

Review and Evaluation of DARE to be You

Prepared for the DARE foundation

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Evaluation Aim

The primary aim of this project is to provide a review and evaluation of the community delivered DARE to be You programme.

Evaluation Objectives

- ❖ To review and evaluate current programme goals, materials, practice and processes of DARE to be You.
- ❖ To identify processes and content to improve the programmes.
- ❖ To review programme logic and whether the programmes meet the set objectives.
- ❖ To evaluate whether the goals of the programmes are being met by the programme documentation and teaching materials.
- ❖ To evaluate whether the programme content is appropriate and relevant to the target group.
- ❖ To consider whether the programmes are likely to enhance or reduce risk relationships.
- ❖ To evaluate whether the programmes are likely to help young people develop an understanding of the consequences of their actions.
- ❖ To consider whether the programmes have the potential for positive long term outcomes.
- ❖ To review whether two existing DARE programmes compliment each other so that participants can take part in DARE to be You then DARE to Move On and build on previously learned messages and skills.
- ❖ To provide suggestions for modification of programme materials and delivery to contribute to the ongoing development and refinement of the programmes.

Information Sources

The review and evaluation of the DARE to be You has been undertaken based on a number of sources of information including:

- ❖ Participation statistics
- ❖ Facilitator, participant and other stakeholder evaluation feedback (collected by DARE Foundation)
- ❖ Participant Evaluation Form, Parent/Caregiver Evaluation Form, Facilitator Evaluation Form
- ❖ DARE to be You Facilitator's Guide, DARE to be You Parent/Caregiver Guide and DARE to be You Workbook
- ❖ Conversations with Adela Jones, Programme Coordinator, DARE Foundation New Zealand and Mandy Hager, Author.

Overview of the DARE Programmes

A range of life skills identified by UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO are the foundation skills taught within two community delivered DARE to be You programme. These organisations, UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO, list the ten core life skill strategies and techniques as: problem solving, critical thinking, effective communication skills, decision-making, creative thinking, interpersonal relationship skills, self-awareness building skills, empathy, and coping with stress and emotions.

The DARE programmes aim to address issues within the young person's local community, target modifiable risk factors and strengthen identifiable protective factors. Within the school environment, the programmes seek to assist young people to increase academic and social competence, study habits, communication, peer relationships, self-efficacy and assertiveness.

DARE to be You focuses on topics towards Self Esteem, Family Issues, Cultural Diversity, Disability and Conservation. The programme has structured interventions with detailed facilitator manuals, but can be adapted to address specific issues identified prior to or during the delivery of a programme. Equally, this flexibility enables the facilitators to be responsive to identified needs related to participant characteristics, such as age, gender, sexuality, ability and ethnicity.

Executive Summary: DARE to be You

This review and evaluation of the goals, materials, processes, practices, and outcomes of the community delivered DARE to be You notes both components and processes of the programme that work effectively and highlights areas for improvement.

DARE to be You is a comprehensive early intervention programme that focuses on engaging young people with the programme through the use of storytelling or bibliotherapy. The story, *Run for the Trees*, is set in New Zealand and is written by a New Zealand author. The DARE to be You programme use a bibliotherapy approach to facilitate change in identified risk and protective factors.

Bibliotherapy refers to the process of sharing stories with individuals, families or groups to facilitate insight into personal difficulties, provide opportunities for emotional growth (Allen Heath, et al., 2005). Groupwork undertaken within a bibliotherapy framework can be used to facilitate the process of expressing emotions such as sadness, hurt, anger, and promote affective change, normalise problems, develop personal insight and achieve growth, make sense of the trauma or aversive life experiences, work with resultant core beliefs, provide information, develop solutions to problems, and develop skills and strategies to deal with situations (Allen Heath, et al., 2005; Iaquina & Hipsky, 2006; Johnstun, 2006; Regan & Page, 2008; Vare & Norton, 2004). Bibliotherapy, within the group context, can also provide a vehicle to explore issues of identity, discrimination, stigma and bullying for minority groups (such as gay and lesbian youth, youth with disabilities, and youth from minority ethnic groups), that are core components of the DARE to be You programme, in a less threatening manner (McCoy & McKay, 2006; O'Neal, 2006; Vare & Norton, 2004).

Group interventions in and of themselves can also provide opportunities for youth to experience boundaries and build meaningful attachments, and develop alternative ways of relating to (empathy) and interacting with others (people skills) (Pudney & Whitehouse, 2001). In addition to the generic benefits of groupwork, bibliotherapy has been shown to have enhanced participants functioning in group when compared to other intervention models (Shechtman & Nir-Shfir, 2008). Bibliotherapy is generally considered to be most effective when combined with other approaches (Jack & Ronan, 2008) as is achieved to some degree within the DARE to be You programme.

There is potential for the implementation of a bibliotherapy intervention to be limited by a didactic and distant style of delivery more compatible with psycho-educational groups or classroom teaching. Greater emphasis on the development of relationships (both between group participants and facilitator(s) and participants) in both the programme documentation and delivery is likely to guard against this potential limitation and enhance both of the DARE programmes reviewed.

The DARE to be You programme is targeted at “youth” and “youth at risk” from 10 years of age. The programme structure and logic is sound and largely consistent with a risk, need, responsivity + Good Lives Model (GLM). This can be considered to be the primary change model of the programme. A bibliotherapy approach, within a groupwork framework, is employed as the primary method of delivering the programme. Again, the structure and content is consistent with relevant research and literature.

Through the use of bibliotherapy and the story, *Run for the Trees*, the DARE to be You programme includes modules on Self Esteem, Family Issues, Cultural Diversity, Disability and Conservation. The DARE to be You programme content is compatible with its overall purpose of targeting modifiable risk factors (with the aim of reducing or removing these) and strengthening identifiable protective factors.

The inclusion of a broader range of mediums to present programme material would be likely to increase engagement with the content and enhance outcomes for participants. Greater emphasis on Maori language, imagery and processes is needed to ensure that the programme is relevant and useful to Maori participants and other youth living in New Zealand.

The programme meets the set objectives, and the emphasis on diversity is strong and integrated. This is a significant strength of the programme. However the emphasis on family involvement or change could be the focus of future review and development.

The programme is well structured and has a very detailed manual ensuring programme integrity. Because DARE to be You is facilitated by trained professionals the quality of programme delivery is likely to be of a high standard. Evaluation feedback appears to be extremely supportive of the effectiveness of this intervention for youth with evaluation reports detailing significant changes and positive outcomes for many participants following completion of the programme.

While the DARE programmes reviewed are able to be delivered as comprehensive single intervention programmes, there is potential to build a more intensive intervention by combining these two programmes (and others that are introduced) and develop a package that is responsive to the needs of those young people at higher risk of problem behaviour or offending. It seems appropriate and relevant that participants could take part in DARE to be You then DARE to Move On to build on previously learned messages and skills. This would provide opportunity to consolidate earlier learning and extend this in a new context. It would be possible to run the groups in quick succession with the same participants where a more intensive intervention is desired, and in other situations they may be staged across the school curriculum with DARE to be You offered as a Year 6, 7 or 8 option and Dare to move on as a Year 10, 11 or 12 option.

The following section notes components and processes of the DARE to be You programme that are consistent with relevant literature and research.

Evaluating the DARE to be You Programme against Contemporary Research and Literature

Addressing the causes of problematic, antisocial or criminal behaviour is the approach that has the most potential to reduce the likelihood of young people developing problematic behaviour and reducing recidivism in youth who have already begun to offend (McLaren, 2000). Therefore, early or “just in time” interventions are important components of a continuum of intervention responses available to professionals working with young people. Of course, such programmes must be designed to meet the needs of the young people involved.

Much research has considered the individual and environmental factors that contribute to the development of aggressive or antisocial behaviour in children and adolescents. Multiple factors models suggest that various causal factors interact to result in an individual pathway to problematic social behaviour, or, at worst, offending behaviour (Shepard & Farrington, 1995; Withecomb, 1997). The idea that some factors contribute to the development or continued engagement in problematic behaviour more than others is, essentially, the basis of risk prediction tools. An assessment of the particular risk factors present for each youth should guide the intervention they receive within a best practice model. The purpose, nature and scope of this assessment may vary significantly across agencies and intervention contexts. Nonetheless, attention to assessment and planned intervention is a foundation of best-practice interventions. In terms of minor criminal behaviour, this means that the presence of particular individual or social risk factors that are correlated with risk of re-offending is assessed.

The review concentrated on research findings and clinical reports that examine effective interventions for youth, including consideration of treatment components and aspects of programme delivery to establish the relevance and appropriateness of the goals, methods and materials of the DARE to Be You programme.

What is Effective Intervention?

Literature in the area of youth development includes a focus on individual, familial and social factors. And, literature examining issues for youth at risk focuses on these same factors in relation to developmental pathways to truancy, alcohol and drug use, anti-social peer associations, suicide, and assessment of risk of offending. There are many types of treatment programmes for youth that address these areas and the efficacy of these interventions are a focus of much clinical discussion and research. Numerous meta-analyses of research into effective treatment and intervention with youth have been conducted (see Andrews & Bonta, 1998).

A meta-analysis “involves the systematic empirical derivation of a common quantitative estimate of the degree of association between treatment and reduced recidivism drawn from a number of different studies” (Andrews & Bonta, 1998, p. 259). The meta-analysis approach to reviewing research on programme and research outcomes allows a synthesis of findings in this area in relation to consistent criteria of effectiveness (Andrews & Bonta, 1998). It is important to acknowledge that while this approach produces useful information it also has limitations (Andrews & Bonta, 1998).

Design of efficacious interventions for youth “at risk” or who have engaged in antisocial behaviour and committed crimes are a concern for victims of crimes, their families, perpetrators of crimes and their families, professionals working in the area, those involved in the judicial system, funders of programmes, and governments. Equally, design of programmes that target protective factors in a prophylactic way are of significant interest to human service professionals. The DARE to Be You programme falls into both of these categories, and targets both risk and protective factors.

A meta-analysis by Lipsy (1989, cited in Andrews and Bonta, 1998) suggested that the most efficacious treatment interventions are those that are structured, focused and “clinically relevant”. The structure and content of the DARE to Be You Programme is consistent with six aspects of intervention related to effective intervention for youth offenders (see Andrews & Bonta, 1998; McGuire and Priestly, 1995; McLaren, 2000; Ogloff, 2002; Rutter, Giller & Hagell, 1998). An overview of the six aspects of intervention identified is provided in Table 1.0.

Table 1.0: Factors Related to Programme Effectiveness

Risk assessment

Assessment of static and dynamic factors provides an estimation of likely risk of recidivism for a particular youth at the time that they are assessed. Best practice approaches employ these assessments in developing intervention programmes with youth estimated to be at high risk receiving intensive intervention and the inverse for youth assessed as at low risk of future problematic or offending behaviour (McGuire and Priestly, 1995; Ogloff, 2002; Rutter, Giller & Hagell, 1998). Assessment of risk factors should also include assessment of protective factors and these should be targeted in any intervention for youth. Relevant risk factors targeted by the DARE to Be You programme include; antisocial attitudes, values and beliefs and associates; problems with interpersonal relationships (indifference, poor social skills, weak affective ties; problems at school, work or leisure and low levels of achievement in these areas (Leschied, Chiodo, Nowicki & Roger, 2008; Zampese, 1997, p.15)

Criminogenic needs

Criminogenic factors are considered to be those dynamic or changeable risk factors (problems with anger, pro-criminal attitudes, substance abuse, etc) that directly affect the likelihood of anti-social behaviour and future engagement in criminal behaviour by a young person. Best practice approaches are argued to be those that target those factors that contribute to the likelihood of this behaviour (criminogenic factors) (Ogloff, 2002; Leschied, Chiodo, Nowicki & Roger, 2008; McGuire and Priestly, 1995; Zampese, 1997). Best practice approaches include holistic interventions targeted to client functioning and human needs as well as interventions based upon empirical research (Ward, 2002).

Responsivity

Responsivity is about responding to any issues that might impair a person from engaging with or learning from a programme. The responsivity principle also relates to the selection of modes of intervention. It is argued that individual learning styles and abilities need to be attended to and treatment modalities matched to these once the level of intervention required by the individual has been determined (Andrews and Bonta, 1998; Ogloff, 2002).

Modality of treatment

Best practice programmes tend to be those that are social-skills oriented and multimodal (employing a range of techniques or treatment components that impact on multiple problems) (McGuire and Priestly, 1995; McLaren, 2000; Rutter, Giller & Hagell, 1998; Zampese, 1997). Andrews and Bonta (1998) note the importance of employing techniques that can impact upon criminogenic factors (i.e., social learning approaches, cognitive and behavioural approaches as well as the importance of matching these to the learning styles of the young people).

Programme integrity

Integrity of the programme and professional ability of those delivering the programme are also noted as critical principles related to intervention and recidivism. The notion of programme integrity includes sound theoretical basis, delivery of programme to population it is intended for (i.e., ethnicity, level of risk), adherence to programme design, programme structure, adequate resourcing, staff skill and training, monitoring and evaluation (McGuire and Priestly, 1995; McLaren, 2000; Ogloff, 2002; Rutter, Giller & Hagell, 1998; Zampese, 1997).

Community location

Research indicates that community based programmes, and those with close links to the community tend to be more effective in working with youth who have engaged in offending or who are "at risk" of engaging in problematic behaviour (Kazdin, 1997; McLaren, 2000; Rutter, Giller & Hagell, 1998; Zampese, 1997). Howells and Day (2003) suggest that the greater opportunity for practicing skills and opportunity to develop strategies within the context that they are to be employed may contribute to the success of community based interventions. Perhaps related to this factor is the finding that treatment that attends to extra-personal circumstances (e.g., family) is associated with reductions in problematic behaviour. It is possible to argue that family focused interventions are more difficult in institutional contexts and in situations where the institutional facility is geographically distant from the family networks.

Summary of Programme Strengths: DARE to be You

As one of a group of programmes seeking to enhance protective factors and reduce or eliminate risk factors, DARE to be You is an effective programme that meets the identified programme objectives. The programme strengths include:

- ❖ The programme meets the set objectives, and the emphasis on diversity is strong and integrated.
- ❖ Targeting interventions to areas that have been identified in relevant research and literature as being likely to reduce the likelihood of initial engagement in problematic, anti-social or offending behaviour (prophylactic interventions) by young people and reducing likelihood of ongoing engagement in these behaviours by youth “at risk”. This is a significant strength of the programme.
- ❖ Preventative focus and potential inclusion of all youth removes the need to label young people as “at risk” in order for them to access the programme.
- ❖ Structured programme and detailed manual documenting intervention goals and expected outcomes, as well as session structure and activities.
- ❖ The structured approach of the programme enables cross-group evaluation to be achieved.
- ❖ The standard of training of facilitators and accreditation processes employed. Engaging skilled professionals to deliver the programme is likely to enhance the quality of the programme content and competent management of process issues including any safety concerns.
- ❖ The sound groupwork programme for young people delivered within a bibliotherapy framework can facilitate the process of expressing emotions such as sadness, hurt, anger, and promote affective change, normalise problems, develop personal insight and achieve growth, make sense of the trauma or aversive life experiences, work with resultant core beliefs, provide information, develop solutions to problems, and develop skills and strategies to deal with situations (Iaquinta & Hipsky, 2006; Johnstun, 2006; Regan & Page, 2008; Vare & Norton, 2004). Bibliotherapy, within the group context, can also provide a vehicle to explore issues of identity, discrimination, stigma and bullying for minority groups (such as gay and lesbian youth and youth from minority ethnic groups) in a less threatening manner (McCoy & McKay, 2006; O’Neal, 2006; Vare & Norton, 2004). Group interventions in and of themselves can also provide opportunities for youth to experience boundaries and build meaningful attachments, and develop alternative ways of relating to (empathy) and interacting with others (people skills) (Pudney & Whitehouse, 2001).
- ❖ The holistic and environmental focus of the DARE to be You programme includes a focus on issues such as conservation and pollution. The DARE programme components probably extend beyond Ward’s GLM intention that interventions are responsive to “environments the person is likely to be living once they complete the program” (2002, p.176), but they are nonetheless consistent with this model, and challenge other programmes to respond in this truly holistic way.
- ❖ Participation from the families is encouraged in terms of the wider ‘buy-in’ from participants and the ‘significant others’ in their lives. Initially, a parent consent form is signed by the participant’s parent/caregiver prior to the commencement of the programme. If consent is not given, that in itself raises concerns and opportunity for follow-up and potentially alternative intervention. This form informs the parent of their child’s involvement in the programme. There is also the opportunity for parents/caregivers to complete an evaluation at the conclusion of the programme.
- ❖ The Parent/Caregiver Guide enables parents, caregivers and significant others to ‘follow along’ with the child or youth as they move through the content of the programme.
- ❖ Involvement of significant others can increase the likelihood of successful outcomes of programmes for children and young people. Parents can be invited to the ‘challenge activities’ for practical purposes but also to celebrate the successes and achievements of the child or youth. These activities may range from physical challenges to community help – depending on the programme focus and the participants needs. The risk analysis management sections are very comprehensive and well structured. Parents may also attend a celebration session to mark participation and successful conclusion to the programme by the participant. Certificates and a t-shirt can be handed to the individual participants at this time in an atmosphere of celebration and achievement.
- ❖ There is also the potential to deliver the DARE parent programme called DARE to Support Your Kids during the time the child or youth participant is going through their programme. The DARE to Support Your Kids programme is a 3-5 session programme covering modules such as communication with your child, setting boundaries, information about signs and symptoms of drug (mis)use, parenting skills and so on.
- ❖ Delivery of the DARE to be You programme in the school or local community is also a significant strength and more likely to produce change than institutionally delivered programmes.

Key Recommendations: DARE to be You

Key recommendations for programme development include:

- ❖ The inclusion of a broader range of mediums to present programme material would be likely to increase engagement with the content and enhance outcomes for participants. As many of the current exercises and activities are paper based, consideration should be given to extending the range of options for facilitators to enable them to better meet the needs of a range of young people with different learning styles. For instance, the use of “props”, psychodrama, charades, art therapy, and modelling clay could be explored along with relevant components of adventure therapy and animal assisted therapy. It seems possible that the emphasis on listening, reading, writing and comprehension of the current format may disadvantage some of the very youth that the programme is targeting.
- ❖ Given the high numbers of Maori youth who identified as struggling at school and who become involved in the criminal justice system, greater emphasis on Maori language, imagery and processes is needed to ensure that the programme is relevant and useful to Maori participants and other youth living in New Zealand within the DARE to be You programme.

Recommendations: DARE to be You

In addition to the key recommendations detailed in the previous section a list of broader recommendations is provided. These are suggestions, designed to assist in ongoing programme development rather than indicate any significant shortcomings of the programme. A summary table prioritising these recommendations and additional suggestions is included below (Table 1.4).

Table 1.1: Prioritisation and Summary of Recommendations for DARE to be You

Suggested Time Frame	Areas for Development
Short Term 0-12 months	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delivery of Programme Material: The inclusion of a broader range of mediums to present programme material would be likely to increase engagement with the programme content and enhance outcomes for participants. 2. Responsiveness to Maori: Greater emphasis on Maori language, imagery and processes is needed to ensure that the programme is relevant and useful to Maori participants.
Medium Term 1-2 years	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Referral Process: Consideration should be given to the referral process. It is possible that some of the young people who need to access this intervention the most are unlikely to be selected to participate. 2. Co-facilitation: While it appears that many groups are currently facilitated by two facilitators it would be useful to aim to make this standard practice. Co-gender co-facilitation and involvement of young people as co-facilitators should be considered. 3. Family Issues: Development of the Family Issues content of the programme is advised. The family issues module is an important part of the programme and central to the programmes objectives. It could be useful to extend the family issues component of the programme and may be beneficial to split this work into two sections. 4. Ongoing Review and Evaluation Plan: A review and evaluation plan is needed that focuses on both evaluations by programme participants and other stakeholders and regular reviews and development of programme content against current knowledge and research.
Long Term 2-5 years	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator Guide: Update and expand programme content and resources included in the facilitator guide. 2. DVD Resource: The use of bibliotherapy (use of literature to assist people to deal with problems or personal development) is a strength of the programme. It would be worthwhile considering the development of a DVD of the novel <i>Run For The Trees</i> to compliment the facilitator reading and audio taped reading options that are currently available to group facilitators. 3. CD and Web-based Resource: Development of web-based or computer-based CD resources to add to the existing programme should be considered. Incorporation of one or both of these resources could be used as a further alternative to “read” the novel and make this process more interactive within the existing group programme and would provide more opportunities for learning for young people with different learning styles. 4. Monitoring Programme Integrity: “Live” supervision or videoing of groups could be used to randomly monitor programme integrity. 5. Involvement of Youth in DARE Foundation: It would be useful to explore possibilities available to engage youth and include youth expertise at a number of levels in the DARE programmes. This might include representation at Board level, involvement in programme review processes, focus group research about programme effectiveness and development, completion of participant questionnaires, and so on. 6.

	Further Options for Programme Development
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-group Preparation: Development of a “pre-group group” that may be a shorter programme, with fewer participants, that focuses on foundation communication, affect identification and behavioural skills that would enable the young people to participate in the existing DARE programmes. If bibliotherapy is to continue to be the defining approach of the DARE programmes, it would seem necessary to develop a novel to work with in a “DARE to get Involved” programme. 2. Refresher Programme: It would be prudent to consider developing a “refresher” programme for young people who have completed the DARE to be You programme. A refresher group could comprise of young people from different DARE to be You groups run over the previous year or two. 3. Extension Programme: An “extension” to the DARE to be You programme would consider the same or similar core modules but could cover these at a much deeper level allowing for further personal growth and more advanced skill development by participants. If bibliotherapy is to continue to be the defining approach of the DARE programmes, it would seem necessary to develop a novel to work with in a “DARE to know You” programme. 4. Early Intervention Programme: It would also be sensible to evaluate the need for a programme for 8-10 and/or 10-12 year-olds as a foundation (but not required) programme. Such a programme could be developed as an early intervention programme for a younger cohort than DARE to be You currently caters for, and could fill an important gap in supports for this age group. If bibliotherapy is to continue to be the defining approach of the DARE programmes, it would seem necessary to develop a novel to work with in a “DARE to Begin” programme. In addition, development of computer based support materials could be an important component of the programme with a younger cohort. 5. Targeted Programmes: Development of shorter, smaller, targeted groups could also be considered to compliment existing DARE programmes. These groups could be designed to follow-on from DARE to be You and DARE to Move On and be targeted at current issues for youth including; dealing with anger, grief and loss, negotiating relationships, managing stress and pressure. Again, if bibliotherapy is to continue to be the defining approach of the DARE programmes, it would seem necessary to develop a novel to work with in these targeted programmes. 6. Family Issues Programme: It would be appropriate to evaluate the need for a new programme targeting family issues that could be taken after one of the foundation programmes was completed. This programme could be offered in the same or in a different format. For instance, it may be useful to consider having six two-hour group sessions then an eight-hour marathon day (that incorporates role-playing, psychodrama, action methods or adventure therapy and includes lunch and dinner together) and then two two-hour follow-up group sessions. Alternatively, a two-day “intensive” model could be employed with older youth. 7. Group Composition: Review how the decisions are made about group composition in relation to age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and the different physical and cognitive abilities that young people have. This information may assist in planning and development of the current programme and new initiatives. Regardless of the process and group compositions that are ultimately employed, utilisation of a standardised recording system of group composition is likely to enhance programme evaluation potential by enabling meaningful comparisons of outcomes and experiences across groups. 8. Family Involvement: Review family involvement with the programme, including a review of family members’ perceptions of their involvement and whether the programme meets their needs.

Conclusions

Applicable research and clinical literature has been considered as a part of this review and evaluation of the DARE to be You programme provided by the DARE Foundation. The review concentrated on this information to establish the relevance and appropriateness of the goals, methods and materials of the two programmes in relation to research findings and best practice recommendations. The focus of the review has been clinical material and research findings that examine effective interventions for youth, including consideration of treatment components and programme delivery.

This review highlights that the DARE to Be You programme content is generally appropriate and relevant to the target group. The programme content is consistent with recommendations from research and literature, and it is clear that the programme has the potential to reduce risk relationships for young people both as a preventative programme and as an intervention for youth "at risk". Some recommendations for programme development are made with the intention of further enhancing possible outcomes of the programme. Finally, the programme has the potential for positive long term outcomes for participants, but ongoing research and evaluation will be required to determine the nature and magnitude of these effects.

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