

Experimenting with Drugs

A design experiment approach to
tackling drugs as part of
“narrowing the gap”

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Background

The Trees Estate

- 800 Households 2000 residents
- High ranking in terms of IMD (Top 4%)
- Chosen to pilot Area Based Initiative Approach (2003)
- “Best Practice” Community Regeneration
- Specific Research into drug use on the estate
- “The Estate They’re In”
- 150 + problem drug users living on or frequenting the estates

The Issues

- High prevalence of PDU's
- High levels of Injecting
- High levels of polydrug use
- High levels of failure to achieve
- 60% in treatment
- No evidence of “treatment effect”

Why a design experiment?

- Evidence base for drugs is clinical
- Local focus switched to outcomes
- No idea of what might work
- Desire to create long term sustainability
- Lack of confidence in short term “plasters”
- Willingness to “Test a Theory”

Experiment In Action

- April 2005 – March 2008
- 6 month lead in – recruitment, research design etc.
- 5 staff – 25 clients
- Intervention v's Control Group
- Progress Review every 12 weeks
- Qualitative Research Opportunities

Action cont.....

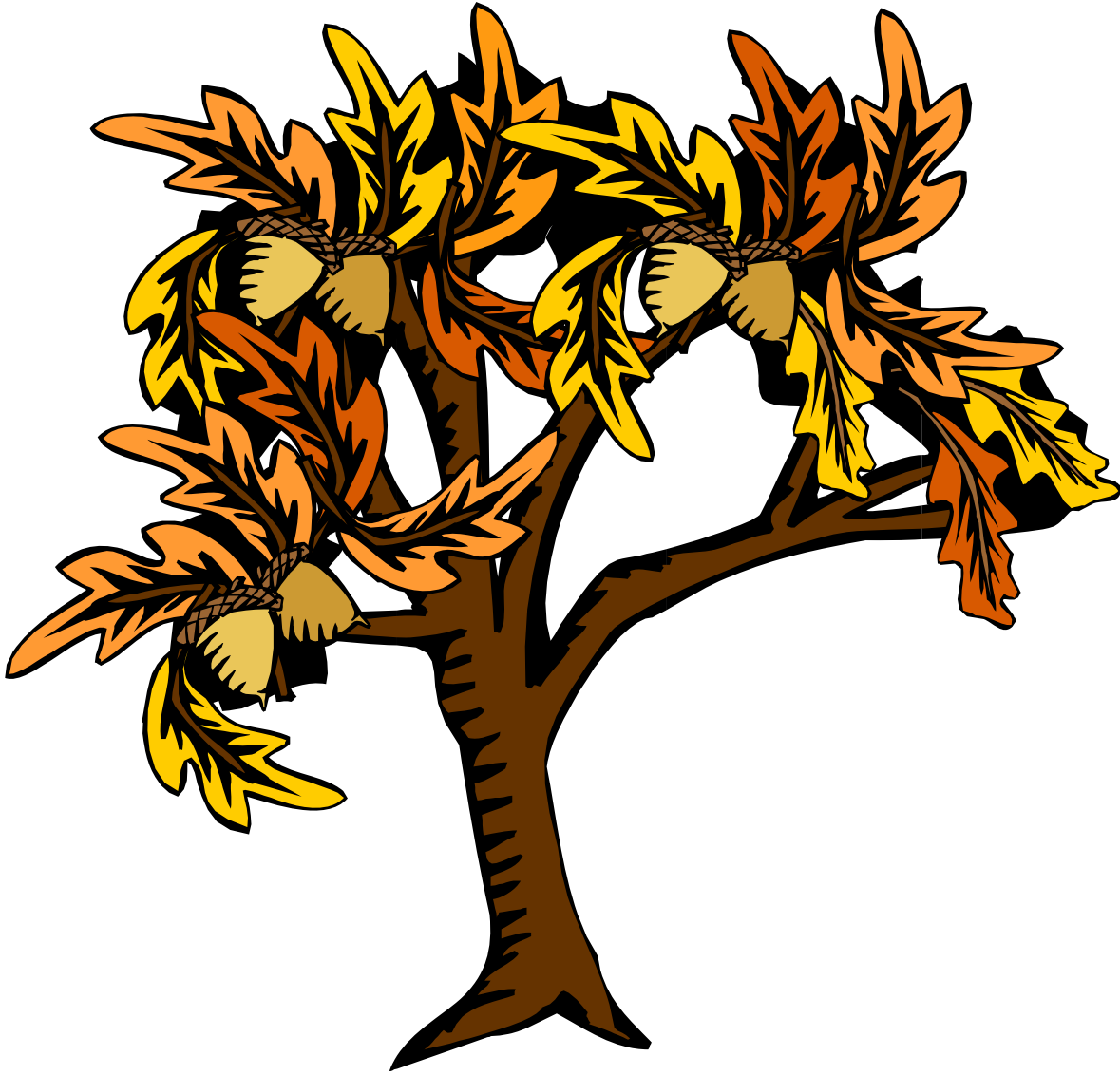
- Intensive Support Approach
- Focus on one to one relationship
- Resource to tackle individual “wicked issues”
- High level of advocacy early on
- Volunteering opportunities within the team/service

Challenges

- Lead In Time
- Expressing The Vision – describe a feeling
- Organisational Barriers
- Keeping Up the Pace
- Coping with the failures

The Good Bits

- 1 year on 23 still engaging well
- Individual progress is evident
- Drug use is down
- Motivation and stability are up
- Staff and clients value the approach
- Waiting list?
- Community Cohesion developing



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