

Respectful relationships and sex education: the importance of a parents and teachers as part of a whole school approach.

Sex and relationships education: in school and beyond
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Australian Curriculum in HPE: Scope to address respectful relationships (Gender based violence)



- Designed to develop knowledge, understanding and skills 'to build and manage respectful relationships' ...and to enable 'students to access, evaluate and synthesise information to take positive action to protect, enhance and advocate' for health and wellbeing.
- In three of the six sub-strands (Being healthy, safe and active; Communication and interacting for health and wellbeing; Contributing to healthy and active communities), there is a welcome concentration on both building relationships and the need for 'protective behaviours' and 'safety strategies' across the F-10 years.
- A focus on prevention and health promotion in relation to 'strategies to manage social and emotional change, help seeking behaviours for self and others and the development of skills to build respectful relationships through 'describing, practicing and investigating' how 'respect, empathy and ethical decision making contribute to relationships'.
- Understanding the role of emotion is also evident as is critical health literacy, reflected in the statements that students will 'examine health messages/discuss and interpret health information and messages in the media and the Internet' and 'recognise how media influence personal attitudes, beliefs, decisions and behaviours' as they 'evaluate health information and apply health information'.
- Skills identified as essential for the primary prevention of VAWAC (Flood et al., 2009; Tutty et al., 2011).



Tension

- Sex positive /strength based approach to issues such as gender based violence.
- Need for negative and positive aspects of sexuality to be discussed, presenting a more realistic view of the complexity of 'multiple expressions and dimensions of sexual intimacy' Cameron-Lewis and Allen (2013: 12).



Respectful Relationships in sexuality education (Gender and Violence Demonstration Project)

- Funded as part of the National strategy Action Plan to Prevention Violence Against Women and their Children 2009.
- Based on a review of school based programs and current approaches in Australia and elsewhere (Flood et al., 2009).
- Whole school approach developed and trialed in 2010.
- Classroom materials piloted in year 8 and 9 in 4 secondary schools in low SES areas in Melbourne
- Data collected from teachers and students – purpose to inform the updating of the classroom materials and the professional development approach.
- Data collected between August and December 2010



Key Themes TEACHERS

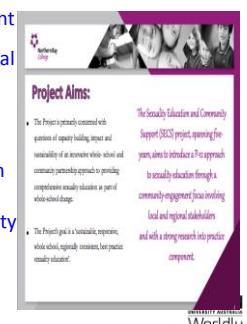
- Subject context impacted on perceived success and experience of the teaching experience
- Experienced teachers, (yet inexperienced in sexuality education), found the teaching experience a positive one
 - improved relationships
 - changed pedagogy
 - improved student engagement
 - PD enabling factor
- Male teachers wanted a more general focus on violence - found respectful relationships a more palatable approach than gender based violence
- Whole school approach was unsuccessful



Ollis D. (2014) The role of teachers in delivering education about respectful relationships: exploring teacher and student perspectives Health Educ Res (2014) 29 (4): 547-559

Whole school Approach: The Northern Bay Experience (Ollis and Harrison)

- Formation of a P-12 Government College in very low socioeconomic area in large rural city in Victoria, Australia
- Regional/local health agencies wanted more sustainable approach to sexuality education
- Inadequate approach to sexuality education
- Parental concerns/initiation





Creating Readiness

Preparing and planning (Samdal and Rowling 2011)

- Partnership between Health and Education (school, departmental, University, State and regional health agencies)
 - Establishment of Working Party - Building awareness and motivation
 - Development of Action Plan
 - Champions from education and health working together

"My motivation is to step out; that's my motivation. It's to put the college in a position where they don't have to ring me, where they don't have to seek me as an expert, where they don't see themselves as needing help from a health agency" (4).



Sustainability

"My vision for this project is that Northern Bay College provide a seamless education that becomes a model of practice nationwide, and that the community are proud of what they do really well."

- Challenges
 - Clear vision of partners
 - Ongoing teacher awareness and motivation
 - Structural differences between primary and secondary schools
 - Role of the champion/s
 - Parental engagement
 - Patience– it takes a long time!



Creating readiness



Preparing and planning

Data collection and dissemination (Action Research approach: Kemmis, 1998)

- #### » Teachers, parents, students, stakeholder interviews

Data collected and disseminated through

- Parent forums/newsletters/community engagement group
 - Professional development and learning
 - Resource identification
 - Policy development

Long lead time to implementation



Sustainability

Success and dissemination- research, newsletters, media, grants

Acknowledgment and resourcing – leadership, community and school

Role of Action Research -

Supported risk taking

Community engagement

Ongoing professional

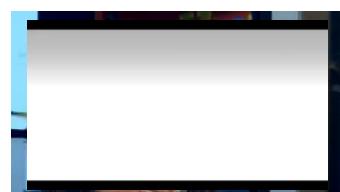
learning and development



Voices of Sexuality Education

The Centre for Excellence in Rural Sexual Health (University of Melbourne)
Kylie Stevens

- #### • A whole school approach



- Utilise new Victorian curriculum as part of whole school approach to promoting gender equality and violence prevention
- Build school and community partnerships to embed a culture of gender equity and respectful relationships in schools
- Comprehensive professional development:
 - » Skill **teachers** to deliver curriculum
 - » Skill **student wellbeing staff** to support curriculum delivery and disclosures of violence
 - » Skill **school leaders** to mainstream gender equity
- Evaluation focusing on the program model and effectiveness of the whole school approach

Respectful Relationships in Schools Project no 2

**(Foundation to Prevent
Violence against Women
and their Children and
the Our Watch initiative**

