



sophie's story



study guide



"We represent police, who daily see the impact of Meth/P on our young people and have joined others in this initiative to educate our youth on the dangers of this drug."
NZ POLICE ASSOCIATION

Assistance available

The NZ Police are very active in educating young people about drugs. They make this offer to teachers: "If you ever need assistance to present Drug Education lessons to your students, please get in contact with your local Police Education Officer. If you are not sure who this person is, then just phone your nearest police station and they will put you in contact with them."

Sophie's Story

Introduction

The effects of 'P' (a type of methamphetamine) pose a growing problem in New Zealand, threatening the well-being of young people as well as adults.

In creating a 20-minute DVD as a resource for health education, we decided to use the drama format so we could explore key themes in a way that was compelling and provided a lively starting-point for discussion and teaching.

In the course of our fictional story, our characters seek information and advice from three real-life advisors - a psychologist and a counsellor with relevant expertise.

This booklet begins with a brief summary of the film *Sophie's Story*, then looks in detail at some of its possible applications. It can be used as a discussion-starter by teachers, sports clubs and other community organizations, Police Education Officers, or anyone else concerned with health or drug education.

Although the film should be relevant to many age groups, we provide particularly detailed teaching suggestions for school Health Education in years 11, 12 and 13. We also explain how the film can be used within the Media Studies curriculum (p.20) and the English curriculum (p.23).

At the end of the booklet (p.24) we provide additional factual information about medical and social aspects of methamphetamine, and list the contact details of relevant support and advisory services (p.26). On the back cover we give a 'thank you' to the many organisations that have generously sponsored this film.

The Story

Excited about having acquired a video camera, 16 year-old Sophie King decides to make a 'video diary' about her family – her father Dave, her mother Raewyn, and her 20-year-old brother Alex. The diary also includes Sophie's 17-year-old girlfriend Jaz, who has a crush on Alex.

Sophie is proud of her family, including her 'cool' brother who seems to be doing well as an apprentice chef. But Alex starts taking 'P' when he works late at his restaurant because he wants a stimulant that will enable him to 'stay up and party all night.' Sophie is shocked by the way his personality changes for the worse as a result of using the drug. Alex is confident he has the drug 'under control,' but in fact he has become addicted.

Inevitably the focus of the 'home movie' shifts to Alex. But as the title suggests, this is Sophie's story as well as Alex's. Her responsible, caring attitude and her resourcefulness in obtaining relevant information make her a positive role model in contrast to the bad choices made by her brother.

Film credits:

Director / Producer	Shirley Horrocks
Writer	Dianne Taylor
Director of Photography	Leon Narbey
Sound	David Madigan Graham Morris
Assistant Director	Jennifer Butcher
Production Assistant	Lani Feltham
Boom operator	Fiona Ewen
Gaffer/Grip	Adrian Greshoff
Key Grip	Geoff Jamieson
Best Boy	Kimberly Porter
Casting	Annabel Lomas
Costume Designer	Kirsty Cameron
Art Director	Kasia Pol
Stunt Coordinator	Mark Harris
Make-up Artist	Louise Harris
Location Scout	Sean Tracey-Brown

Cast:

Sophie King	Troy Garton
Alex King	Xavier Horan
Raewyn King	Louise Graham
Dave King	Calvin Tuteao
Jaz	Leigh Fitzjames
Rugby Player 1	Tim Dale
Rugby Player 2	Harley Rushton

As themselves:

Uniformed policemen	Sergeant Nigel Roe Constable Viiga Lima
Detective	Phil Le Comte
Psychologist	Nigel Latta
Youthline Councillor	Renee Haitoua

Educational Use:

Health Education

Note to Health Education teachers:

- The issues raised by this short film mean that students will need an opportunity to discuss and explore understandings about the significant negative effects of methamphetamine. To this end it is strongly recommended that the film be used as a part of a comprehensive drug education programme.

See the Ministry of Youth Development's *Effective Drug Education for Young People: A Literature Review and Analysis* (2003) and *Strengthening Drug Education in School Communities* (2004), available at

<http://www.myd.govt.nz/policyresearch/drugeducationinitiative/drugeducationinitiative.aspx>

- Students also need to know where they can seek help for themselves, or in support of others. (See also Year 11 Activity #4).
- The Year 11 activities show in detail how this film can be incorporated into learning programmes assessed by a range of the Level 1 Health Achievement Standards.
- The film can also be used in Year 12 and Year 13 Health Education learning programmes by applying it to existing programmes of work developed by the Beacon Schools project (which are assessed with Level 2 and Level 3 NCEA Achievement Standards).
- See the Year 13 section of the booklet for information on how to access a Beacon Schools unit of work that focuses on use of the drug 'P'. This unit contains information that may also be of use for other levels besides Year 13.



Year 11

Activity 1. Effects of methamphetamine ('P') on well-being

Learning outcome

Students will describe effects of methamphetamine use on people's well-being – physical well-being, social well-being, mental and emotional well-being and spiritual well-being.

NCEA link

AS90066 (1.6) *Demonstrate understanding of issues relating to drug use.*

The requirement of the relevant criterion is to 'Explain a wide range of issues relating to drug use'. Drug-related issues can include the effects of drugs on well-being (as related to the concept of hauora). While this achievement standard emphasises tobacco, alcohol and cannabis use, this film offers several opportunities for students to apply their conceptual learning about the concept of hauora to other drug contexts.

Task (a): Focusing questions (checking for understanding):

- What (in general terms) is 'P' or methamphetamine?
- Why is methamphetamine commonly called 'P'?
- What are some other names for 'P'? (E.g. 'ice', 'pure', 'burn'.)

The police detective in the film talks about methamphetamine being a 'Class A drug'.

- What is meant by a substance being a 'Class A drug'?
- What are the implications of being caught with a 'Class A drug'?

NB: For extra information on drug classification, see www.ndp.govt.nz

Task (b): Information for students to note down when viewing the film:

- What effect is Alex's use of methamphetamine having on his well-being?
- What effect does Sophie learn about when she accesses information on methamphetamine use?
- What effects of 'P' use does the psychologist mention?

Teacher's notes:

The effects listed on the computer screen (when Sophie is researching the effects of 'P' on the Internet) are:

agitation, reckless or violent behaviour, convulsions, anxiety, confusion, insomnia, repetitive behaviour, mental health problems, rotten teeth, damage to organs.

Sophie also speaks of the feeling that one has 'insects crawling under the skin'.

Effects noted in the interview with the psychologist Nigel Latta:

'The crash' (after the initial high) 'is particularly hard and heavy.' Using the drug 'can affect your heart rate; it can make people feel like their skin is itchy and things are crawling all over them; people don't sleep; they don't eat properly; their sexual drive and sexual performance can be affected. Also, people can become paranoid, they hear voices.... One in three people who take methamphetamine develop a form of psychosis from taking the drug.'

The "Faces of Meth" website (mentioned in the film) is at: www.facesofmeth.us/

Task (c): Relating ideas about the effects of 'P' use on well-being to the concept of hauora

Using the list of effects of 'P' use, as noted in task (b), identify those that are:

- effects on physical well-being (taha tinana)
- effects on mental and emotional well-being (taha hinengaro)
- effects on social well-being (taha whanau)
- effects on spiritual well-being (taha wairua)

NB. It is likely that some effects will apply to two or more dimensions of well-being.

Also, remember that *spiritual well-being* in this context refers to the effects that the use of 'P' may have on: what people value, what they believe is important, what their hopes and aspirations are, how they see themselves (their identity), how they feel about themselves (for example, their sense of self-worth), what they feel connected to, and/or their sense of belonging.



Task (d): Consolidating understanding of the effects of 'P' use (written task)

In your learning journal:

- Describe (at least) two effects of 'P' use on each of the four dimensions of well-being. You need not only to *identify* the effect but also to explain *how* it may affect that dimension of well-being.
- Describe how the effects can be inter-related – for example how an effect on mental and emotional well-being can then affect spiritual well-being, then how that can affect social well-being, and so on.
- Describe how having a criminal conviction (related to 'P' use, manufacture or supply) may affect a person's well-being, especially in the future.
- Describe how Sophie's well-being has been affected by her brother's use of 'P'.

Activity 2. Making healthy decisions related to the use of 'P'

Learning outcome

Students will demonstrate the use of a decision-making model to make a healthy choice in a situation involving pressure to take 'P'.

NCEA Link

AS90066 (1.6) *Demonstrate understanding of issues relating to drug use.*

The requirement of the relevant criterion is to 'Complete all steps of a decision-making model and make and evaluate valid health-enhancing choices'.

Task (a): Who needs to make decisions in drug-related situations?

Everyone in this film has a decision to make. Even though Alex is the one with the addiction to 'P', this has an effect on everyone else he comes into contact with – and so everyone has decisions to make.

- Jaz could have made a healthier decision than trying 'P' when pressured by Alex to do so.
- Sophie has choices to make about how (or if) she will continue to try to help and support Alex.
- Alex in effect has had a lot of his choices taken away from him. The effects of his addiction to 'P' mean that his irrational behaviour gets in the way of him being able to make healthy decisions *and to stick to them*. Having broken the law, he's in trouble with the police. And he's had many other choices taken away from him.

Jaz's big decision

Using the decision making model supplied (p.10), help students to:

- Identify the main decision Jaz needs to make – i.e. whether or not to try 'P'.
- Identify other choices involved - for example, whether to say 'no' but continue to hang out with Alex, or to say 'no' and leave him.
- Understand what the consequences are, and identify possible positive and negative consequences. (Even 'good' choices can have some negative consequences.) Also consider what the immediate, short- and long-term consequences may be.
- Discuss the possible feelings involved (that is, possible emotional responses to the situation and not merely possible thoughts about the situation).
- Identify the healthiest choice for Jaz to make, and evaluate this choice by asking and responding to the following questions:
 - What barriers will get in the way of Jaz sticking to her decision? How could she overcome these?
 - What enablers will help Jaz to keep to her decision?
 - Is her decision going to disadvantage, or place at risk, anyone else in the story? If so, explain who this is and why, and what could be done to avoid this extra complication.



Task (b): Other people's decisions

Sophie:

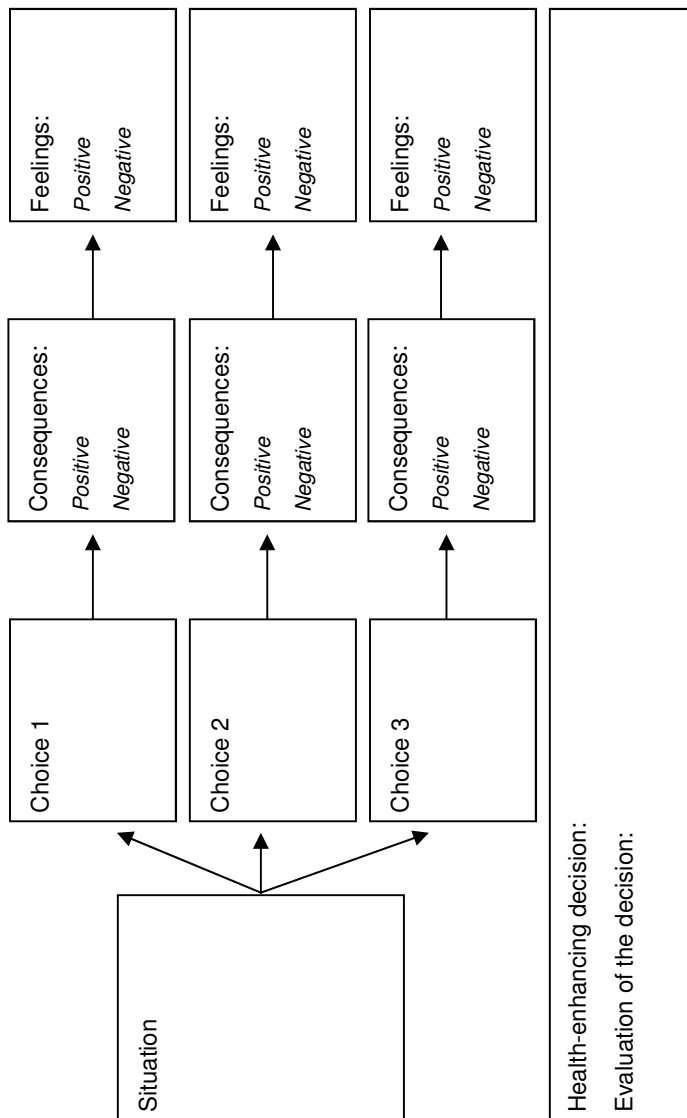
Sophie has tried to be as helpful and supportive of Alex as she knows how. As the story in the film ends, think about her choices from here on, especially in the ways she might choose to help Alex. Complete a decision-making model to show how Sophie might decide how (or if) she will keep helping her brother

Alex:

As noted, Alex's addiction is getting in the way of him making rational decisions and sticking to them. He's also in trouble with the police. Try to fill out a decision-making model to show what choices Alex has available to him at the point in the story at which the film ends.

Decision-making template:

Either enlarge the following template, or use one supplied with other Health Education resources – e.g. *Taking Action: Life Skills for Health Education*, page 98 (by G. Tasker et al, Learning Media, 1994).



Activity 3. Being assertive in peer pressure situations

Learning outcome:

Students will apply assertiveness skills to a situation where a person is being pressured to take drugs.

NCEA Link

AS 90064 (1.4) *Understand skills required to enhance relationships and apply a problem solving model.*

The requirement of the relevant criterion is to 'Demonstrate in-depth understanding of personal and interpersonal skills used to enhance relationships'.

One of the skills that must be included in the assessment is assertiveness skills.

Task (a): Recalling the situation

Replay the scene in the film where Sophie, her friend Jaz, and Alex are in the car, which has stopped in a park. It is apparent that Jaz likes Alex. She and Sophie now learn that Alex has come to buy 'P'. Sophie has just called her brother a 'loser'.

Alex: Do you think I'm a loser, Jaz?

Jaz: Uh, no.

Alex: So do you want to try it? The first time is unbelievable!

Jaz: Uh ... I don't know

Alex: Your choice - but you've got to try everything once.

Sophie: That's such bullshit!

Jaz: Sophie, it's not like I'm going to turn into a complete drug addict if I try it just once!

Discussion:

- What sorts of things do some people say or do – not just in the film, but in general - to pressure their friends and peers into taking drugs?
- Who is pressuring whom in this scene?
- What is the nature of that pressure?
- Do you think Jaz wants to say 'no' to Alex's offer of 'P'? Why, or why not?
- What is Jaz afraid of happening if she says no to taking 'P'?
- What is Jaz afraid of happening if she says yes to taking 'P'?

Note to teachers:

It is important that students see the *indirect* pressures in this situation. While Alex tells Jaz it's her 'choice,' he still makes the drug sound very attractive. Also, Alex is playing on the fact that Jaz likes him and wants to gain his attention (or affection).

Task (b): Making an assertive response to a pressure situation.

Ask students to recall:

- the features of giving an assertive response (i.e. to stand confidently, look the other person directly in the eye, use a confident tone of voice and have a facial expression that matches this); and
- the steps to making an assertive response (i.e. to say no and to explain one's feelings about the situation, using "I" statements), requesting a change in behaviour and stating the positive outcomes of this change

What Alex said:	What Jaz said:	An alternative, assertive response that Jaz could have made:
Do you think I'm loser, Jaz?	Uh, no.	
So do you want to try it? The first time is unbelievable!	Uh ... I don't know	
Your choice - but you've got to try everything once.	Sophie, it's not like I'm going to turn into a complete drug addict if I try it just once!	

In small groups, complete the table below, to show how Jaz could have responded assertively to the pressure from Alex to use 'P':

Checklist for assertive response:

- Did Jaz say 'no' to the offer of drugs?
- Did Jaz explain how she really feels about the situation – that is, how she feels about Alex's use of the drug and about Alex asking her to try it?
- Did Jaz use "I" statements to explain her feelings?
- Did Jaz explain to Alex the change she would like to see happen, without being aggressive or demanding?
- Did Jaz explain the positive consequences of Alex *not* pressuring her to take 'P'?

Task (c): Demonstrating assertiveness skills:

- In groups of three, students should turn the assertive responses from task (b) into a script.
- They should then take turns to say the assertive responses, at the same time using assertive body language and tone of voice. In each practice round, one member of the group should be the person putting on the pressure; the second should be the person who is assertive and resists the pressure; and the third should be an observer who checks that each of the features of assertiveness is being used. (The observer will need a checklist made up from the items listed above.)
- Rotate the scripts around the groups of three in the class, so that the students in each practice round are working with a slightly different script, and each person in each group takes a turn at being the person applying the pressuring, the person who is assertive, and the person who observes.

Activity 4. Being a helper, and seeking help**Learning Outcome:**

Students will describe strategies that will enable them to:

- know what to do to seek help, when someone else's drug use is affecting them;
- know what to do if they have a drug-related problem of their own; and
- help someone else with a drug-problem – that is, being a helper.

Task (a): Knowing what to do:

A focusing question:

What does the Youthline Counsellor, Renee Haitoua, recommend that people do if they need help with drug-related issues – either their own issues, or those presented by other people?

Renee tells Sophie: 'Timing will be important when you are talking to your brother. You know, you don't want to catch him when he is running out the door, or when he is high, because it might trigger stuff off in him. Wait till you're alone and together and be ready to suggest that maybe he talks to someone he can trust - like an adult, someone in the community, a family friend. Or a service he can contact, like Youthline or CADS [Community Alcohol and Drug Services], which specializes in this kind of area. And it is important for you too that you have people that are supporting you, so someone like the Youthline telephone helpline is available 24 hours, 7 days a week, and they'll just be there to support you and your journey through this. And know that at the end of the day, ultimately he makes his own choices - but having you there, walking the journey with him, is a great support.'

Information for students to note down when viewing the film:

- List the ideas provided by the Youthline worker in *Sophie's Story*, about ways to help or get help for drug-related problems; and
- List the actions Sophie herself used in the film to help herself and her brother.

Task (b): Where to go for help?

- Students brainstorm as many people, places, websites, and other sources they can think of, that would help with drug-related issues.
- Each pair of students is assigned one source of help, for which they need to find out the contact details and the type of the help that is offered.
- Supply each pair of students with a 10-15cm square piece of coloured paper on which to write their information. Combine all the pieces of paper on a large class poster, to list all the possible people and places to go to for support with drug-related issues.

Note to Teachers

Make sure students include in their lists: the school guidance counselor and nurse; the local church minister or other trusted adults in related roles; the youth worker and/or social worker if appropriate to your school/region; the police (and which branch of the police to contact if it is not an emergency call); Youthline and any other youth support agencies, including those who may not have a local base but can be contacted from any part of the country; and websites (especially those supported by Government or non-government agencies – NGOs such as www.urge.org.nz). Also, the local District Health Board drug and alcohol support services (NB: these vary in name and availability in different parts of the country). See p.26 for some contact details.

Task (c): Sophie as the helper

NCEA Link

AS90064 (1.4) *Understand skills required to enhance relationships and apply a problem solving model.*

The requirement of the relevant criterion is to 'Select and apply all steps of problem-solving models to conflict situations'.

Sophie's problem is that her brother is addicted to 'P' and this is having a significant effect on her life. The problem for her is, firstly, knowing what to do to keep herself safe (which in the film she shows she is able to do), and secondly, to know what to do to help her brother with his drug abuse problem.

Use the following problem solving model to describe the steps Sophie (or someone like her) would need to take to help a brother addicted to 'P':

Steps of the model:	How to apply these steps in this situation:
1. Define the problem as Sophie sees it.	
2. Identify Sophie's needs and feelings about the problem.	
3. Consider what Alex's needs and feelings are likely to be.	
4. Identify a possible solution, and how both Sophie and Alex are likely to feel as a result.	
5. Consider what goals need to be achieved, the barriers to reaching the goals, and how those barriers can be overcome. (NB: This needs to be thought through carefully as Sophie may need the help of other people – see task (b) above.)	
6. How will Sophie decide on a suitable time and place to raise the issue with Alex? (This will possibly involve help from other members of her family.)	

Year 12

NCEA Link

AS90327 *Describe aspects of mental health.*

This film can be used as part of the work that students complete in preparation for this NCEA assessment which requires them to '*Describe factors that may influence mental health*'. Drug use in this case is a consequence of, as well as an ongoing influence on, poor mental health.

Access the existing unit of work on mental health prepared by teachers as part of the Ministry of Education Beacon Schools Project

- Go to the Health and PE community on the Te Kete Ipurangi website at: http://www.tki.org.nz/r/hpe/elearning_e.php.
- To gain access to the Beacon Schools material, users must receive a username and password. Use the form provided on the webpage for this purpose.
- Select 'Beacon Schools material' and then scroll down the list files to Level 7 and the file 'Examine Aspects of Mental Health'.

Activity based on the film *Sophie's Story*:

Sophie's Story can be used as an example of a young person who is very resilient and managing her mental health, despite the adverse situations created by her brother Alex and his use of 'P'. Alex on the other hand seems less resilient; and his drug use has undermined his resilience and mental health still further.

Discussion questions:

How could two children from the same family have such different health outcomes? (NB: Students will need to make up the 'back story' - that is, what Sophie and Alex's lives were like prior to the events shown in the film. For example:

- What could have gone on in Sophie's life that helped her to decide not to get involved with drugs, and helped her to cope with Alex's situation as successfully as she has done?
- What could have gone on in Alex's life that put him at risk of becoming addicted to 'P'?)

Take each of the answers to those questions and make links between (a) the risk factors that can undermine resilience, and (b) the protective factors that can build resilience. That is:

- What factors may have helped to protect Sophie and make her resilient?
- What factors may have placed Alex's well-being at risk and undermined his resilience?

A list of possible risk and protective factors appears in the Ministry of Youth Development's *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa* (available at <http://www.myd.govt.nz/uploads/docs/00.7.6.5ydsa.pdf>).

Additional learning, in preparation for assessment with AS90327, should explore strategies for supporting mental health and building resilience. Consider:

- What strategies is Sophie already using to support her own mental health and resilience (as shown in the film)?
- What other strategies could Sophie's family, friends, and the wider community use to help her to manage and maintain her mental health and resilience?
- Alex's addiction makes it very hard for him to kick his 'P' habit by himself. What strategies could Alex's family, friends and wider community use to help him to improve his mental health and resilience?



Year 13

NCEA link

90709 *Analyse a health issue for a particular group within New Zealand society.*

Access the existing unit of work “Methamphetamine use in 15-24-year-olds,” prepared by teachers as part of the Ministry of Education Beacon Schools Project. Currently the unit can be assessed in this way:

- Go to the Health and PE community on the Te Kete Ipurangi website at: http://www.tki.org.nz/r/hpe/elearning_e.php
- To gain access to the ‘Beacon Schools material’, users must receive a username and password. Use the form provided on the webpage for this purpose.
- Select ‘Beacon Schools material’ and then scroll down the list files to the Level 8 file ‘Planning guide: Analyse a health issue within New Zealand’.

Sophie’s Story provides a useful resource for this unit, as part of the work completed by students in preparation for NCEA assessment, which requires them to: ‘Analyse the implications of this issue [i.e. methamphetamine use] for this group within New Zealand society’. The ‘group’ could be ‘young adults’, or ‘users of methamphetamine’, or ‘the community described within the film *Sophie’s Story*.’

Activity based on *Sophie’s Story*:

Students should analyse the implications of Alex’s ‘P’ use in relation to the well-being of:

- Alex himself
- Sophie
- Sophie’s friend Jaz (and the implications of Jaz’s use of ‘P’)
- Sophie and Alex’s parents

The community in which Alex lives.

Note to teachers:

The implications for well-being could include reference to Alex’s changed state of mental health resulting from his ‘P’ use and the effects this has on all aspects of his own well-being, and his relationships with others (family, friends, team mates, the people he works with, etc.). This includes the tendency of ‘P’ users to engage in violent behaviour. Also, think of the implications for the wider community - e.g. recreation activities such as Alex’s football team, or the role of the police and community health services.

Additional learning, in preparation for assessment with AS 90709, should include an exploration of:

- the factors that influence methamphetamine use among young adults (what may have been going on for Alex - personally, interpersonally, and in relation to his wider community - leading up to the problem depicted in the film); and
- strategies for bringing about health-enhancing change (what needs now to happen for Alex, his family and others in the community).

New Zealand-specific information to support this learning can be obtained from the following sources:

- National Drug Policy New Zealand (www.ndp.govt.nz)
- Methamphetamine Action Plan, Ministry of Health 2003
(<http://www.ndp.govt.nz/publications/methamphetamine-action-plan.pdf>)
- New Zealand Drug Foundation (www.nzdf.org.nz)

Additional resources, background information, and assessment guidelines can be found in the Beacon unit on 'Methamphetamine use among 15-24 year olds in New Zealand.' (See above for information on how to access the unit.)

-Notes on Health Education by Jenny Robertson, Health Education specialist.



Media Studies

Sophie's Story was made by an award-winning director (Shirley Horrocks, who has directed and produced such feature-length documentaries as *Marti* and *The New Oceania*), a leading cameraman (Leon Narbey, who has shot such feature-films as *Whale Rider* and *No.2*), and a very talented group of crew-members and actors.

This short film can be used in Media Studies at Levels 2 and 3, in relation to the following achievement standards:

Level 2

2.1 (AS90276): "Demonstrate understanding of the relationship between a media product and its audience."

This media product has been made with a particular educational purpose in mind (health and drug education). It is aimed at a particular target audience (high school students) and focuses on the types of decision they will have to make if they encounter drugs or have a friend or relative who is having problems with drugs. All the choices of genre, style, and narrative content were made with the audience in mind. The aim was to create a film that was both relevant and interesting.

2.2 (AS90277): "Close read unfamiliar media text."

See the Media Studies website:

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/nqfdocs/units/pdf/7464.pdf>. Other sites that offer practical suggestions for the various Media Studies achievement standards include: http://www.tki.org.nz/r/media_studies/ and <http://www.waikato.ac.nz/film/NAME/> (NAME is the National Association of Media Educators, which also publishes the useful magazine *Script*.)

One important dimension to discuss is narrative. In the course of its 20 minutes, *Sophie's story* has a beginning (or 'exposition' which establishes the main characters and setting), a middle (which introduces the problem or conflict, then develops it through a series of events, which become increasingly serious), and a conclusion (which may not resolve the conflict but does arrive at a greater level of awareness). This is a classic narrative form. *Sophie's Story* is unusual, however, in its use of documentary elements as part of a fictional drama.

2.3 (AS90278): "Demonstrate understanding of messages and/or values, and representations within media text."

As an educational drama, this is a text that seeks to communicate strong messages and values. It explores an important and controversial social issue, making use of the resources of the film medium and the dramatic impact of a fictional narrative. Drug use is a highly emotive subject, and any representations associated with it are bound to carry moral and emotional implications. In this

case, the film-makers were seeking to provide a clear alternative to the many media representations of drug use in films and rock music that make drugs seem exciting and cool, and do not acknowledge the negative effects they can cause.

2.4 (AS90279): "Demonstrate understanding of a media genre."

Sophie's Story is a classic example of a particular genre – the 'video diary,' which has become hugely popular with the increased availability of relatively cheap forms of moving image technology (such as the handcam, the small digital camera, mobile phone cameras, etc.) and the world-wide popularity of websites such as YouTube.com. The 'video diary' can take various forms but the typical approach – as illustrated by *Sophie's Story* – is to shoot footage from a first-person (or 'subjective') point-of-view, and to add a personal 'voice-over' commentary. The video diary has a particularly strong sense of 'point of view.' The maker of the video is never seen unless he or she is reflected in a mirror or turns the camera on and talks directly to it. (*Sophie's Story* illustrates all of these stylistic elements.)

Level 3

3.2 (AS90600): "Explain how meaning is created in media texts."

Many elements of film language contribute to the meaning of this film, such as the use of a 'video diary' style and personal commentary. Since 'Sophie' is a fictional character, her 'diary' is an artificial construction - the film-makers selected this method of narration as a way of conveying a particular set of meanings to a specific target audience in a way that would seem dramatic and relevant to them. It is interesting to consider whether the same message could have been conveyed by (say) a straight-forward documentary. Also see the notes on level 2 above.

3.3 (AS90779): "Investigate an aspect of media and explain its significance for New Zealand." *Sophie's Story* illustrates at least two important aspects of contemporary media in New Zealand: (1) 'commissioned films' (film as a medium to communicate important information or a particular point of view – in this case, to get a health message across to an audience of young people); and (2) 'amateur video-making' (the widespread use of personal moving image technology, as reflected in 'home movies,' production by students, competitions for new film-makers, amateur videos on websites, moving images by mobile phone cameras, etc). *Sophie's Story* is not an actual example of amateur film-making, but the choice of this genre as the film's framework acknowledges the fact that such film-making has become part of our everyday culture and will be familiar to every viewer. Both commissioned films and amateur films used to be regarded as unimportant genres, but today they are collected and preserved by film archives (including the NZ Film Archive) because they are now understood to be a rich source of social and historical information. Also, the mainstream media are making increasing use of home-made material, as are various popular websites.

3.4 (AS90602): "Explain the relationship between a media genre and society."

See the notes on 'genre' and society in 2.4 and 3.3 above.

Levels 2 and 3: Production

The 'video diary' form is an ideal format for production-related work by students, in relation to these achievement standards:

2.6 (AS90765): "Design and produce a media product and evaluate the process used to create the product."

2.7 (AS90282): "Use technology in media production."

3.6 (AS90604): "Complete and justify a concept and treatment for a media product."

3.8 (AS90606): "Create a media product using appropriate media technology."

In each case, *Sophie's Story* can serve as an example or model. Students can be asked to script or produce a similar video diary that explores a social issue in a realistic and persuasive way. In 'evaluating' or 'justifying' the result, students need to be able to discuss the choices they have made. That is, how will elements of film language (such as camerawork, editing, sound effects, setting, lighting, etc.) contribute to the intended meaning?

Students should create or plan *either* their own real-life video diary *or* the diary of a fictional character (like Sophie). In either case, the creation of such a video (or the treatment for it) should present them with an interesting challenge - in terms of visual story-telling - since it will be necessary for them to observe the conventions and to keep consistently to the subjective point of view of the person filming the diary.

It is also important that the diary be not merely anecdotal but to have a particular aim in mind - e.g., to explore an interesting social issue within our local environment (our home, school or suburb), and to arrive at some conclusions about it.

If the diary is fictional, students may also be asked to construct it in the form of a dramatic narrative (see the notes on 2.5 above).

English

Short films provide popular examples for the study of 'visual texts' in English. The relevant achievement standards are:

1.5 (90056): "View/listen to, study and show understanding of a visual or oral text."

2.5 (90379): "Analyse a visual or oral text."

3.4 (90723): "Respond critically to oral or visual text studied."

The above notes for Media Studies (pp.20-22) help to clarify how visual and verbal elements within *Sophie's Story* combine to produce meaning (aspects of style, narrative, etc.). The English curriculum emphasizes the persuasive aspects of communication, and this film is a clear example of a message aimed at a specific target audience (senior high school students) that uses both visual and verbal elements for dramatic emphasis. The film seeks to convey both information and emotion. It aims to provide useful facts about its subject, and at the same time to shock its viewers and get them thinking about the issues. In 3.4, a critical response can assess how successful the film has been in achieving these aims.

At senior level English students have done production work for both unit standards and achievement standards – such as 90059 (1.8), 'produce a media or dramatic presentation,' and 90374 (2.7), 'deliver a presentation using oral and visual language techniques.' The video diary is a genre well suited to such assignments, particularly if the diary is not merely anecdotal but has a clear purpose in mind (as *Sophie's Story* has). If the diary is fictional, students may also be asked to construct it in the form of a dramatic narrative (see the notes on Media Studies 2.2 above).



Additional information about Methamphetamine

[NB: The information in this section is based in part on the booklet *Breaking the Ice*, one of the many resources for drug education produced by the organization Fade. The complete booklet – which was developed with the support of the NZ Police – can be purchased from resources@fade.org.nz.]

Methamphetamine is a powerfully addictive synthetic stimulant. It dramatically affects the central nervous system giving a physiological and psychological response similar to that of adrenalin. The drug was developed early in the 20th century from its parent drug amphetamine, and appears mostly as a whitish, odourless, bitter-tasting crystalline powder that easily dissolves in water or alcohol. The effects of methamphetamine can last 6 - 8 hours.

There is no stereotypical methamphetamine user. The drug is much more readily available than most realise and is used by people of all ages, backgrounds, incomes and ethnicities. This is similar to overseas trends.

Although there is often discussion about the forms of methamphetamine available, it generally appears in three forms in the NZ domestic market:

(1) PILLS: Historically these are imported. Sometimes methamphetamine capsules are sold as ecstasy and also combined with other drugs such as ketamine. The pills and capsules are swallowed.

(2) POWDER: This is currently the most common form of methamphetamine. It is usually white in colour but can be found in shades of yellow, orange, brown and pink. The powder is usually snorted or injected.

(3) CRYSTALS: This form of methamphetamine is the most pure (hence the name 'P') and is becoming much more common. Often termed 'ice' because of its appearance, the white or translucent crystals are smoked/inhaled after heating, using what is called an 'ice pipe' or modified methods such as broken light bulbs.

Methamphetamine 'street' names: The terminology used for methamphetamine is often based on the form available. Pills and powder are associated with terms such as 'speed', 'meth', 'shabu', 'yaba' and 'uppers,' along with other local names. The powder and crystal forms are both associated with 'pure' and 'P'. Local terms such as 'Kiwi crack' are also heard.

Crystal methamphetamine is a relatively recent development in the NZ drug scene. Because of its purity, the drug has more pronounced effects on the central nervous system and is highly addictive. Its street names are derived from its appearance ('ice', 'crystal', 'glass'), how it is used ('burn'), and its purity ('P', 'pure').

However, 'purity' is not a given because this drug is often made in clandestine laboratories using impure ingredients. There are over 20 dangerous chemicals and acids that can be used in making 'P' - for example, hydrochloric acid, red phosphorus, hydrogen chloride gas, benzene and drain cleaner.

There are dangers in clandestine laboratory manufacture. The chemical processes used are potentially explosive, give off toxic fumes and gases, are flammable, and pollute the environment with the toxic waste left over after the 'cook' has finished. Nevertheless clandestine laboratories are rapidly increasing in number, making methamphetamine a drug with the potential for widespread abuse.

Effects

Because methamphetamine is a powerful stimulant it can, even in small doses and in the short term, increase physical activity, increase the desire to stay awake and decrease appetite. Increased alertness, energy and talkativeness are linked with an overall feeling of well-being and euphoria. These are seen by some as positive reasons to use this drug. However, the impact on the central nervous system mimics the 'fight or flight' response of adrenalin, and - as a result - breathing, heart rate, body temperature and blood pressure increase, along with other symptoms such as a dry mouth. A high dose of methamphetamine can result in serious consequences, even in the short term.

The long-term effects of methamphetamine use are potentially very damaging, causing the negative physical and psychological effects mentioned in the film, among others. Problems also result from the compulsive, drug-seeking behaviour associated with addiction to this drug.

Crystal methamphetamine, like all addictive drugs, produces an initial pleasurable effect followed by an unpleasant rebound effect in the form of depression and fatigue. These extreme feelings are often what drives a user to use it again and again, resulting in significant tolerance as well as psychological dependence. Increasingly this form of methamphetamine is being linked to irrational, aggressive and violent behaviour in families and communities throughout NZ.

For teachers: More complex information on the subject may also be available from:

New Zealand Drug Foundation www.nzdf.org.nz

Mental Health Foundation www.mhf.org.nz

It is suggested that teachers copy this information for students:

Contact Details for Support Services

National Youth Centered Services

Youthline Helpline	0800 37 66 33
Youthline Text	027 4 YOUTH
Youthline Email	Youthline@youthline.co.nz
Youthline website	www.youthline.co.nz
Urge Website – Youth Information	www.urge.co.nz
	www.whakamanawa.co.nz
Alcohol Drug Helpline	0800 787 797
Narcotics Anonymous	0800 NA TODAY
Alcoholics Anonymous	0800 229 675

Regional Youth Centered Services

Northland

The Pulse Youth One Stop Shop	Whangarei	09 438 0004
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Auckland

CADS Auckland	Auckland	09 845 1818
The Centre for Youth Health	Manukau	09 261 2272
WAYS – West Auckland Youth Services	Henderson	09 837 4306

Midland

Café For Youth Health	Taupo	07 378 3895
Rotovegas Youth Health	Rotorua	07 343 1013

Central

Youth One Stop Shop	Palmerston North	06 355 5906
Directions For Youth Health	Hastings	06 870 8449
Youth Advice Centre	Wanganui	06 348 9935

Wellington

Vibe	Upper Hutt	04 528 6261
	Lower Hutt	04 566 0525
Evolve	Wellington	04 801 9150

Upper South Island

The Hub	Nelson	03 545 9147
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Central South Island (including West Coast)

198 Youth Health Centre	Christchurch	03 379 4800
Waipuna Youth Community Services	Christchurch	03 386 2159

Otago

Otago Youth Wellness Centre	Dunedin	03 474 9547
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Southland

Child, Adolescent Family Service	Invercargill	03 214 5753
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For up-to-date and more extensive information about regional support services, contact Youthline or the Alcohol Drug Helpline.

NB: Since changes occur from time to time, teachers should try to check that this list is up-to-date.

'Sophie's Story' and the study guide were produced by:



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**The text of this booklet is also available on our website
(www.pointofview.co.nz) under 'Education/Training'**

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