

Mates and Dates New Zealand



Type of intervention



Classroom setting

Target groups, levels of prevention and sub-groups:



Primary prevention

Young People (12-17 Years) | Male & Female | Classroom Setting | English



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Target population

Young people in high school grades 9 – 13 (aged 13 to 17 years).

Delivery organisation

Accident Compensation Corporation, New Zealand.

Mode and context of delivery

Mates and Dates is a healthy relationship programme for high school students. It is taught in schools over five weeks each year; each session lasting one hour. A stepped/progressive approach is taken, with each year's programme building on that of the previous year. It forms part of the Health and Physical Education curriculum for years nine to 13 and encourages a whole school approach to preventing dating violence.

Mates and Dates addresses all forms of violence in dating relationships, including sexual violence. The programme was developed in recognition that 15 -24 year olds are most at risk of violence from current and ex-partners. One in five female and one in 10 male secondary school pupils report unwanted sexual conduct or being made to do unwanted sexual acts. 57% of young people tell no-one.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required

In the pilot study the programme was delivered by facilitators without teaching experience. The evaluation recommends that in future, facilitators require teaching skills and experience as well as familiarity with the course materials and subject matter. One male and one female facilitator were used in the pilots.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

Five sessions of one hour are delivered annually. Stepped approach with each year building on previous year's programme.

Description of intervention

The objectives of the Mates and Dates pilot programme are to:

- provide young people with tools (such as knowledge and skills) to establish and maintain healthy relationships
- change social norms relating to respect, negotiation, and consent in relationships
- teach ethical bystander and intervening skills where risk of violence is identified
- provide young people with help-seeking skills for themselves and their friends if they are experiencing or causing sexual or dating violence
- encourage schools to adopt a whole school approach to preventing sexual and dating violence amongst young people, including having in place:
 - policies which support school boards, staff, and school leadership to promote student safety from sexual violence
 - processes in place to encourage and respond to disclosures of dating and sexual violence

The programme takes a strengths –based approach and has an underpinning belief that all young people are able to act with respect towards their mates, dates and family in all their interactions.

Five one hour sessions are delivered in classrooms to the whole class by two facilitators, one male and one female. The programme is designed to be age relevant for children between 13 and 17 years of age, with each year referencing and building from previous year's content. It uses a combination of interactive methods, such as role play, and age-appropriate written materials.

The programme was first piloted in New Zealand in 2014.

Evaluation

Mates and Dates was piloted in eight schools in New Zealand and the pilots were independently evaluated (Duncan, A. & King, V. *Evaluation of Mates and Dates: School-based Healthy Relationships Primary Prevention Programme Pilot, 2015*). The evaluation found positive impacts were modest but were statistically significant in relation to:

- attitudes towards rape
- confidence in ability to recognise risky situations and inappropriate sexual behaviour
- confidence in ability to seek help or support for self or others if needed

The programme was found to meet best practice standards with a focus on developing and practicing new skills and in its use of age appropriate materials. Students, teachers and facilitators were largely positive about the programme.

References

Healthy Relationships 101: An overview of School-based Healthy Relationship Programs. Canadian Women's Foundation.

Tutty, L.M. (2011) Healthy Relationships. Preventing Teen Dating Violence. An Evaluation of Teen Violence Prevention Programmes. Canadian Women's Foundation

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