

MyUSE: A Digitally Delivered health app to protect college students' well-being from drug use

**Best practices from
Ireland**



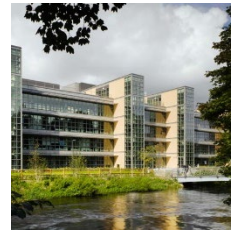
A TRADITION OF
INDEPENDENT
THINKING



UCC

University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Acknowledgments

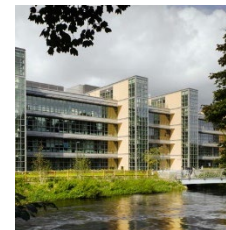


- **Key Interdisciplinary Collaborators:**

- School of Applied Psychology, UCC
- School of Business & Information Systems, UCC
- School of Public Health, UCC
- Student Health Service, UCC

- **Funders:**

- University College Cork, Students' Union



The problem of drug use among college students

- highly prevalent among students

(Bennett et al., 2015)

- High risks for first-year students

(Skidmore et al., 2016)

- Harm from drugs becomes a pertinent public health problem

(Bachman et al., 2013)

- Limited care opportunities from student support services

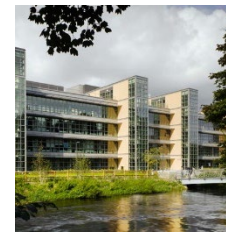
(Gulliver et al., 2015)

The MyUSE intervention



UNDERSTANDING
SUBSTANCE USE





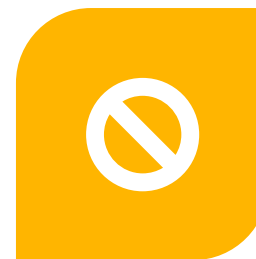
3 problems to address



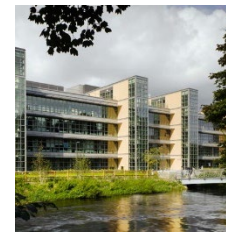
Low awareness of the factors influencing drug use



Poor insight for the negative effects of drugs in college's life



Lack alternatives to drug use activities



What we target to change



Increase students' behavioural awareness in relation to their decision to take drugs

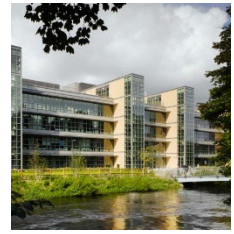


Help them find alternatives to substance use behaviours to fulfil personal desires



Create a personalized harm-reduction plan

How MyUSE works (mechanism of change)



**Make more
mindful
decision making
(increase your
behavioural
awareness)**



**Get the most of
the college's life
(identify valued
based activities)**



**Protect your
well-being
(personalized
harm-reduction
plan)**

How MyUSE works (mechanism of change)



Increase behavioral awareness on:

- “why I take (or not take) drugs?”
- “What do drugs give me more than what I have?”
- “Am I taking drugs because my friends do it?”
- “What activities do and don’t make them use drugs?”



Recognition of valued based activities:

- “Can I have fun with other than drug use activities?”
- “Which activities can promote long-term satisfaction ?”



Decide & Protect:

- “How can I decide mindfully when drug is offered?”
- “What are my influences?”
- “How I prepare myself in case drug use is offered?”

We focus on 8 clusters of behaviors to change



Cluster 1:
Increase awareness of the effects of drug use



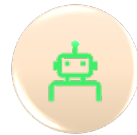
Cluster 2:
Promote value-based committed actions



Cluster 3:
Increase optimism for alternative activities to induce positive experiences



Cluster 4:
Increase awareness of the university as a risky context



Cluster 5:
Cultivate awareness of the reasons for use



Cluster 6: Resolve misleading expectation of the effects of drugs

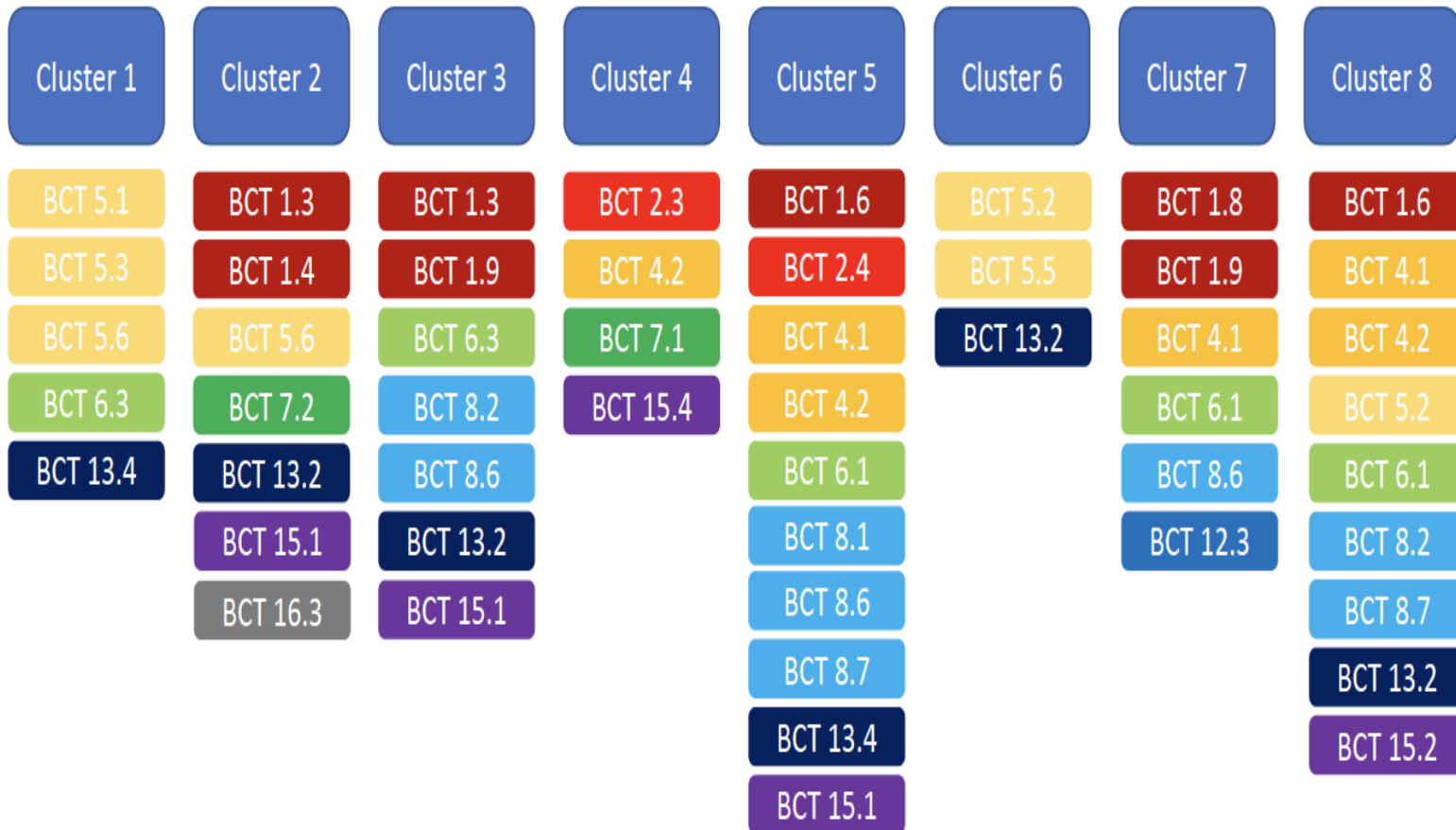
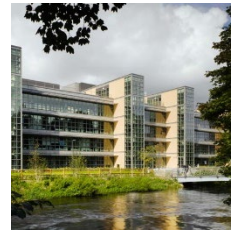


Cluster 7:
Increase practical skills on harm reduction use

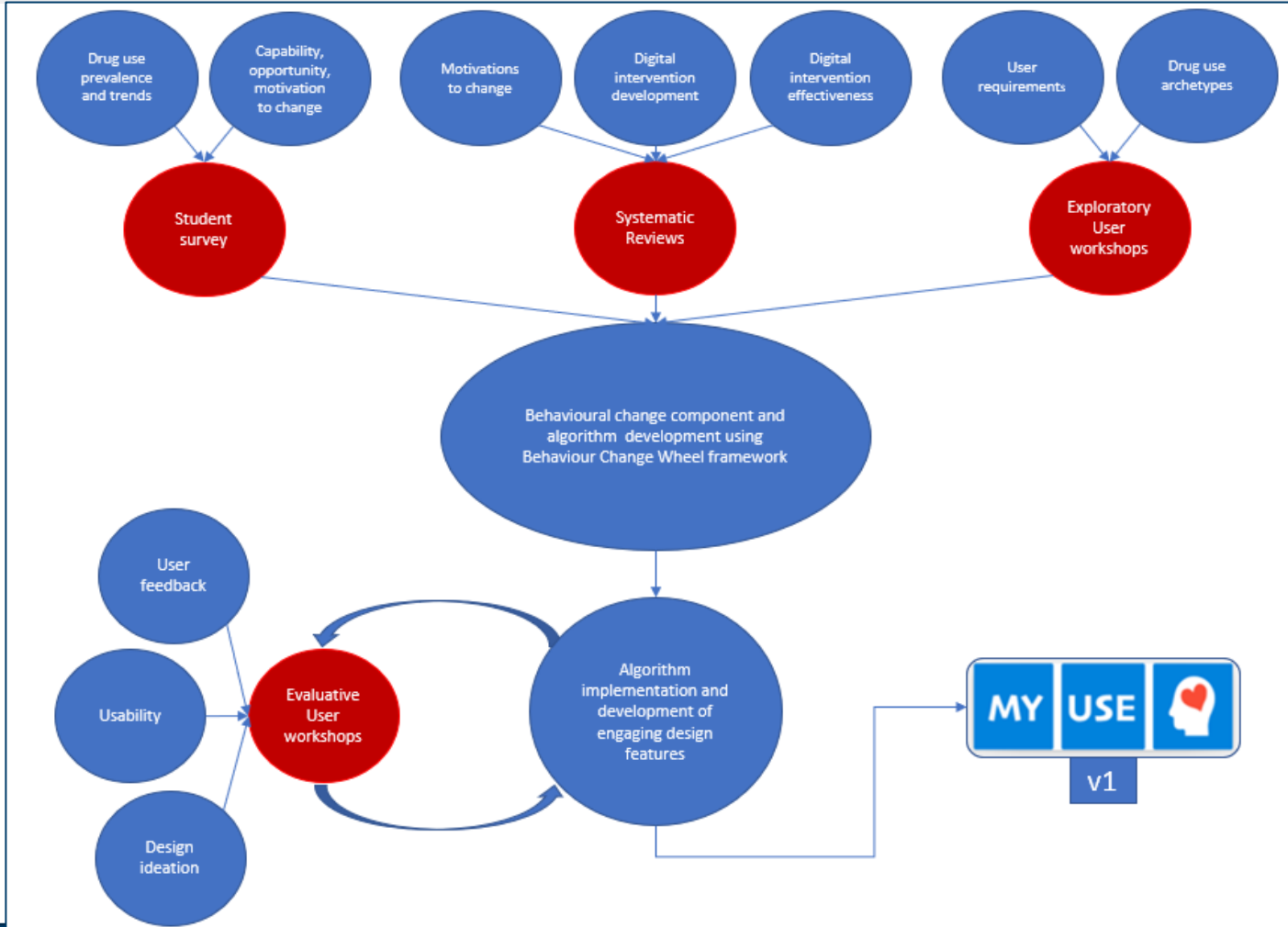


Cluster 8:
Promote awareness of the decision to use drugs under the peer influences

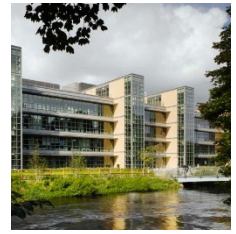
Clusters are targeted via 29 Behavioral Change Techniques (taxonomy; BCTTv1)



MyUSE Development



Website



[Home](#)

[Check My Use](#)

[Substances](#)

[Activities](#)

[About Us](#)

[Find Support](#)

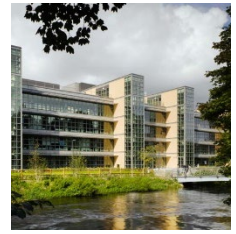
Get the most out of university life

Sometimes using substances can affect your journey as a student. We're here to help you make informed decisions about substance use, and find the supports you need.


[Try Our Checkup](#)



Mobile app



MyUse



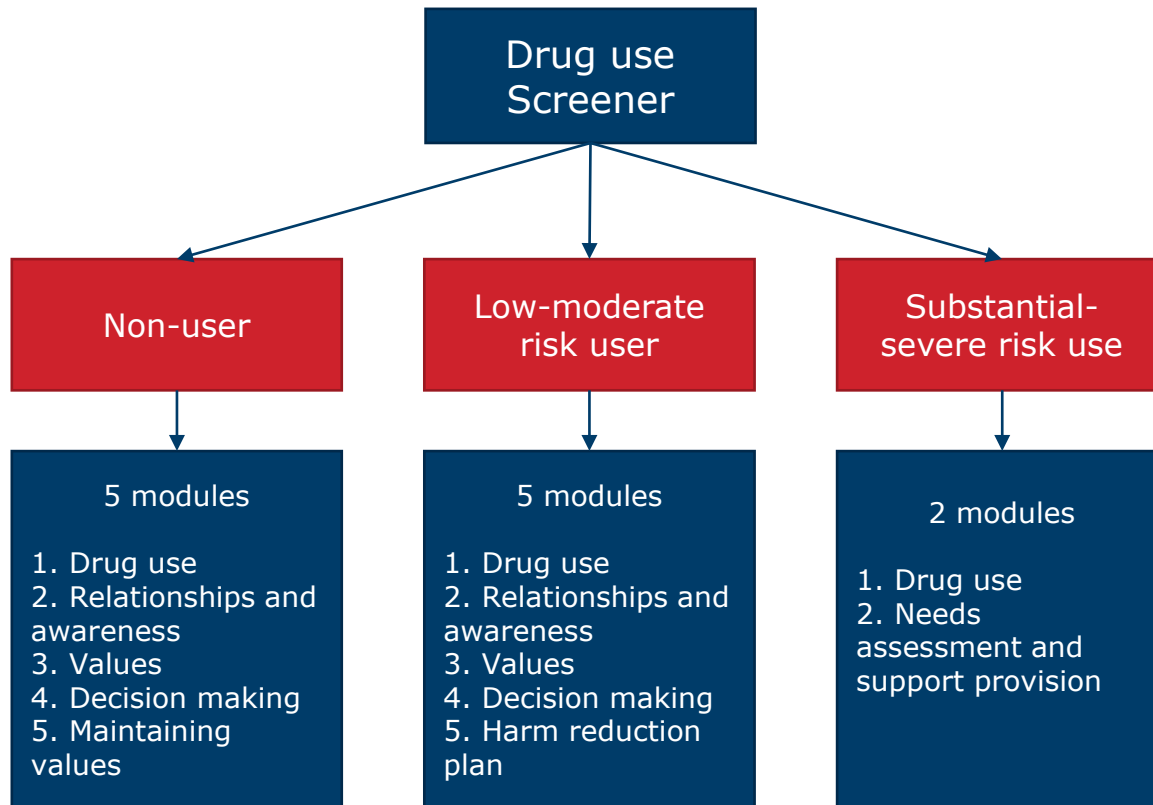
Get the most out of university life

Sometimes using substances can affect your journey as a student. We're here to help you make informed decisions about substance use, and find the supports you need.

[Try Our Checkup](#)



Intervention



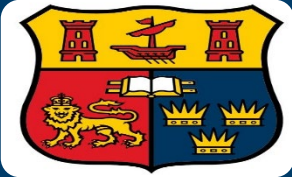
MyUSE therapeutic plan



UNDERSTANDING
SUBSTANCE USE

- **1 (brief) visit intervention (30-45')**
- **2 Stage user's journey**
 - [I] Profile building (assessment) and personalized feedback
 - [II] Tailored to users' needs modularized delivery of therapeutic modules

MyUSE Overview



Designed and developed in UCC

- Multi-disciplinary team of experts
- Comprehensive research and evidence base
- Use of rigorous methodologies in design and development of behavioural change components



Designed by students, for students

- Student's Union review and input
- Student Advisory Group
- Student testing



Meets the needs of the National Drug and Alcohol Strategy

- *"The development of IT/Web based drug education, harm reduction and brief advice tools targeted at third level students which have a component signposting to locally available supports, will be a key element of the prevention strategy"*

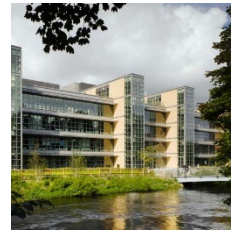


Fulfil one of the formal recommendations of the RRG framework

- *"HEIs should provide and actively promote to students an on-line educational, screening and brief intervention tool"*



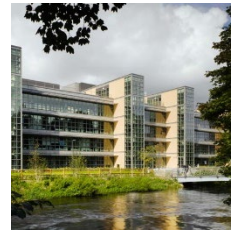
Next Steps



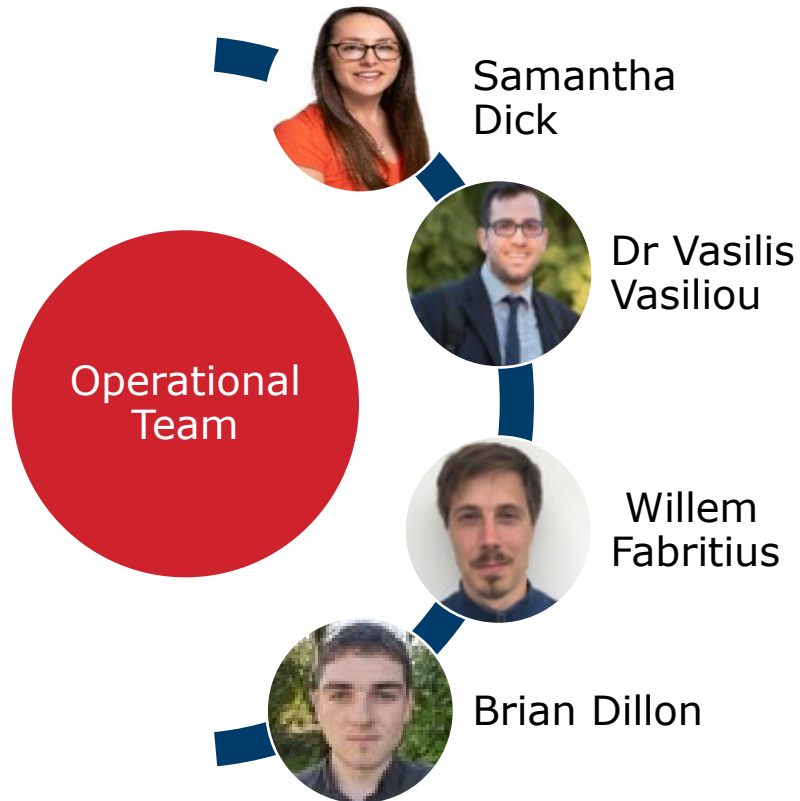
- MyUSE v1 due for launch in September 2020.
- User testing and iteration Sep-Dec 2020.
- MyUSE v2 launch January 2021.
- Pilot evaluation Semester 2, 2020/2021.
- Comprehensive technical, economic & clinical evaluation Semester 2, 2021/2022.



Meet the Team...



Meet the Team...



Thank you for your attention

more info:

Vasilis S. Vasiliou, Ph.D.

Post-Doctoral Researcher

School of Applied Psychology

 v.vasiliou@ucc.ie

 @vasiliou_vs

