

An Evaluation of the Toronto Raver Info Project

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A report to the School of Urban & Regional Planning in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Planning

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Kingston, Ontario, Canada
August 2002

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Executive Summary

This report consists of an investigation into the programs offered by the Toronto Raver Info Project (TRIP), a grassroots organization aimed at reducing the harm associated with drug use at raves in Toronto, Ontario. The major purpose of this study was to evaluate the programs offered by TRIP in terms of three key areas: design, implementation and outcome.

This was achieved through a process evaluation of the programs offered by TRIP. A process evaluation is focused on examining the ways in which a program is designed and implemented, and places less of an emphasis on the specific outcomes of an intervention. This type of evaluation is particularly useful in the case of TRIP – an outreach organization that cannot keep track of participants in order to test whether a program is eliciting its intended effect. A process evaluation identifies the ways in which the planning and implementation stages of a program can be modified in order to improve the effectiveness of that program.

The data for this project were collected in four ways. Research began with a review of the current literature on substance abuse among youth. The focus group and the interview were the two methods used to get information from the staff and volunteers of the organization. Finally, a document review was used to assess whether some programs are being implemented as planned.

Through an analysis of the design, process and outcome aspects of the programs offered by TRIP, it was determined that, for the most part, the program design and implementation process used by the organization is sound. Based in this analysis, six major recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the programs offered by TRIP were identified, as follows:

1. Establish specific, relevant goals for each of the programs offered by TRIP.
These goals must be attainable, measurable, and reflective of the mandate of the organization.
2. Create a mechanism to review program goals periodically.
3. Include stakeholders such as parents, police and promoters in the program design and implementation process.
4. Where possible, improve measures used to monitor programs in order to ensure that the programs are being effective.
5. Also ensure that the outcome measures that are established relate to program goals.

6. Regularly collect qualitative and quantitative data on program outcomes and effects in order to determine how well programs are meeting their goals.