

# The Daniel Spargo-Mabbs Foundation

Drug and alcohol education for schools, colleges,  
professionals and communities



**DSM** *foundation*

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The drug education charity

2023 - 2024

# ABOUT US



[Click to visit our website](#)

The Daniel Spargo-Mabbs Foundation is a drug and alcohol education charity founded by Tim and Fiona Spargo-Mabbs in response to the death of their 16-year-old son Dan in January 2014, having taken ecstasy. Part of a loving family and the younger of two boys, Dan Spargo-Mabbs was bright, articulate, popular, kind, funny and talented. He was one of the very last people anyone would have expected to come to harm from drugs. And yet, on 17th January 2014, he made a decision which was to cost him his life. On his way to a rave, Dan took a dose of ecstasy. He fell into a coma and died three days later after doctors were unable to save his life. He was just 16.

Our vision as a charity is that every young person in the UK has access to effective, evidence-based drug and alcohol education, that no young person is faced with a decision about drugs without the knowledge, life skills and resilience they need to make informed and safer choices, and that no more young people come to harm. The charity is based in South London and has spread rapidly across the UK since it started working in schools, through word of mouth and recommendation.

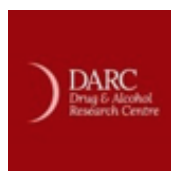


# EVIDENCE-BASED DRUG EDUCATION

Our drug and alcohol education programme for students, staff and parents is mapped to an international evidence base of what's most effective in drug and alcohol education, and to European standards of good practice. It is reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis to ensure it's all current, relevant and addresses the priority issues for young people. It provides schools with all they need to achieve the drug education outcomes in the Relationships, Sex and Health Education framework in England, and Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland. It incorporates direct delivery by specialist DSM Foundation drug educators, planning and resources for teachers, training for staff, workshops for parents and carers, a Youth Ambassadors' programme and Theatre in Education.

## EVALUATION AND IMPACT

Evaluation is essential to ensure our planning, resources and delivery are as effective as they can be, and for us, schools and stakeholders to measure the impact. Evaluation data is gathered from students, teachers, parents and carers on an ongoing basis, which is used to inform future planning and delivery. We are delighted to have been awarded government funding through the **National Institute for Health and Care Research** to work with **Middlesex University** on an academic evaluation of our drug and alcohol education programme in schools across the UK. If we are successful in the next rounds of funding this work will continue over the coming years. The DSM Foundation has been an Associate Member of Middlesex University Drug and Alcohol Research Centre since 2017, and their initial academic assessment of elements of our drugs and alcohol education programme can be seen [here](#).



The story of Dan is woven into everything we do, giving a relevance, context and reality to the information and life-skills included in the PSHE programme. Storytelling can be an incredibly engaging and effective means of communicating an important message



Click to hear Director and Founder Fiona Spargo-Mabbs' TEDx talk, explaining why drugs education is vital for all young people, and what the DSM Foundation is doing to support young people, parents and professionals.

# DRUG EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

Assemblies, talks and interactive workshops can be **delivered in person** by our drug education team if this is within reasonable reach of our London office, with a second base being established in Scotland in 2023-24. Our drug educators will plan delivery in discussion with key staff, to make sure it meets the needs of your school and students, and using pre-workshop survey feedback from years 11-13/ S5-6 students.



For schools at a distance to us we can offer:

- **Bespoke live-streamed workshops** using your school's online platform or our own Zoom Pro account, and for this option an edited recording can also be provided to you afterwards.
- Pre-recorded talks of around an hour in length, with breaks for classroom discussion and/or activities to promote student engagement and interaction.

These are modular in design so can include optional sections on topics such as vaping, nitrous oxide and festival safety as appropriate for your students.

- From Years 9 - 13/S3 - S6 '**Dan's story**', a specially commissioned 10-minute docu-drama telling Dan's story (short-listed for a Charity Film Award) for showing to students as an introduction to our PSHE/PSE resource packs.

“ Your sessions were engaging, informative, and just what the students needed. Keeping a year group fully engaged for 60 minutes is no mean feat, and you successfully managed it three times over! Teacher ”

**FE and sixth form colleges:** For larger cohorts we recommend live-streaming interactive drug and alcohol education sessions directly to students in classrooms or tutor groups. These can work well arranged around Freshers' events or Wellbeing weeks. Bespoke pre-recorded talks can also be provided with sufficient notice. We can also offer a range of specialist drug education including talks and workshops for ESOL and SLDD students. Sessions are most effectively delivered to students on vocational courses when they are grouped by subject or level.

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# DRUG AWARENESS TALKS FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Parents have a significant influence over their children throughout their teens, and working in partnership with parents can add huge benefit to all you're doing to support your students to stay safe. **'I Wish I'd Known' interactive workshops for parents and carers** involve finding out about current issues for young people in relation to drugs and alcohol, decision-making and the adolescent brain, practical strategies and advice, what to do if you have concerns and how to have conversations at home. There is an opportunity to ask questions of our specialist drug educators.

We can deliver these **in person**, if within reasonable reach of our London base, or **via webinar**. Online delivery continues to prove popular with both parents and schools, and this enables us to provide an edited recording of the presentation afterwards. All parents are signposted to a dedicated landing page on our website where they can access summary information from the workshop and other information and resources they may be interested in, and also give us their feedback.

I've just watched the recording of last night's webinar which was really informative and I'd say essential viewing for parents of teens! Parent



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# TRAINING FOR TEACHERS

Training should always be accessed by teachers delivering our 'Making Safer Choices' lessons or form time sessions, either by booking a training session at your school (in person or online) or using the pre-recorded training module available with our lesson resources if used (see below). Research demonstrates the importance of drug education being delivered by facilitators trained in this specialist area. More generic training is also available for teachers and school staff on the current issues for students relating to drugs and alcohol and how schools can most effectively work with the school community to prevent drug-related harm. Training can be designed to be bespoke to individual schools and developed in discussion with our drug education team.

“ The presenter was such a clear communicator, she spoke with knowledge, insight and compassion. There was SO much to hear about and lots of good things were signposted that I can follow up on later to further increase my knowledge ”

## 'MAKING SAFER CHOICES' DRUG EDUCATION PROGRAMMES FOR YEARS 7-13/S1-6

We offer a range of free resource packs for teachers to enable them to deliver effective, evidence-based, interactive drug and alcohol education as part of PSHE/PSE, either in lessons or in shorter, form time sessions. We always advise that schools follow up workshops delivered by one of our drug education team with our



“ I wanted to pass on how much we have enjoyed teaching such brilliant lessons. The way they have been written really lends itself to discussion and we have had an amazing response from our young people - Head of PSHE ”

**Making Safer Choices** sessions to give students an opportunity to extend their knowledge and understanding, and allow time for questions and reflection. The evidence base of best practice demonstrates that in order to be effective drug education should be delivered over a series of structured sessions, in an age-appropriate way, and reinforced in subsequent years.

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Our Making Safer Choices programmes incorporate a spiral curriculum of age-appropriate sessions for students aged 11-18. There is a 2-3 session pack for each school year, which can also be combined to be delivered in alternate school years, and used flexibly to meet your PSHE/PSE planning needs. Sessions combine age-appropriate information about the effects and risks of drugs and alcohol, what the law says, and discussion around issues such as motivation, the teenage brain, peer influence and resilience. Important practical and harm reduction strategies are included, especially for older students. A 45-minute pre-recorded training unit is included in every pack for teachers delivering this programme to provide underpinning knowledge. All these resources are downloadable from our website [here](#), including a 'map' which shows what is covered in each year group.

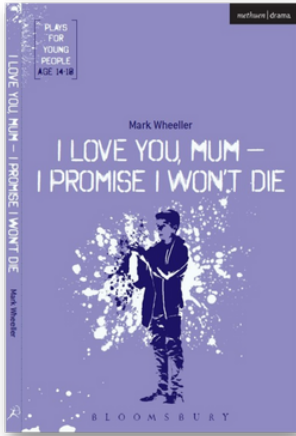
## 'MISSION TRANSITION' YEAR 6/P7 PROGRAMME

# MISSION TRANSITION for age 10-12 years

Our **Mission Transition resource pack** builds pupils' confidence and resilience both in preparation for the transition from primary to secondary school, and in adapting to their early weeks and months there. Pupils learn about core values, decision making and carry out a research lab activity investigating drugs and alcohol in an age-appropriate way. The resource pack contains two Powerpoint presentations plus teacher notes for each, designed for teachers to deliver in class. During the summer term we also offer some in-person workshops. Availability of these will very much depend on the capacity of our drugs educators so please apply early if this is of interest to you.

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# DRAMA & DRUGS EDUCATION



In 2014 we commissioned a powerful verbatim play that tells Dan's story, **'I Love You, Mum – I Promise I Won't Die'**, written by award-winning playwright **Mark Wheeler** (Bloomsbury/Methuen Drama, 2017). In September 2022 this became a GCSE drama set text on the Eduqas syllabus, and since its publication it has been studied, taught and performed in schools and communities across the UK and around the world, as far away as Australia and Canada.

The professional touring Theatre in Education production of 'I Love You, Mum – I Promise I Won't Die', adapted by the playwright, has been seen by thousands of students since 2017, with performances followed by interactive workshops. This has had a huge impact on students, teachers and parents and will be touring schools and communities again in Autumn 2023 in Scotland, Spring 2024 in the North of England with **Tie It Up Theatre** and in London and the South with **Wizard Theatre** in Spring 2024.



When the Covid pandemic prevented live performances, we commissioned a professional film of a brand new production of the play, performed by Tie It Up Theatre. The **play film resource pack** includes interviews with Dan's parents, Tim and Fiona, and follow-up workshop resources for teachers to deliver. This remains available as part of our drug education programme.



It was amazing. The actors were so good and helpful not only were they skilled actors they were really informative and have helped me make good decisions. Year 9 student



**Click to  
watch  
the film  
trailer!**

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# YOUTH AMBASSADORS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Having young people at the heart of our team, as well as our work, has been a key ingredient of the DSM Foundation from its beginning. Our school-based **Youth Ambassadors' training and development e-learning programme** is designed for year 12/S5/S6 students and provides everything needed to equip them to be a positive influence for their peers, and contribute to their school community, with support and supervision from a lead teacher in the school.



After studying the programme, students will be able to:

- develop drug and alcohol awareness messaging and resources for their school
- design and deliver workshops for younger students in their school
- speak to parents/carers at workshops, advise the school on drug and alcohol education
- represent the DSM Foundation at events and activities where possible and importantly
- to advise the DSM Foundation team on plans and developments.

## WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING FOR COMMUNITY, BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL SETTINGS

In addition to our comprehensive schools programme we offer drug education workshops to young people and parents in community settings and the workplace, and talks as part of wellbeing programmes for staff. We also provide training for health sector and multi-agency professionals, the police, voluntary sector, business and commerce, to improve their own knowledge and skills for their work. Talks are bespoke and developed in discussion with our drugs education team.

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# BOOKS FOR PARENTS BY FIONA SPARGO-MABBS

**'I Wish I'd Known – Young People, Drugs and Decisions: A Guide for Parents and Carers'** (Sheldon Press, 2021) weaves Dan's story through all the information, advice and practical tips his mum Fiona wishes she'd known before he died. It has proved incredibly popular with both parents and teachers, and in 2022 won a Gold Medal in the Nautilus Book Awards. [Click here for more information.](#)



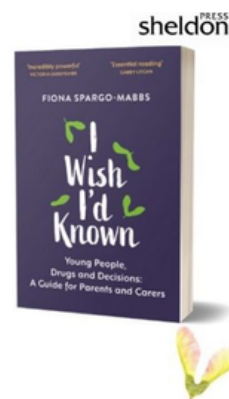
'When Dan died, I realised many things. I realised drugs were closer to our door than I'd thought. I realised drugs have become normalised for young people. And I realised I didn't know, and nor did Dan, how to navigate the choices and come home alive.'

*'Incredibly powerful'*

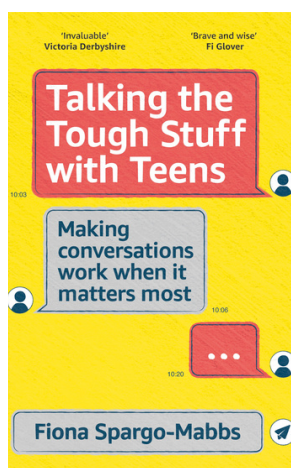
- Victoria Derbyshire

*'Essential reading'*

- Gabby Logan



**'I Wish I'd Known – Supplementary Materials'** (Sheldon Press, 2022) A series of short e-books are available to extend the content of the book to specific audiences: **'Schools, colleges, drugs and decisions'** adds advice about evidence-based drug education, school and college drug policies and cross-curricular planning; **'Drugs, decisions and difference'** is written for parents and professionals supporting neuro-divergent young people, in particular those with ADHD and autism; **'Faith, Drugs and Decisions'** explores these issues in relation to the Christian faith, for parents and church leaders.



**'Talking The Tough Stuff With Teens – Making Conversations Work When It Matters Most'** (Sheldon Press, 2022), explores conversations with teenagers – what can make them work well, or not, and what can help, both in general terms, and also in relation to specific areas of risk to young people, that are particularly tough to talk about – relationships and sex, sexuality and gender identity, mental health, drugs and alcohol, eating disorders, self-harm, and suicide.

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# CONTACT US



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