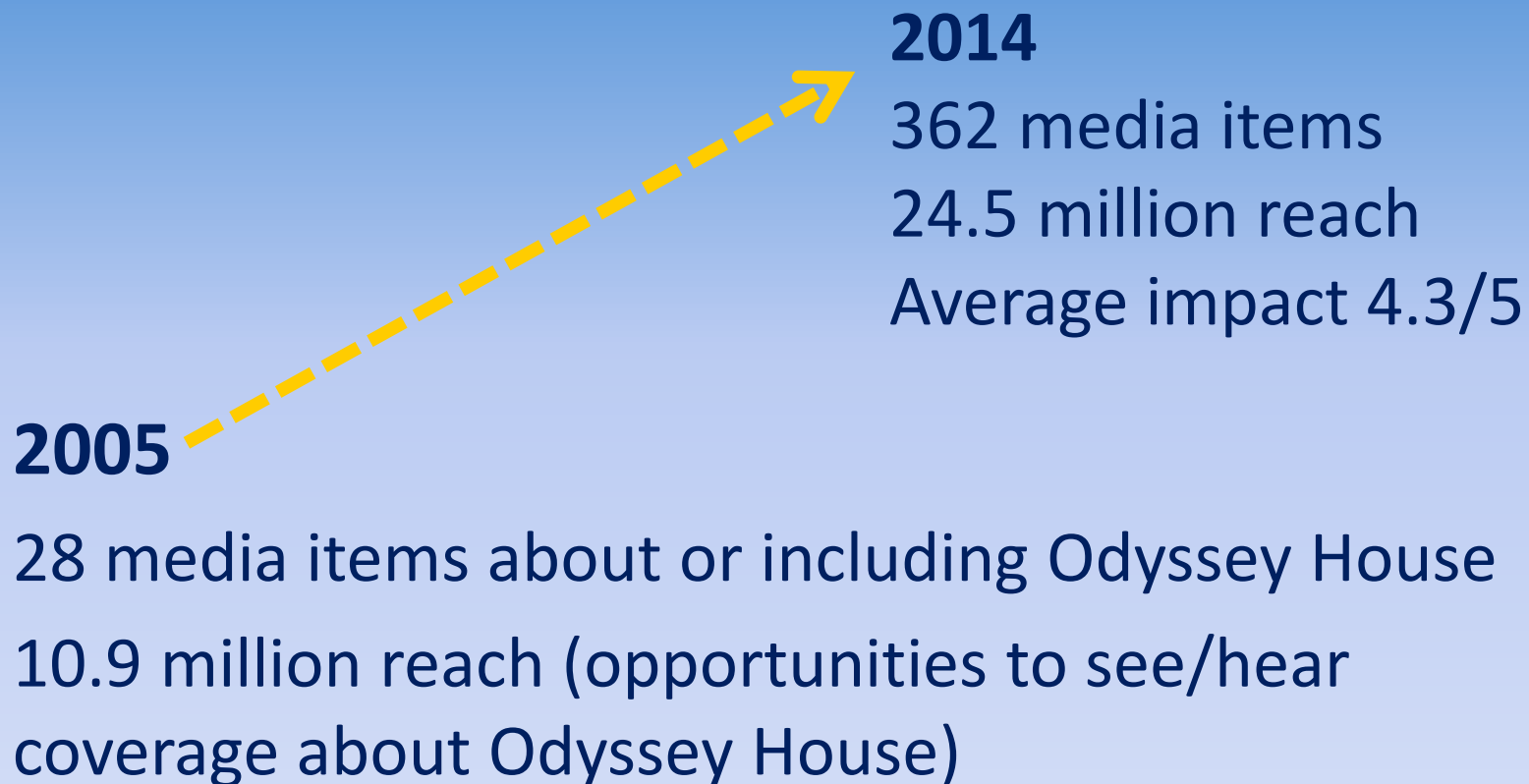


Measuring our success

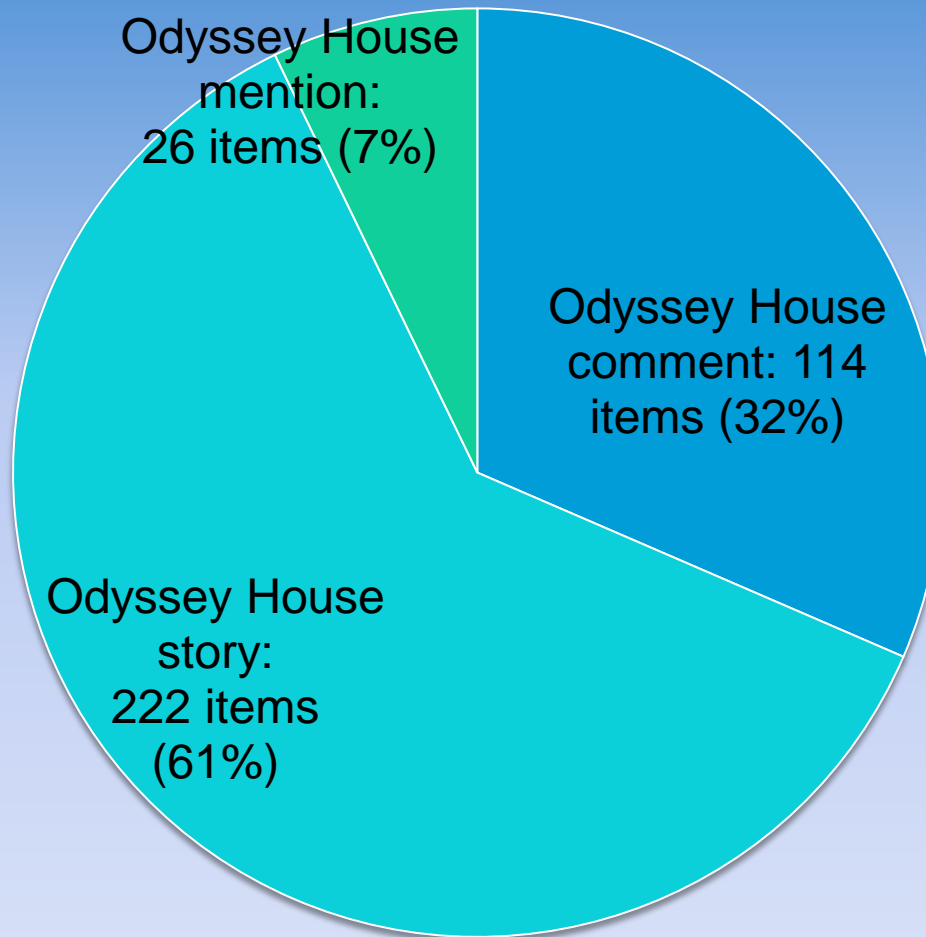
- Monitor media coverage ('outputs')
- Media content analysis
 - Number of media items mentioning Odyssey House
 - Number of readers/viewers/listeners
i.e. 'opportunity to see/hear' coverage
 - Impact rating for tone, size, quality, key messages, etc
 - Type of media items, main topic, who is quoted
- Benchmark and set objectives
→ evaluate success over time
- Analyse re key learnings for PR campaign
- Track 'outtakes' (i.e. what people *do* as a result)
 - e.g. enquiries, website visits, donations



Our media coverage results

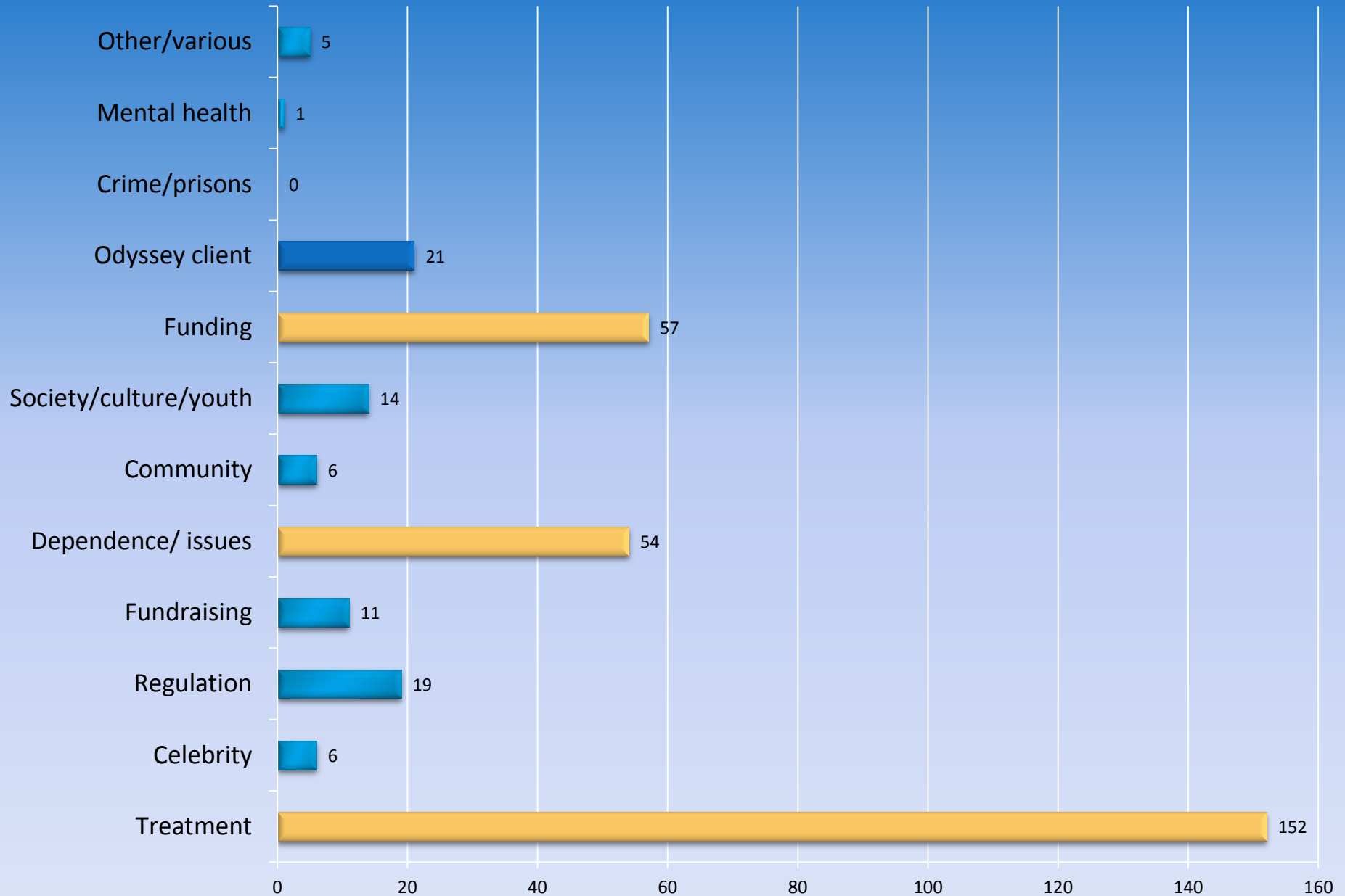


Extent of Odyssey House focus in media coverage 2013-2014



82% of coverage
included an interview
with or quotes from
CEO James Pitts

Number of media items by topic, 2013-2014





Our media outcomes

- Key messages re dependence + treatment + funding
- Increased media coverage: quantity and quality/impact
- AOD news + more 'good news' on client stories and treatment outcomes
- Positive media relationships
 - CEO a regular media commentator
 - Media contact us for info, interviews; ask to be on distribution lists
- Local media are supportive
- Strong support base, continued funding, rehab increasingly part of the 'conversation'



Key insights/learnings

- Prepare well to ease the process, manage risk, communicate effectively
- Leverage media interest in AOD to spread your/TC messages and positive outcomes
- Be persistent with media but not pushy
- Engage your local media in particular
- Be available to media and willing to consider opportunities to present positive stories



*'A Calm in
the Sea of
Addiction'*

Persuade with fact...
motivate with emotion





Positive stories, positive outcomes

- Questions?
- Your stories?

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