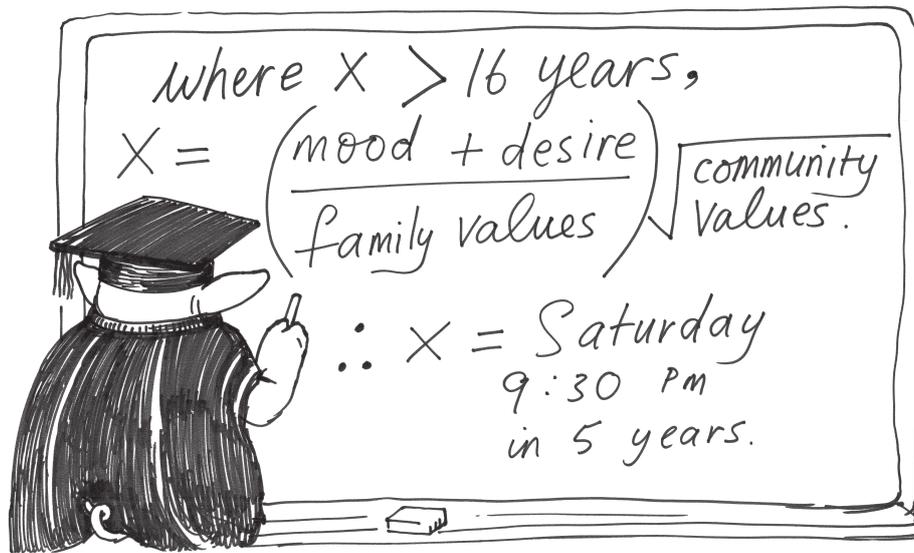


Topic 1 - Introducing Love, Sex and Relationships



Introduction

These first 3 activities help you to set the scene for the rest of the *Love, Sex and Relationships* unit. Unsurprisingly for this age group, young people do not want to feel they are being told what to do, and take pride in their capacity to make personal decisions. We encourage their critical thinking in the following sets of activities by reflecting on the range of beliefs and information we have so far about these topics.

Activities

- 1: Creating a Safe Space
- 2: Introducing the Love, Sex and Relationships Ethical Framework.
- 3: The Sexuality Timeline

Time

100 minutes

Handouts

- H1: Love, Sex and Relationships Ethical Framework
- H2: Love, Sex and Relationships, Ethically
- H3: Sexuality Timeline Cards
- H4: Sexuality Timeline Family Values Cards
- H5: Extra Information Cards

ACTIVITY 1: CREATING A SAFE SPACE

Time: 5-10 minutes

Overview: It's a good idea to create a group agreement before you begin this unit of work. It helps to be clear about boundaries and expectations and students feel safer to join in. Perhaps the most helpful outcome of this activity is teaching students how to disagree respectfully. That is, how to say what they think without expressing it as a put-down. Many students worry that disagreeing with someone is a bad thing. Teaching students to frame an alternative opinion with 'My opinion is', or 'I think...' rather than 'You are wrong/stupid...' encourages further examination of an idea, minus the hostility.



You may already have a working set of class rules. If so you may like to move on to the next activity, but before you do, make sure your students know to whom they can talk, or where to go, if they need further support after class.

Key Messages

- Sex and relationships can be hard to talk about but if we establish some rules we can take care of ourselves and each other.
- Everyone is deserving of a voice and respectful treatment.

Preparation and Materials

- Butcher's paper to record the Group Agreement.

Method

1. Explain to the students that we are beginning a unit of work on love, sex and relationships. While some people love talking about these topics, some of us are more reluctant, and of course, it can be risky talking about these topics.

Ask: What would you not like to see happen when we talk about these topics in class? What could go wrong when we talk about sex and relationships? (Answers might include: someone's privacy is breeched, people feel put down by others)

2. Brainstorm and develop a list of rules so that everyone feels safe enough and has an equal chance to join in. If the students have trouble getting started, here are some ideas:

- No personal questions. This applies to both students and the teacher.
- While I'd like everyone to join in, you have the option to pass. *Sometimes you may prefer to say nothing. You don't have to offer an opinion, and you don't always have to participate if a topic makes you too uncomfortable.*
- Use the 3rd person when you're telling a story. Instead of saying 'my brother...', say 'someone I know...'. *(Don't tell personal stories about yourself or others involving sex or drug use.)*
- Confidentiality. *We are aiming for 'what's said in the room, stays in the room' (but we can't absolutely promise it, so try to speak in the 3rd person). Don't repeat stories from this room on social media.*
- It's ok to disagree with each other, but no put-downs. *It is possible to disagree respectfully by saying something like 'my opinion is different to that one. I think...'. The focus should remain on discussing the idea, rather than disparaging the person who expressed the idea.*
- Listen while others are talking. *Listening is not only a sign of respect but shows a commitment to hearing a range of different opinions.*

3. After the students have made a list, make sure you cover the following:

- Identify at least two resource people in or near the school to whom a student could go for help with concerns.
- **Confidentiality** - It is important to explain to students that absolute confidentiality is not possible from you. That is, if you believe that they are in danger of harming themselves or likely to be harmed by someone else you have to pass that on to another trustworthy source. You will not do this without the student's knowledge and will provide support for them through this process.
- Explain that if you think a student is about to reveal something too personal about themselves or somebody else, that you will interrupt them. **Protective interrupting** is a strategy to prevent a student disclosing in front of other students and provides them with the opportunity to disclose in a safe and confidential way.

4. Keep the Group Agreement for the remainder of the unit as a reminder for the students.

N.B. How to respond to disclosures of sexual assault

A student may come to realise an event in their past was both sexual in nature and non-consensual. This is one reason why we spend so much time setting up rules about what is to be shared or disclosed in class, and that we make sure students understand there will be opportunities to talk about concerns they might have in a one-on-one situation.

If you think a student is about to disclose something that shouldn't be discussed in public, you need to protectively interrupt them, letting them know you want to follow the conversation up in private.

If they come to you first and disclose details of a non-consensual sexual encounter you should:

- Listen attentively and empathically to what the student is trying to say in their own words
- Make sure the student is safe
- Remain calm and non-judgmental – accept what the student says and give them time to say it
- Give reassurance that telling somebody was the right thing to do
- Reassure the student that ongoing support will be provided and explain what will happen next
- Inform the Principal immediately (on the same day as the disclosure) of what is alleged to have occurred but remember it is not the role of principal or school staff to prove that sexual assault has occurred.

Each State and Territory will have policy outlining the procedure required to appropriately respond to a disclosure of sexual assault and teachers must be aware of school and legal procedures if a student does disclose personal issues, particularly disclosures of sexual assault.

ACTIVITY 2: INTRODUCING THE LOVE, SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS ETHICAL FRAMEWORK



Time: 20 minutes

Overview: We may not be aware of it but most of us are trying to conduct ourselves and our relationships in accordance with a kind of 'Rule Book'. The Rule Book is populated by a set of expectations we have developed or acquired. Not all of the 'rules' lead to treating ourselves or others with kindness and respect. The analogy of a rule book is used in this activity to:

- help students identify and critique their existing beliefs about love, sex, and relationships
- to suggest an alternative ethical framework which aims for fairness, equity, safety and compassion (and fun) in making sexual decisions.

Key Messages

- Making decisions about what feels right when it comes to love, sex and relationships can be complex.
- There are several elements that must be in place for a sexual decision or actions in a relationship to be ethical.

Preparation and Materials

- Construct four A4 continuum cards with the following positions: Strongly agree; Agree; Disagree; Strongly disagree.
- A3 print out of *H1 The Love, Sex and Relationships Ethical Framework* for display on the wall.
- Copies of *H2: Love, Sex and Relationships, Ethically*, 1 per student.

Method

Part 1

1. Tell the students: We are going to find out if there exists a 'rule book' for love, sex and relationships. *This is not assuming everyone is having sex now, but its good to talk about how sexual relationships can be done while you are 'learning' or starting this part of your life.*

2. Place the four continuum cards on the ground using a two-, three- or four-point continuum (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree), and explain to students that you're going to read out a list of statements and they need to move to the card that most accurately reflects their view. Once everyone has taken a position ask for volunteers from the different points on the continuum to share their beliefs. Make sure you invite students to express their beliefs from a range of places on the continuum. You may need to remind students of the Group Agreement.

3. Select between three or four statements from the following list or develop your own:

- *When a girl is in love, she's supposed to see the other person's happiness before her own, whatever it is.*
- *A guy won't love you if you don't do the things that they want.*
- *Guys have to score, kissing girls or whatever, and just forgetting them. That's the pressure on guys.*
- *Girls have to be careful or they can get called sluts.*
- *Girls expect you to be after only one thing and that's not true.*
- *Girls have to be attracted to boys, and boys have to be attracted to girls.*
- *Guys have to tell their friends what they did or their mates will give them a hard time.*
- *A boy should always pay if he takes someone out.*
- *If a guy says no to sex there is something wrong with him.*

4. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Do you think some people might feel nervous to express their true beliefs about some of these statements? Might a boy be nervous to say that he thinks love and caring are important in a relationship? Would a girl be scared to say that sex is good?
- If we said these beliefs are like an unwritten rule book for love, sex and relationships – do you think the rule book is fair, kind, respectful?
- Are there penalties for someone who says something different to what the prevailing belief is? (Answers might include: *not getting your needs met, being called a slut, or to have people gossiping about you, being harassed or bullied for being gay*).

Part 2

1. This exercise suggests that there are unwritten 'rules' about relationships and sex that reflect values or beliefs that aren't always fair or equal. We are going to look at an alternative guideline so that sex and relationships could be better – more fun, less pressured, less misunderstandings, and fairer. Ask the students:

- *What is meant by doing something in an ethical way?* (Answers might include: trying to do the right thing, being compassionate, with empathy, fairness, equality, doing what you should do).

2. Handout the *H2: Love, Sex and Relationships, Ethically* and read out each step.

ACTIVITY 3: THE SEXUALITY TIMELINE

Time: 30 minutes

Overview: Our ideas of what's right and wrong, what's normal and common is one predictor of the choices we make and of the pressure we feel to be a certain way. The Sexuality Timeline is the first step in exploring the range of beliefs held in your classroom and is a great way of challenging students' assumptions about what 'everyone else' is doing. Students will analyse the impact of external influences on their decisions. It provides both a reality check and a chance for the class to recalibrate their expectations of themselves and each other.

Key Messages

- There are a lot of myths about love, sex and relationships that can create a kind of 'normal' that's hard to measure up, or down, to.
- Part of the pressure about sex and sexual development is the belief that there is one kind of 'normal'. In fact, humans come in a large range, not only in ages of sexual development, or becoming interested in relationships, but in how people express their gender and sexual feelings.

Preparation and Materials

- H3: *Sexuality Timeline Cards*
- H4: *Sexuality Timeline Family Values Cards*
- H5: *Extra Information Cards*

Method

1. Stretch some string across the wall to represent a timeline, marking 5 year spans along the way, from Birth to '40 and beyond'.
2. Ask:
 - What do you think the research has indicated as the average age for the following events/experiences/changes listed on these cards?
3. Distribute the *H3 Sexuality Timeline Cards*, one or two per student. Ask

the students to place their card on the timeline, above the string, according to the age they think would be the national average. NB your students may point out that the 'average age' varies depending on who you are focusing on. They are correct. Tell them so, but add that we will focus on variations and the reasons for variations later. Give them the choice of focusing on 'the average age at this school', or sticking to a national average.

4. Once all the cards have been placed pause to consider the results. Ask if anyone wants to change the order of any cards other than their own.

5. Next, add the H5: Extra Information Cards onto the timeline, below the string, for the corresponding events. The cards refer to existing research that may be surprising when contrasted with the class beliefs. This section will take some time as you (or students) read out the information contained on the cards and compare their placement. You may choose not to use all of the H5: *Extra Information Cards*

6. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Are there any surprises for you?
 - Do you think if a person believes that all their peers are doing something such as drinking alcohol, having relationships, or having sex, that it might affect how they feel about themselves, or the choices that they make?
1. Students can consider how beliefs about sex and relationships may vary among their own families. This time we are asking 'What would families (parents and carers) identify as the best/right age?'
- Have the second set of cards ready for placement on the timeline (the H4: *Sexuality Timeline Family Values Cards*). They include:
 - First romantic relationship
 - Using contraception and condoms.
 - First sex (for girls)
 - First sex (for boys)
 - First sex for someone in a same-sex relationship
 - If and when to drink alcohol
 - When should sex education begin

2. Is there much variety among family beliefs in your classroom? Where do your parents and carers' beliefs and values come from (eg. TV headlines, life history, religion, culture, generational, etc)?

7. Ask the students to predict the implications of these different expectations on sexual health and relationships for girls, boys, straight and same sex attracted young people (such as, *Could a young person get some help or support when they need it? Would they be more or less likely to make good decisions about sex and relationships?*).

LOVE, SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS ETHICAL FRAMEWORK



Love, Sex and Relationships Ethical Framework
If you want to do things in an ethical way,
these are the 4 steps to be considered.

1. TAKING CARE OF ME.

This means asking, Is this what I really want to do? Am I safe emotionally and physically? Is the other person treating me with respect and concern?

2. TAKING CARE OF YOU.

How does what I want affect the other person? How do I know? I've got to check.

3. HAVING AN EQUAL SAY.

Do we have equal power, or is one person getting their way most of the time? When it comes to sex, a person owns their body and has the right to control who has pleasure from it.

4. LEARNING AS WE GO

Few of us are born knowing how to 'do' relationships. We can learn, and learn from our mistakes.

What would have made the situation better? What am I doing, what am I not doing?

What can I learn from this?

LOVE, SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS, ETHICALLY

Here's what *ethical* sexual relationships sound like from young people who have begun sexual relationships.

<p><i>It's ok to speak up of what I want to do and how to do it in the bedroom. (It's) not all about pleasing the other person (Rose 17yrs)</i></p>	<p>Taking care of me...</p> <p>This means asking, Is this what I really want to do? Am I safe emotionally and physically? Is the other person treating me with respect and concern?</p>
<p><i>I like people who you can talk and be honest and just say how you feel. Not let them sort of decide what they want and then just go from there, there has to be sort of an equal companionship...</i></p>	
<p><i>I say 'what do you want' sort of thing, cause I don't believe in pressure' (Bill 19 years)</i></p>	<p>Taking care of you</p> <p>How does what I want affect the other person? How do I know? I've got to check</p> <p>Having an equal say</p> <p>Do we have equal power, or is one person getting their way most of the time? When it comes to sex, a person owns their body and has the right to control who has pleasure from it.</p>
<p><i>Talking to my partner about what she wants from the experience/how she feels, during or about sex (Jack 17yrs)</i></p>	
<p><i>Helping a friend who was drunk and being led to another person's car that she did not know. Instead we shared a taxi and made sure she got home safely (Jessie 18yrs)</i></p>	
<p><i>A mate hitting on a really drunk girl, I stepped in and told him it was a bad idea (Tom 17yrs)</i></p>	
<p><i>I have done stuff before where I felt like I had to do it because it was expected kind of thing. But I didn't feel very good afterwards and I was too young. But you know, I know what love is now and that's what is important to me right now and it's the best thing... (Dan 19 years)</i></p>	
<p>Learning as we go</p> <p>Few of us are born knowing how to 'do' relationships. We can learn, and learn from our mistakes.</p> <p>What would have made the situation better? What am I doing, what am I not doing?</p>	

Going on the Pill or
some other prescribed
contraception

Masturbation

First boy/
girlfriend

Using condoms



First crush



Seeing porn

Curiosity about body
parts and asking
'what's that'

Getting sexual
feelings

Ending a pregnancy
(abortion)

Having a baby

Moving in together/
Getting married

Learning about bodies,
sex and babies at school

Learning about sexually transmissible infections at school.

Learning at school that sex is a potentially positive and pleasurable experience.

Talking with parents/ carergivers about how babies are made.

Falling in love

Deciding to
have sex

Alcohol use

Sending naked
photos



Puberty



Coming out

Talking about same
sex attraction at
school.

Knowing you are
same-sex attracted

Knowing you are
heterosexual/straight

First romantic
relationship

Using contraception
and condoms.

First sex for someone
in a same-sex
relationship

First sex
(for boys)

First sex
(for girls)

If and when to
drink alcohol

When should sex
education begin



H5: EXTRA INFORMATION CARDS

GOING ON THE PILL OR SOME OTHER PRESCRIBED CONTRACEPTION

Second to condoms, the Pill is the most common choice by teenage women.

About 50% of teenagers are sexually active for 12 months before they visit their doctor for prescription contraception (at about 17-18 years).

More teenage women are starting to choose longer acting options (LARCs) like injectable contraception and contraceptive implants, as the risk of unintended pregnancy is 20 times less than other methods.

Source: Better Health Channel, 2015; Winner et al., 2012

FIRST BOY/GIRLFRIEND

Of those people who have romantic relationships as teenagers, the types of relationships tend to vary with age.

Younger teenagers (12 to 14) usually hang out together in groups. They might meet up with someone special among friends, and then gradually spend more time with that person alone.

More intense boyfriend/girlfriend relationships usually start after 15 or 16.

Having a girlfriend or boyfriend during the teenage years is neither good nor bad. It depends on the quality of the relationship. If the relationship is supportive and trusting it is likely to have a positive effect.

FIRST CRUSH

Before we start having relationships, we might have one or more crushes.

A romantic crush is the beginning of finding someone very attractive, who you feel excited to be around, and with whom you want to spend a lot of time. There is a big range of ages for this, the average age of a strong first romantic crush is between 10 and 12 years.

CURIOSITY ABOUT BODY PARTS AND ASKING 'WHAT'S THAT'

We start asking and learning about bodies (and whether we are allowed to ask questions or to talk about these matters in our family) from a very early age. Children often ask as young as 3 or 4 where they come from.

Source: sexualityandu.ca, 2012

ENDING A PREGNANCY (ABORTION)

The highest numbers of abortions occur between the ages of 20 and 24. Half of teenage pregnancies end in abortion. Abortion is one of the most common surgical procedures performed in Australia – around one in three women will have the procedure in their lifetime.

Source: Family Planning NSW, 2013

SENDING NAKED PHOTOS

Among sexually active Yr 10, 11 and 12 students, 84 % said they had received a sexually explicit text and 72 % said they had sent one.

Source: Mitchell et al., 2014

COMING OUT

We don't know the average age, as young people are coming out earlier than they used to, as they are more likely to find supportive friends and adults. We do know that it makes a huge difference if to the person coming out if the person they confide in is supportive.

Source: Hillier et al, 2010.

USING CONDOMS

In 2013, of those 16 year old students who had penis-in-vagina sex or anal sex, most reported using a condom the last time they had sex.

People aged under 20 are better than older people at using condoms. Over 70 % of Australian men aged 16 to 19 used condoms during the most recent event of vaginal intercourse.

Unfortunately over half of those who use the contraceptive pill don't use condoms to protect themselves from STIs.

Sources: Mitchell et al, 2014.

The Second Australian Study of Health and Relationships (ASHR)

SEEING PORN

The numbers of children viewing online porn have increased and the average first age of seeing porn online in Australia is often cited as 11 years (although its hard to find the research that back this up). We can assume many more young people can see porn regularly. The concern is when porn portrays sex as a rough and violent act against women and if children are learning about sex based on unrealistic expectations.

GETTING SEXUAL FEELINGS

While sexual body parts are extra sensitive right from the start (because they have so many nerve endings), sexual feelings become much stronger as puberty starts, and continue to grow stronger. Puberty can start from age 9 to 16.

Males and females both experience strong sexual feelings and desire. This coincides with an increase in masturbation. Most children (girls and boys) masturbate at some stage and it's perfectly healthy.

Source: www.sexualityandu.ca, 2012

PREGNANCY AND/OR HAVING A BABY

The average age of a woman having her first baby is 28 years.

5% of sexually active students across Australia report that they had experienced sex that resulted in pregnancy. Students in Year 10 (8%) were more likely than those in Year 12 (2%) to report having sex that resulted in pregnancy.

Around half of all teenage pregnancies occur within the first six months of becoming sexually active.

Source: Smith et al, 2009.

PUBERTY

There is a wide range of normal when it comes to puberty kick-off times. Puberty can begin anywhere from about 9 to 16. On average it starts at age 11-12 for girls and 6 months later for boys.

Source: www.sexualityandu.ca, 2012

KNOWING IF YOU ARE SAME-SEX ATTRACTED

For up to 10% of young people, the start of puberty will mean realising they have same-sex attraction (although many young people say they knew they were 'different' in primary school). A larger number of young people might develop bisexual attraction.

Sexuality develops and often changes over time. What happens in adolescence isn't set in stone for the rest of a person's life. Exploration and experimentation with sexuality is normal and common.

Source: Hillier et al., 2005, 2010

KNOWING YOU ARE HETEROSEXUAL/STRAIGHT

While many young people experience first crushes and attractions in primary school, they may not experience sexual attraction until they are 11 or 12. Often, people do not think about 'am I straight' as it often taken for granted as the common or normal way to be.

Sexuality develops and often changes over time. What happens in adolescence isn't set in stone for the rest of a person's life. Exploration and experimentation with sexuality is normal and common.

FIRST SEX

Most people's first sexual experience is with someone they consider to be a boyfriend or girlfriend. By the end of Year 10, about 25% have had sex (Penis-vagina sex). By the end of Year 12, about 50% have had sex. Not all teenage relationships include sex, but most teenagers are likely to experiment with sexual behaviour at some stage. Those young people who feel pressured into sex by their partner or friends are less likely to have a good experience of sex. Those who wait until they feel ready are more likely to have a positive experience.

Source: Mitchell et al, 2014

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