



Overview

- Two projects
 - Whole School sexuality education project (Catching on Everywhere) (2008)
 - Principals' pilot program (Breaking the silence) (2009 - 2011)
- The importance of leadership
- Sexuality education and the primary prevention of violence against women and girls should go hand in hand.



Primary prevention

- What is primary prevention?
- Why culture change?
- Health promoting schools.
 - Curriculum, teaching and learning
 - Engaging the wider school community
 - School ethos and environment



Project One

- A shift away from problem focused sexuality education
- Used a whole school approach: focus on
 - Utilizing the skills and expertise of the school and its wider community
 - Addressing issues for staff and students via curriculum, teaching and learning
 - Ensuring the school ethos and environment promoted student wellbeing.



The process

- 50 schools (working alone or in clusters) applied for funding from the DoE
- Primary, secondary and special schools from the Catholic, state and independent systems.
- Worked together in groups to identify objectives, targets, activities, indicators and evaluation tools.



Key learning and challenges

- Although sexuality education is mandated in the Victorian curriculum, many schools had limited programs.
- Policies were out of date
- A whole school approach was difficult to implement in most schools
- Without leadership support programs struggled.



Leadership support

- Projects that had the full support of their principals were demonstrably more successful than those who lacked overt support.
- Main challenges: staff attitudes to culture change and lack of leadership support.



Research into practice

- Based on this finding the White Ribbon Foundation and the Sydney DoE implemented a program (Breaking the Silence).
- Principals from primary, secondary and special schools in the Sydney region were purposively recruited to participate in a program



Aims

- To implement primary prevention strategies to reduce violence against women and girls.
- To motivate and engage principals to use a whole school approach
- To ensure schools are safe and inclusive
- To implement respectful relationships education.



Overview

- Three workshops in the course of one year.
- Worked together to plan their approach (the collaboration was a rare opportunity that was welcomed).
- By the end of the year: implementation plans for the new school year.



Outcomes

- Some schools elected to run events rather than use a whole school approach
- Schools that did use a whole school approach, led by the principal, were able to achieve significant results



Factors for success:

- The credibility and recognition of the White Ribbon Foundation
- The opportunity for principals to participate in communities of practice, exchange ideas, and share models of promising practice among their peers.
- The leadership shown by the Sydney Regional Director with the principals



Sexuality education & culture change

- Puberty, reproduction and problematic sexual behaviours (STIs, BBVs, unwanted pregnancy)?
- OR
- Inclusive, safe and providing young people with the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to make sound decisions.



Ethical sexuality education

- Programs that promote equal and respectful relationships are an essential part of all sexuality education programs.
- In schools this requires strong and visible leadership support.
- Relationship skills are as important as anatomy, physiology and prevention.



Thanks

- Victorian Department of Education and Training (DoE)
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- Sydney Regional Office of the NSW Department of Education and Training
- The White Ribbon Foundation

