

Summary Report on the Evaluation of Indigenous Hip Hop Projects by *beyondblue*



This evaluation project was conducted from September to November 2009 by Edith Cowan University (ECU)

beyondblue is a national, independent, not-for-profit organisation working to address issues associated with depression, anxiety and related substance misuse disorders in Australia.

beyondblue was established in 2000 by the Australian and Victorian Governments to respond to high levels of depression and anxiety through increasing awareness and reducing any associated stigma. Youthbeyondblue is a *beyondblue* initiative which aims to help those aged between 12 and 25. The key messages it promotes to young people are: 'Look' for signs of depression, 'Listen' to your friend's experiences, 'Talk' about what is going on and 'Seek Help' together!!

Since 2007 Youthbeyondblue has worked in partnership with Indigenous Hip Hop Projects (IHHP) which is a team of artists who use traditional culture fused with hip-hop, rap, beat boxing and break dancing to foster positive mental health and leadership skills in remote Australian communities.



The aim of this partnership is to raise awareness of depression and anxiety, mental health and increase young people's wellbeing by conducting engaging hip hop performances and workshops. During this partnership, IHHP has visited over 100 communities across Australia.

Youthbeyondblue messages are incorporated into the IHHP program using various methods such as a call and repeat technique. Participants are also provided with Youthbeyondblue merchandise including sweatbands and stickers.

In 2009, *beyondblue* commissioned a research team headed by Professor Colleen Haywood from Kurungkurl Katitjin Centre for Indigenous Australian Education and Research, ECU, to conduct an evaluation to determine the effectiveness and impact of IHHP on young people.

The evaluation had four primary objectives:

1. Examine the extent to which young people in regional and remote communities respond positively to the health promotion messages of IHHP.
2. Identify the relationship between young people's knowledge of *beyondblue*'s key messages and their preventive behaviours such as supporting one another, seeking help and choosing appropriate life strategies.
3. Evaluate the change in profile of *beyondblue* and health services as a result of the IHHP visit.
4. Describe and measure the impact of activities implemented by IHHP.

Methodology

A mixed methodology was used, involving focus groups and interviews of young people and interviews with local stakeholders about the IHHP program in which they had all been involved. Details are included in Table 1 below.

During Stage 1 of the evaluation, researchers travelled to Derby and Broome while IHHP were conducting their community program, collecting data from 76 young people. For Stage 2, researchers revisited the Stage 1 sites four weeks after the IHHP visit, collecting data from 47 young people. Finally, in Stage 3, researchers travelled to Wickham and Roebourne and collected data from 41 young people who had participated in the IHHP program six months earlier. None of those interviewed in Stage 3 were included in Stage 1 or 2. In addition, 17 in-depth interviews were conducted with local stakeholders and 5 with IHHP staff.



Table 1: Details on the methodology used for the IHHP evaluation

	When	Areas of exploration	Data collection method	Participants	Sample size	Location	
Stage	1	First week of IHHP visit	Stage one measured the activities of IHHP; participant satisfaction toward IHHP; and the immediate impact of IHHP's key messages.	Questionnaires & focus groups	Young people aged 10-17 years	76	Derby & Broome
				In-depth interviews	Community organisations & school personnel	5	
	2	4 weeks after IHHP visit	Stage two determined how well the messages of IHHP were retained after four weeks; and any changes of behaviour/service provision during this time.	Questionnaires & focus groups	Young people aged 10-15 years	47	Derby & Broome
				In-depth interviews	Community organisations & school personnel	5	
	3	6 months after IHHP visit	Stage three examined the recall of IHHP's key messages by visiting communities that had engaged in the program six months previous	Questionnaires & focus groups	Young people aged 9-15 years	41	Wickham & Roebourne
				In-depth interviews	Community organisations & school personnel	7	
1-3	-	-	In-depth interviews	IHHP staff	5	-	

Key findings:

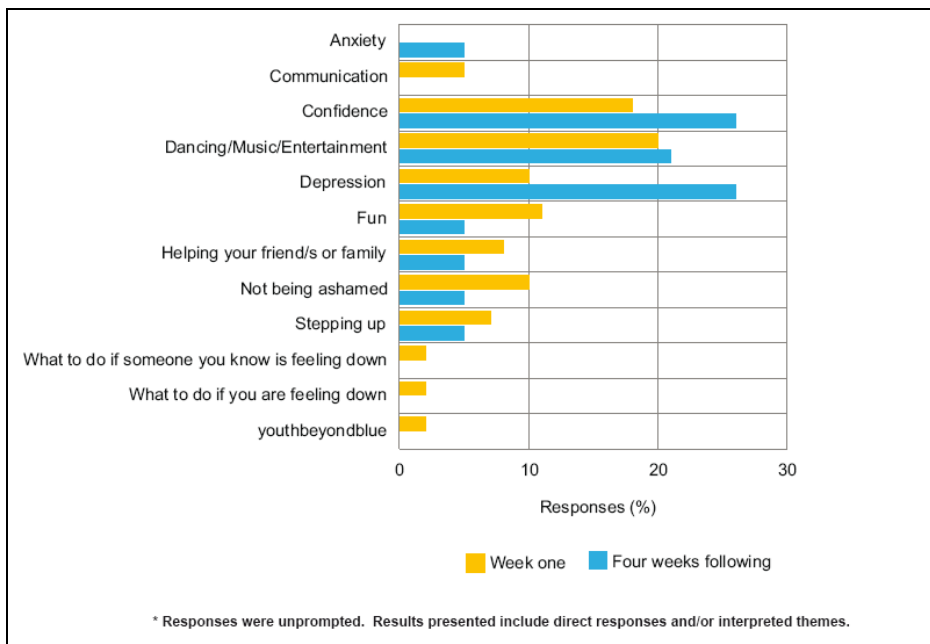
1. Young people appear to respond well to the health promotion messages of IHHP and there was some recall of the messages relating to depression and self-respect.
2. Although the level of unprompted recall had dropped six months after the visit, young people reported higher levels of self esteem.



3. 80-81% of young participants knew what depression was although this appeared to be strongest in the week of the IHHP visit. Young people appear to be less familiar with the concept of anxiety.
4. The ability of young people to identify the signs to look for when someone they know is feeling down or depressed appeared to improve as a result of IHHP. Young people were able to recall signs and symptoms of depression which were clearly defined and more specific.

5. There was a changed ability and confidence to talk about tough times with their friends/peers. As a result of IHHP, young people became more comfortable listening to a friend or family member who was experiencing tough times. The majority of young people (72-73%) appear to be comfortable talking with friends or family if they (personally) were experiencing tough times.
6. Six months after the IHHP visit, young people continue to have some awareness of the need to talk about what is going on when a person is going through a tough time and of the need to talk with friends and family if they were experiencing tough times.
7. Attitudes about attendance at health services and local community services appeared increase during the IHHP visit and this attitude was maintained four weeks following the visit. Six months later over 90% of young people said they knew where to go if they, or someone they knew, was feeling down. They were more likely to seek help from a member of their family in the first instance or someone they know, rather than from a health service.

Figure 1: When asked ‘Can you tell me what Indigenous Hip Hop Projects is about?’ young people at Stages 1 and 2 provided the following unprompted responses.



Future Directions

The ability of IHHP to capture the attention of the young Indigenous audience was evident in the anecdotal and reported feedback from the research team. *beyondblue* and IHHP has included other recommendations offered by the report in the development of their 2010 program.



“There are a few kids at this school particularly at risk who have responded to IHHP – kids with previous behavioural problems.”

About the senior researcher

Professor Colleen Hayward is a senior Aboriginal woman of the Noongar nation in the south-west of Western Australia and has been appointed as Head of Centre of Kurongkurl Katitjin at the Edith Cowan University. Among her many achievements, in 2008 Colleen was recognised for her long-standing work for and on behalf of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia by being named a finalist in the nation Deadly Awards in the category of Outstanding Achievement in Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health and by winning the National NAIDOC Aboriginal Person of the Year Award. Colleen is the 2009 inductee into the WA Department of Education & Training's Hall of Fame for Achievement in Aboriginal Education.

Photos have been provided courtesy of IHHP.