




Transforming gendered practices through sexual ethics education

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Thomas
a 20-year-old Aboriginal man from a regional area

They just described the mechanics of it; they didn't discuss how you went about picking up; they didn't discuss how you come to the agreement to have sex; they never discussed any of the actual arrangements, they just described the mechanics and the effects of the mechanics.

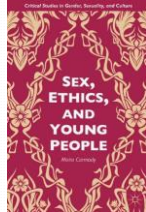
Why ethics?

- Its point is to offer some tools for thinking about difficult matters...recognizing that the world is seldom so simple or clear cut. Struggle and uncertainty are part of ethics, as they are part of life.
- (Weston 1997 p.2)

Key sites of struggle

- Who should be taught?
- What should be taught
- How should it be taught?
- When should it be taught and by whom?

Sex & Ethics Program Objectives



- Encourage young women and men to gain knowledge and skills in ethical decision making around sexual intimacy
- Assist in reducing/ preventing pressured and coerced sex in casual and ongoing relationships
- Challenge dominant cultural gendered expectations of men and women around sex and relationships
- Invite them to consider alternative ways of being women and men and to stand up against sexual violence

Program content

- Different cultural perspectives on sexual intimacy
- The sexual ethics framework and how to decide what is right for you and the impact on others
- How to handle pressures to be sexual
- Non-verbal communication skills
- Alcohol and drugs and the impact on sexual decision-making
- Skills in ethical consent and the law, ethical use of social media



Content continued...

- Negotiating conflicting desires and needs in casual and ongoing relationships
- Recognising the signs of abusive relationships
- Breaking up and
- Being an ethical bystander and standing up to sexual violence and other gender-based abuse in your community



Sex + Ethics Framework©

Ethical sex involves:
Caring for myself

+

Being aware of my desires and wants and the possible impact on the other person

+

Negotiating and 'asking'

+

Reflection

Carmody (2009) ©

Participants

- Young people from generic and specialist youth services, schools, university residential colleges, football clubs, university student associations 2006 -2011.
- From rural, regional and urban areas in NSW, Queensland, Western Australia and Wellington New Zealand
- Sexually, geographically, economically, culturally and gender diverse aged 16 to 26 years of age.
- Slightly more men than women were in the groups and the three phases of evaluation over 9 months

Impact of program

- Data from 3 phase evaluation gathered on 200 young people from NSW, Qld and New Zealand 2009-2011
- Participants reported a significant increase (from pre-group survey to post-group survey; and from pre-group survey to follow-up survey) in their understanding of their own needs and their partner's needs in sexual relationships
- Four – six months after the program ended **88%** of young people reported using the *ideas* and **87%** reported using the *skills* they had learnt in the Program

Examples

- Being intimate with someone and being able to confidently ask what they liked, and being *confident to say no* to things without feeling insecure and also being *able to ask for things and say yes to things* without feeling insecure. I've changed a lot of my behaviours because of what I've realised from the Sex & Ethics Program. (Jane aged 18)
- It doesn't matter if you are together or not, *you may be a couple that regularly has sex, but there has to be consent made*. If you are too drunk, you are not in a position to give consent. (Rick aged 19)

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