

Sex and Ethics: The Sexual Ethics Education Programme for Young People Australia



Type of intervention



Classroom setting



Book/Guide

Target group/s, level/s of prevention and sub-group/s:



Primary prevention

Young People (12-17 Years), Young Adults (18-20 Years), Adults (21 Years +) | Male & Female | Classroom Setting, Book/Guide | English



Primary prevention

Young People (12-17 Years), Young Adults (18-20 Years), Adults (21 Years +) | Male & Female | Classroom Setting, Book/Guide | English

Target population

Males and females aged 16-25 years.

Delivery organisation

The programme can be run in youth services, football clubs, schools, universities, community organisations or any other area working with young people.

Mode and context of delivery

There are two parts to the Sex and Ethics work. The first consists of a 200 page book Sex & Ethics: Young People and Ethical Sex (2009a) which sets out the research underpinning the project and the research outcome evaluations conducted since the programme began in 2007. This book is currently being updated and will be published in the USA in early 2015 by Palgrave Macmillan New York, with a slightly different title. There is also a 180 page education programme Sex & Ethics: The Sexual Ethics Education Program for Young People (2009b). The programme can be run in any area or organisation working with young people.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required

A range of staff can deliver the programme including social Workers, youth workers, sexual health workers, teachers, community psychologists and rape crisis or sexual violence counsellors. All staff need experience of facilitating a group, as well as knowledge about sexual or other forms of gendered violence.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

Six sessions of two to three hours. There should be a one week gap between sessions, to allow time for adequate reflection.

Description of intervention

The Sex & Ethics: The Sexual Ethics Education Program focuses on showing how the challenges faced by young people negotiating their sexual lives can be addressed. It considers how to address the prevention of sexual violence with dating relationships, providing a framework to help young people make ethical decisions in which they take care of themselves and are also mindful and respectful of others.

The key features are:

- ethical practices
- brings together research on sexuality and violence prevention
- focuses on showing how the challenges faced by young people negotiating their sexual lives can be addressed
- considers how to address the prevention of sexual violence within dating relationships
- provides a framework to help young people make ethical decisions in which they take care of themselves and are also mindful and respectful of others

The book:

Many young people are beginning their sexual lives early, but how can they negotiate their sexual lives with both pleasure and safety? Sexuality education is common in many countries but despite this, young people often feel this education fails to provide them with the knowledge and skills they need to negotiate sex ethically.

The programme:

How can young people negotiate their sexual lives with both pleasure and safety? Sex and Ethics: The Sexual Ethics Education Program for Young People is an innovative approach to addressing this complex issue. It aims to increase young people's knowledge and skills in ethical intimacy and reduce unwanted, coerced or pressured sex.

Sessions include activities on sexual ethics, pressures to be sexual, non-verbal and verbal communication skills, alcohol and its impact on ethical negotiation, ethical consent, negotiating conflicting desires and needs in relationships, breaking up and ethical bystander skills.

The programme also provides learning objectives for each of the six lessons, educator's notes including detailed instructions on how to run each activity, handouts, worksheets and overheads for each session and suggested readings for educators.

Programme structure:

- Week 1 - Getting to know each other and how we learn about sexuality and gender. This includes focus on different perspectives on sexual intimacy
- Week 2 - What is Sexual Ethics? This includes focus on pressures to be sexual; gender, sex and friends
- Week 3 - Understanding other people`s desires and needs. This includes focus on alcohol, drugs and sex
- Week 4 - Ethical Consent. This includes focus on the law & sexual consent and skills in ethical negotiation and consent
- Week 5 - Is this relationship working for me? Conflicting desires and wants. This includes focus on ‘what do I want out of a relationship?’
- Week 6 - Standing up against sexual violence. This includes focus on being an ethical friend and bystander.

Evaluation

Carmody, M., & Ovenden, G. (2013). [Putting ethical sex into practice: sexual negotiation, gender and citizenship in the lives of young women and men.](#) *Journal of Youth Studies*, 16(6), 792-807.

This evaluation employed quantitative and qualitative methodology to explore the impact of the *Sex & Ethics Education Program* on young people’s lives. Responses were gathered across three groups (pre-group, post-group, follow-up) – 153 young Australian/New Zealanders (both male and female) who participated in the Programme between 2009 and 2011 completed the evaluation. The long term follow-up of the Sex & Ethics Education Programme demonstrates a significant positive impact on young people's lives. Despite gender differences, males and females were able to move toward behavioral change, explore alternative approaches to gender relations and increase their skills in sexual negotiation as ethical sexual citizens.

References

Carmody, M. (2009), '*Sex & Ethics: young people and ethical sex*'. Palgrave Macmillan: Melbourne, Australia.

Carmody, M. (2009), '*Sex & Ethics: the sexual ethics education program for young people*'. Palgrave Macmillan: Melbourne, Australia.

See project website for more detailed information <http://www.sexandethics.net/>

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