



DANIEL  
SPARGO  
-MABBS  
foundation



# **Fiona Spargo-Mabbs**

## **Director and Founder**

### **DSM Foundation**

# **Involving parents in drug and alcohol education**



The drug education charity



**Fiona Spargo-Mabbs**  
**Director and Founder**  
**Daniel Spargo-Mabbs Foundation**  
**Involving parents in drug and alcohol**  
**education**

Supporting young people to make safer choices about drugs





Supporting young people to make safer choices about drugs



# DSM Foundation drug education

Evidence-based programme of drugs and alcohol education from years 6-13, consisting of:

- Interactive student workshops
- Spiral curriculum of age-appropriate, teacher-friendly programmes of PSHE lessons and form time sessions
- Mission Transition Year 6 resources
- SEND workshops, resources and SOWs
- Training for teachers, school staff and other professionals working with young people
- Youth Ambassadors' programme
- Workshops and resources for parents & carers
- Online learning resources and webinars



Supporting young people to make safer choices about drugs

# Drugs, drama and Theatre in Education

Verbatim play by Mark Wheeler.

Published 2017 by Bloomsbury/ Methuen Drama.

Performed across the UK and around the world.

Professional Theatre in Education tours since 2017.

TiU Theatre filmed production 2020.

Eduquas GCSE drama set text from Sept 2022.



Supporting young people to make safer choices about drugs



# Why involve parents in drug education?



Most 11-15 year olds would go to their parents first for useful information about alcohol (77%) and drugs (72%)

*Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England (NHS Digital, 2019)*



Effective, evidence-based drugs education encourages **strong relationships** and **communication** between **students, parents and schools**.

*European Prevention Curriculum, EMCDDA 2019*

Supporting young people to make safer choices about drugs

# Why involve parents in drug education?



**“The family is generally the context in which children learn their group’s norms, values, attitudes and behaviours...**

**“The family is one of the most important micro-level influences on an individual’s person characteristics that can ultimately lead them to substance use.”**

*European Prevention Curriculum, EMCDDA 2019*

**“Peers and parents tend to have the strongest effect on adolescent substance use behavior. Influences can be both direct, such as offers and availability to use substances, as well as indirect influences, such as the perception of substance use approval.”**

*A review of psychosocial factors linked to adolescent substance use (Elisa M Truco, 2020)*

# Why involve parents in drug education?

## Family protective factors include:

- **Supportive relationships** with family members
- **Strong parent-child connectedness**
- **Positive parent-child communication**
- Family provides **structure, limits, rules, monitoring, and predictability**
- **Balance** between emphasis on **rules** and on **risks and consequences**
- **Clear expectations** for behaviour and values



## Family risk factors include:

- **Parental substance use**
- Both **authoritarian and neglectful** parenting styles
- **Emphasis on rules** without explaining risks and consequences
- **One-sided** communication

*Parent-child connectedness and communication in relation to alcohol, tobacco and drug use in adolescence (Carver, H. et. al., 2016).  
Which parenting style is more protective against adolescent substance use? Evidence within the European context. (Calafat et al, 2014)*



# What are the issues for parents?

- The world is a very different place!
- Ignorance of ignorance
- Pressures
- Fear/ 'othering'
- Shame/ stigma



# How to involve parents in drug education?



**DSM** foundation  
The drug education charity

## Accessible communication –

- About drug education and associated activities taking place in the setting
- About relevant policies and practices in the setting – reminders, updates and changes
- About relevant information, opportunities and news locally and nationally



What methods of communication work best for your families?



Where could improvements be made? – what, how, when, by whom?

*Supporting young people to make safer choices about drugs*

# How to involve parents in drug education?



**DSM** foundation  
The drug education charity

## Participation –

- In stakeholder focus groups – policy updates, curriculum planning, identifying local issues and priorities



What opportunities already exist for parents?

Where could opportunities be opened up? – what, how, when, by whom?



# How to involve parents in drug education?



**DSM** foundation  
The drug education charity

## Information, education and support –

- Provide accessible information events, workshops and signposting
- Provide opportunities for parents to engage with wider events and activities
- Identify families under pressure, and/or in need of support



What do you do already?



What more could be done?

“Parents should...be provided with support to ensure that they have high levels of connectedness with their children and consequently, that the conversations they have are informative, of high quality and effective.”

*Parent-child connectedness and communication in relation to alcohol, tobacco and drug use in adolescence (Carver, H. et. al.,2016).*

# DSM Foundation: working with parents



**DSM** foundation  
The drug education charity

What substances are  
around for young  
people?

How can you have  
effective  
conversations...?

...preventative  
conversations?  
...concerned  
conversations?

## Workshops for parents

What effects and risks  
do they need to be  
aware of?

Why is decision making  
and managing risk  
tricky for teens?

What practical  
strategies can help  
them stay safe?

Where can you go for  
more information and  
support?

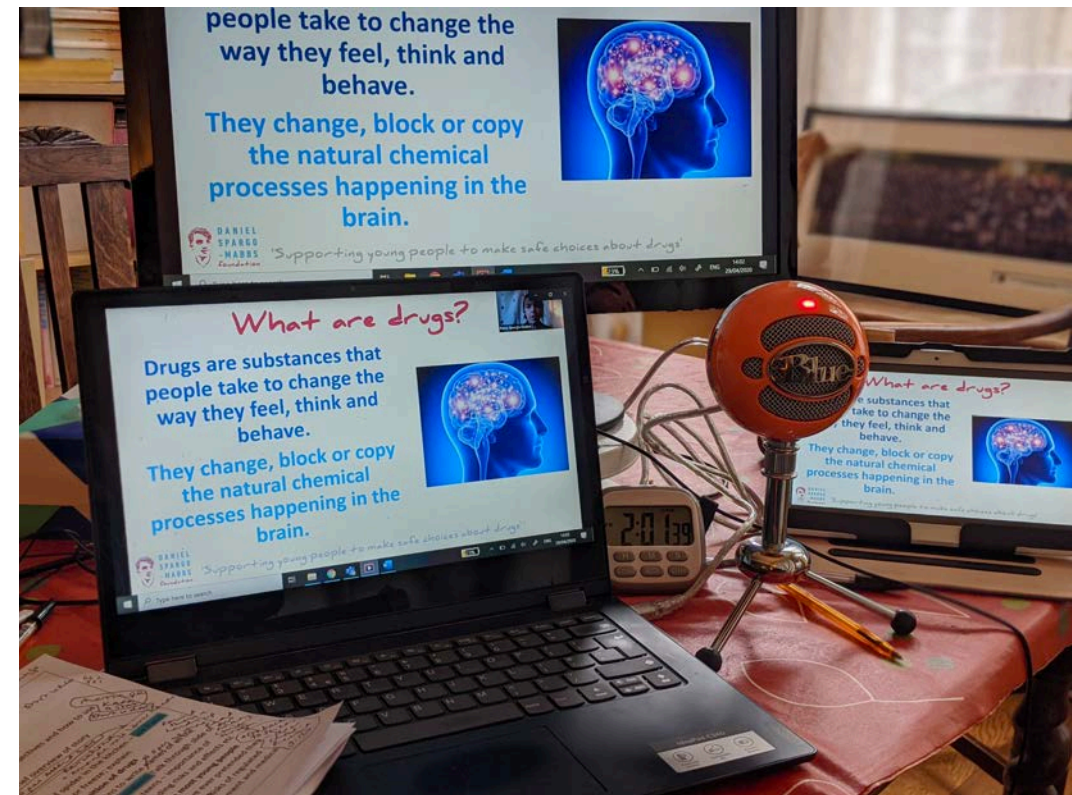
# DSM Foundation: working with parents



Accessibility, privacy and confidentiality  
Additional online resources for parents



Supporting young people to make safer choices about drugs





# DSM Foundation: working with parents

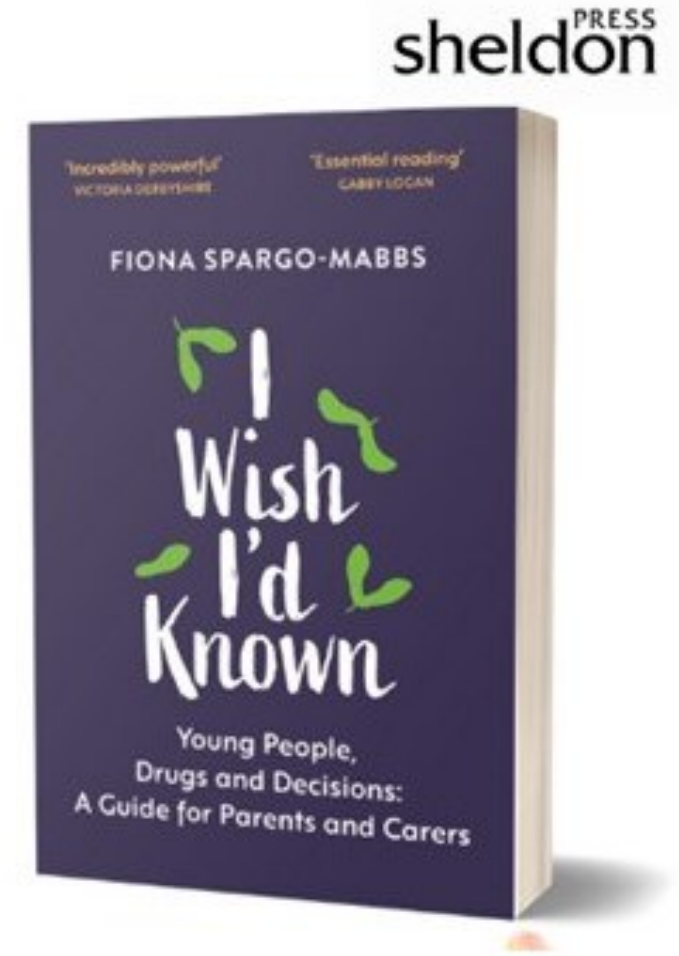
*'Incredibly powerful'*

- Victoria Derbyshire

*'Essential reading'*

- Gabby Logan

- Supplementary materials available autumn 2021, including:
- Drugs, decisions and difference
  - Schools, colleges, drugs and decisions



# Contact...

**Fiona Spargo-Mabbs**  
Director and Founder

Email: [fiona@dsmfoundation.org.uk](mailto:fiona@dsmfoundation.org.uk)  
Tel: 07785 280116



[danielspargomabbsfoundation](https://www.facebook.com/danielspargomabbsfoundation)



[dansgeneration](https://www.facebook.com/dansgeneration)



[@dsmfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/dsmfoundation)



[@foundationdsm](https://twitter.com/foundationdsm)



[www.dsmfoundation.org.uk](http://www.dsmfoundation.org.uk)