

Relationships and sexuality education

an aspect of

Social, personal and health education

***Interim curriculum and guidelines
for post-primary schools***

Prepared by

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Developing policy

1. Social, personal and health education: the rationale

The general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual, including the aesthetic, creative, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, religious, social and spiritual development for personal and family life, for living in the community and for leisure.

It follows that education in the area of personal and social development will be part of an education process which seeks to fulfil this holistic aim. There is a growing recognition that the Social, personal and health education (SPHE) offered to our young people is as important as any other area of the curriculum. Indeed, personal and social development is a pre-requisite for successful learning; a young person who has a high degree of self worth, a sense of security and a positive self image will be more pre-disposed to school life and to the variety of learning situations it offers.

SPHE provides students with a unique opportunity to develop the skills and competencies to learn about themselves, to care for themselves and others, and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development. In this way students are enabled to participate as active and responsible adults in the personal and social dimensions of society and to make responsible decisions which respect their dignity and that of others.

2. Relationships and sexuality education: the challenge

Sexuality is a key element of healthy social and personal development in all our lives, but particularly in the life of the adolescent. Adolescence is marked by the onset of physical sexual maturity. It provides a wider range of opportunities for socialising with members of the opposite sex. This stage of development is also marked by the establishing of first significant boyfriend/girlfriend relationships, by the first experience of sexual attraction and by the experience of falling in, and out, of love. There is greater freedom and responsibility and exposure to a bewildering variety of messages about sexuality, issues of sexual orientation and the place of sexuality in personal and social life. Sexual development calls for the critical evaluation of the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values with which adolescents are bombarded.

All of these factors contribute to the challenge of Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) at post primary level.

3. RSE: the contexts

3.1 The whole school

The processes of all teaching and learning are bound up with personal and social development. Every teacher and staff member, every class and extra curricular activity can offer opportunities for enhancing the personal and social development of the student. A supportive school environment is essential if SPHE and therefore RSE is to

be effective. In such an environment:

- people feel valued
- self-esteem is fostered
- respect, tolerance and fairness are evident
- high expectations and standards are promoted
- there is support for those with difficulties
- open communication is the norm
- effort is recognised and rewarded
- uniqueness/difference is valued
- conflict is handled constructively
- initiative and creativity are encouraged
- social, moral and civic values are promoted

The principles of fair play, respect, tolerance and reward for effort must permeate the whole school climate; they cannot be compartmentalised into SPHE. The impact of SPHE on the students and on the school is seriously undermined if principles such as those outlined above are not in operation in the whole school environment.

An effective programme of RSE must be supported by a school climate marked by gender equity and a healthy respect for sexuality. These key principles require particular attention in single sex schools. In this regard every staff member has a role to play in the delivery of the school's RSE programme.

3.2 Cross-curricular opportunities

This document outlines the lesson content for RSE programmes at junior and senior levels. While it is envisaged that such lessons would be part of SPHE, it is clear that teachers with specialist knowledge in particular subject areas can support the work of RSE at different stages in the programme. At junior cycle, teachers of home economics, science, religious education, physical education, and civic, social and political education have a particular contribution to make. At senior level, contributions can be made by teachers of biology, home economics, religious education and physical education. These subject areas can contribute to the programme by reinforcing what is delivered in RSE programmes. Teachers of these subjects can, and should, be involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the school's RSE programme.

3.3 Social, personal and health education

SPHE should be the main focus of the school's RSE programme, supported by the whole school climate and the cross curricular opportunities outlined above. The *Draft guidelines for RSE* (NCCA, June 1995, 1.2) state that SPHE is 'spiral, developmental in nature and age appropriate in content and methodology'. The RSE programme outlined in this document is designed to follow this principle and pattern. These lessons should be delivered within the school's existing SPHE programme. Apart from these specific lessons, SPHE covers other areas which would be pertinent to the development of a healthy attitude to sexuality in oneself and one's relationships with others. SPHE deals with issues such as self esteem, assertiveness, communication and decision making skills - all of which can contribute to the effectiveness of the RSE programme.

3.4 The wider community

It would be naive to ignore the myriad of out of school factors which effect the development of a positive attitude to sexuality during adolescence. In the design and delivery of RSE, schools must take account of the culture of the students in the school. Their social lives, the kinds of relationships they form and their behaviour within these relationships, the peer expectation of relationships, the reading material of students, their exposure to sexually explicit material on video and television and through music, their role models in the area of sexual identity - all of these have to be considered in the development and teaching of an RSE programme in school. Consultation with community and youth groups may be necessary and can only serve to enhance the effectiveness of a programme. The consultation process with parents, necessary for the design of the RSE programme, will also offer insights which can enhance the effectiveness of the programme.

The wider community can further support the work of the school in RSE by providing speakers and visitors appropriate to the topic under consideration.

3.5 Parents

The work of RSE in the school is designed to be supportive of the efforts of parents and their concerns for the health, safety, security, and well being of their children. Parents are aware of the contemporary cultural context in which adolescents must grow to adulthood. They are aware of the religious traditions, civic, moral, spiritual, familial and personal values and priorities which they hold to be important and which they endeavour to hand on to their children. A school programme, planned in consultation with parents, should reflect these values.

In addition, programmes should be developed by and for parents and parent associations to complement and enhance the school-based programmes. Parents' groups should be supported in their efforts to develop such training programmes.

3.6 The moral framework

The aims of RSE set it firmly within a moral, spiritual and social framework. A positive attitude to sexuality will be expressed in responsible and respectful attitudes and behaviour towards oneself and others. It will recognise that sexual behaviour is not just a personal and private matter, but has social and community implications as well. Decisions about such attitudes and behaviour are made in the light of the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes delivered in RSE, inside and outside school.

The values inherent in the programme should be consistent with the core values and ethos of the school.

4. Aims

Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) which is located in the overall framework of Social, personal and health education (SPHE), has as its specific aims:

- to help young people understand and develop friendships and relationships
- to promote an understanding of sexuality
- to promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and in one's relationship with others
- to promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction
- to enable young people to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.

5. Objectives

RSE should enable the students to:

- acquire the understanding and skills necessary to form healthy friendships and relationships
- develop a positive sense of self-awareness, and the skills for building and maintaining self esteem
- become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change especially during adolescence and to develop respect for difference between individuals
- understand human physiology with particular reference to the reproductive cycle, human fertility and sexually transmitted diseases
- understand sexual development and identity and explore aspects of sexuality including sex roles, stereotyping, gender issues and cultural influences on sexuality
- value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood
- develop strategies for decisions and actions consistent with personal moral integrity and respectful of the rights and dignity of others
- develop skills for coping with peer pressure, conflict and threats to personal safety.

Some of these objectives will be supported by the other elements of SPHE, by the broader curriculum and the whole school climate.

6. School policy

The school policy on RSE will reflect policy on SPHE. In order to formulate such a policy, the report of the Expert Advisory Group on RSE (1995) suggests the setting up of a consultation group which might include teachers, parents and management. This school group could also consult with students as appropriate. The following steps could be taken in the formulation of school policy:

- the principal calls the consultation group together:
 - to examine the existing provision for RSE within the school*
 - to examine the needs of RSE within the school, taking account of the cultural context*
 - to evaluate the existing provision in the light of the guidelines and the needs of the school*
 - to plan for implementation/revision of RSE as necessary. This would include such things as the location of RSE in SPHE, the formulation of programme objectives, highlighting cross curricular opportunities and the identification of staffing and training requirements*
- a draft document is prepared for discussion with staff, parents and management
- the draft is amended where necessary
- an implementation policy is agreed.

Provision is made for ongoing evaluation. This evaluation should involve those who took part in the initial consultation process of policy development.

7. Time allocation

One timetabled period per week should be allocated to SPHE. This is in addition to the time allocated to Civic, social and political education (CSPE). Out of the SPHE programme in operation in the school, **five to six timetabled periods** in the year should be assigned to RSE. SPHE, in dealing with issues such as self esteem, health and hygiene, substance abuse, communication skills and life roles, supports key elements of RSE. It is spiral and developmental in nature and age appropriate in content. SPHE and RSE can be supplemented by work done on a cross-curricular basis through the medium of a wide range of subjects.

8. Educational methodologies

8.1 Teaching and learning strategies

Teaching methods in RSE, as in all of SPHE, are concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and skills which have implications for behaviour. An open and facilitative teaching style and participative and experiential methodologies are essential.

8.2 The learning environment

In organising the learning environment, the teacher will be careful to create an atmosphere which respects the privacy of each individual student and treats all students with due sensitivity and care. Some important considerations might be:

- the degree of trust, respect and positive regard for students
- the relationships between the teacher and the students and among the students themselves
- the need for clear expectations, goals and learning objectives

It is important that ground rules and codes of behaviour should be discussed and agreed with the class.

8.3 The learning experience

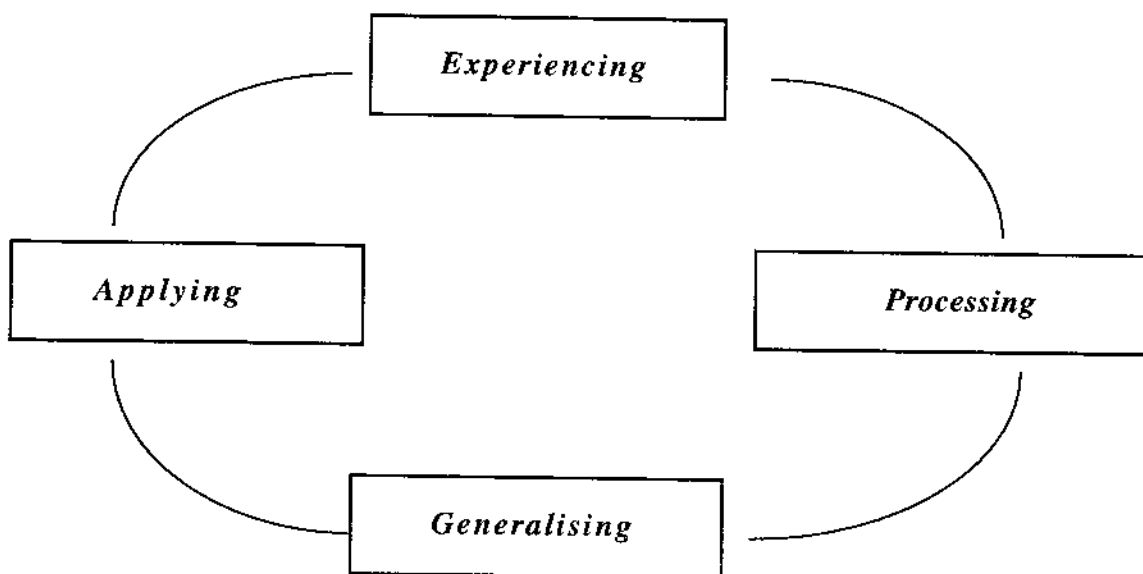
Group work

Working in small groups has been found to be a most effective way of organising the learning in SPHE and RSE classes. This involves dividing the class into small discussion groups of 4-6 students. The teacher's role is to organise the class so that effective work takes place in the groups. The major work takes place between the students themselves, rather than between the students and teacher. It is important to remember that skill in group work is something developed in teachers and students over time.

Experiential learning

The structured experiential method is widely recognised as the most appropriate method for use in all forms of SPHE. The use of this method in the classroom setting ensures the students active participation in their own learning. They are not simply the passive recipients of information. Such active involvement gives a greater significance to the learning because it arises out of the students own experience, ideas and behaviour.

This method is made up of four stages: experiencing, processing, generalising and applying.



Experiencing

The first phase consists of the initial experience that forms the foundation of the entire process. The experience is generated in the classroom through the use of a structured exercise such as role play, simulation, drama etc. The students have to be participants rather than observers in this initial experience in order to generate the reactions needed to resource the next phase of the process.

Processing

Initially, processing consists of reflection on, and sharing of, the variety of reactions to the experience. Then, analysis occurs, through a variety of methods, in order to explore and evaluate the initial experience and the reactions to it.

Generalising

In this phase of the cycle, generalisations are extracted from the sharing and discussion and principles developed. Consideration is then given to how these might influence attitudes and behaviours in the context of moral, religious and cultural values.

Applying

The fourth phase of the cycle calls for the application of the learning in new situations. The teacher can use a variety of methodologies to encourage the application of the learning to new contexts.

The role of the teacher in experiential learning

The teacher is responsible for designing, planning and structuring the experiential learning elements of an RSE programme. The exercises and their subsequent analysis should reflect the aims and ethos of the school's RSE policy. Participating in an activity is not necessarily a learning experience. It is important that in addition to being involved in an activity, students are facilitated through analysis and processing to application.

Some methods which support the experiential learning cycle include:

Group discussion

This can be triggered by a wide variety of experiences inside and outside the classroom. Discussions should be planned, have clear aims and be structured in accordance with the aims and objectives of the lesson.

Case studies

These can be drawn from students' own experience, from television programmes, from newspapers and a wide variety of other sources. They are particularly useful for problem solving exercises.

Brainstorming

The students are asked to call out words they associate with a particular topic. All contributions are recorded without comment on a flip chart or board. The group may then put them in order or in categories and move on to a discussion of some of the issues raised.

Role play

This is a teaching procedure which allows students to explore simulated situations in a controlled and safe environment. In role play, students take on roles based on real life situations in which personal skills can be tested and developed. Scripts and role cards are useful in supporting this methodology.

Artwork

Artistic expression can be particularly useful for overcoming literacy problems. Forms of artwork which are appropriate include drawing, collage, montage, graffiti work and posters.

Narrative expression

The creation of stories and poems can be helpful. Stories can be worked on in groups and a variety of possible endings suggested for different scenarios. Poetry is a useful tool for the expression of feelings and attitudes.

Games: Icebreakers

Icebreakers can be used to energise a group or to help develop a relaxed atmosphere in the class. They can also enhance listening and communication skills.

Games: Simulation

These games function in the same way as role play, but in a carefully structured environment. They can provide experience of, and exposure to, a wide range of situations and experiences.

Debates

A debate is a series of formal spoken arguments for and against a definite proposal. While the normal form of exploration in the SPHE and RSE class is the more informal discussion, debates can be useful for developing skills of analysis, critical awareness and appreciation of differing points of view.

Project work

A well designed project assignment can facilitate students in directing their own learning. Four key stages are involved:

- plan - decide on the project title and theme
- implement - carry out the work
- present - display the completed work and answer questions from other students
- evaluate - what was learned in the entire process.

Visitors

While visitors to the classroom can be a useful addition to RSE, the delivery of the programme remains the responsibility of the teacher.

Planning a module of RSE

9. A module of Relationships and sexuality education

The content of RSE at post-primary level is described under **three themes**. These themes are neither sequential nor discrete; they merge and overlap with each other. Teaching strategies should reflect this relationship.

The three themes of RSE at post-primary level

- 1. Human growth and development**
- 2. Human sexuality**
- 3. Human relationships**

9.1 Human growth and development

This theme consists of an age appropriate understanding of the biology and psychology of the human life cycle from conception through birth and growth to death. This is accompanied by a rationale for responsible behaviour in relationships and sexual activity. It includes insights into physical well being, infection and disease. The topic of AIDS can be dealt with here in a way which supports the already existing AIDS education programme in the school. The theme of human growth and development provides a vocabulary for understanding the functioning of all parts of the human body and a psychological understanding of feelings and their appropriate expression.

9.2 Human sexuality

This theme deals with human sexuality as including all aspects of the human person that relate to being male and female and being subject to change throughout life. Sexuality is an integral part of the human personality and has biological, psychological, cultural, social and spiritual dimensions. The theme offers opportunities to develop a holistic understanding of sexuality as contributing to the development of personal well being, enhancing personal and family relationships and ultimately contributing to the well being of society.

9.3 Human relationships

This theme focuses on the importance of relationships for health and well-being. It examines how one relates to self and others - family, friends (significant and incidental) - and stresses the importance of self esteem as a basis for worthwhile friendships and relationships. It looks at rights and responsibilities and how patterns and expressions of relationship change with time. It addresses issues such as communication, influence, intimacy, sexual attraction and sexual expression in relationships consistent with personal and moral integrity.

10. Development of themes at Junior Cycle

10.1 Human growth and development

- awareness of changes in the human life cycle
- an understanding of the physical and emotional changes that take place in males and females at puberty and appreciation of variation
- knowledge of sexual organs and their function
- an appreciation of hygiene associated with puberty
- an awareness of the sometimes conflicting feelings, moods and emotions characteristic of adolescence
- development of a language for the expression of emotions
- an understanding of fertility, conception, pregnancy and birth
- awareness of implications of sexual activity
- understanding of sexually transmitted diseases, with particular reference to HIV/AIDS

10.2 Human sexuality

- an awareness of what it is to be female and male
- an awareness of stereotyping and its influence on attitudes and behaviour
- an appreciation of equality and difference
- information on and sensitivity to sexual orientation
- awareness of discrimination
- respect for sexuality
- developing skills for personal safety

10.3 Human relationships

- developing skills for self awareness
- developing skills for building and maintaining self esteem
- awareness of the qualities valued in friendships and how friendship patterns change
- developing skills for establishing and maintaining relationships
- awareness of roles and responsibilities in relationships and families
- identifying groups students belong to, behaviour in these groups and response to peer pressure

11. Lesson themes for Junior Cycle

In the light of the time constraints, the developmental and spiral nature of the subject and the requirement for age appropriateness, the following lesson content and sequence of lessons is **suggested**. These are exemplar lessons. The developmental stage of the students as well as their social and cultural context, must be considered in the planning of the school's own programme. A wide range of material and methodologies is **suggested**. A comprehensive list of resources will be available in the context of training. The factors pertinent to the planning of a school programme will also have a bearing on the selection of materials for use in class. Each one of the lessons can cover one or more class periods.

Year One

Description of lesson

Useful resources

<p>1.1 Me as unique and different</p> <p>This lesson looks at what makes us all unique and different with special reference to masculinity and femininity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Western Health Board; <u>Healthy Living</u>, <i>Self Esteem</i>, lesson 2, p.173 and • <u>Healthy Choices</u>, <i>Maintaining Self Esteem</i>, lesson 3, Girls and Boys p.83 • On My Own Two Feet; <u>Identity and Self Esteem</u>, lessons 4&5, p.22
<p>1.2 Friendship</p> <p>In this lesson the students will examine friendship as the basis for a wide range of relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Western Health Board; <u>Healthy Times</u>, <i>Relationship Skills</i>, A Friend is.., lesson 1,p.129 and • <u>Healthy Living</u>; <i>Building Relationship</i>, lesson 1, The People in My Life, p.185 • Students might take part in an exercise which asks them to identify and rank the qualities they look for in a friend.
<p>1.3 Changes at puberty</p> <p>This lesson will examine the changes that take place at puberty - including psychological, social and physical. The latter would include issues related to hygiene.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a number of videos and biological charts available • On My Own Two Feet; <u>Identity and Self Esteem</u>, lesson 7, p.35

Description of lesson

Useful resources

<p>1.4 The male and female reproductive system</p> <p>This lesson will give a clear understanding of the male and female reproductive system, intercourse and the concepts of fertility and conception.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School science texts can be used here. • North Western Health Board; <u>Healthy Choices, Growth and Development Towards Adulthood</u>, lesson 1, p.174
<p>1.5 Images of male and female</p> <p>This lesson will analyse how our concepts of male and female are formed and developed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dept. of Education; <u>Exploring Sex Stereotyping</u>, lesson 7 • On My Own Two Feet ; <u>Identity and Self Esteem</u>, lesson 14, Sex roles, p.67
<p>1.6 Respecting self and others</p> <p>This lesson will look at the importance of respect for self and others in relation to sexuality, sexual orientation and, in particular, how language may be used and abused.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On My Own Two Feet; <u>Identity and Self Esteem</u>; lesson 15, Nobody's perfect, p16 <i>and</i> • <u>Understanding Influences</u>; lesson 3, Friendship, p.19

Year Two

<i>Description of lesson</i>	<i>Useful resources</i>
<p>2.1 From conception to birth This lesson will give a clear understanding of human fertility and the development of the foetus from conception to birth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Western Health Board; <u>Healthy Choices, Growth and Development to Adulthood</u>, lesson 3, A Child is Born, p.182 • Texts from the science and home economics course. • Hyland Maura; <u>Show Us The Way</u>, lessons 4&5.
<p>2.2 Recognising and expressing feelings and emotions This lesson will provide opportunities for developing an awareness of the feelings connected to a variety of relationships and the language needed to express those feelings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Western Health Board; <u>Healthy Choices, Relationship Building Skills</u>, lesson 6, p.148 and • <i>The Language of Feeling</i>, lesson 3, Changes, p.116 • On My Own Two Feet; <u>Feelings</u>, lessons 1,2&3 pp.16-23 and lesson 9, Expressing your Feelings, p.44
<p>2.3 Peer pressure and other influences This lesson will examine the role of peer pressure and other influences in the area of sexuality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On My Own Two Feet; <u>Understanding Influences</u>, lesson 5, Peer Pressure p.24 • North Western Health Board; <u>Healthy Choices, Decision Making Skills</u>, lesson 5, Who influences my Decisions? p.55 • Text books dealing with media and advertising in the English curriculum.
<p>2.4 Managing relationships This lesson will provide the students with opportunities for developing skills for establishing and maintaining relationships at appropriate levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Western Health Board; <u>Healthy Choices, Relationship Building Skills</u>, lesson 5, Relationships and Communication, p.148 and lesson 6, Problem Solving, p.149

Description of lesson

Useful resources

<p>2.5 Making responsible decisions This lesson will focus on the skills for making considered decisions in the area of sexuality, consistent with a personal value system and within a moral framework.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On My Own Two Feet; <u>Decision Making</u>, lesson 3, Decision Making Stages, p.22 and lesson 4, Values, p.26 • North Western Health Board; <u>Healthy Choices</u>, <i>Decision Making Skills</i>, lesson 3, Making Decisions - F.A.C.T.S., p.51
<p>2.6 Health and personal safety This lesson will develop an awareness of the potential risks in developing new relationships and the practical steps involved in keeping safe. This will include issues of health and personal safety and infection awareness with a particular emphasis on sexually transmitted diseases.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources on assertiveness from a wide variety of sources • Case studies on such areas as abuse, assault etc. (age and group appropriate) • Information from a range of help and support agencies • Departments of Health and Education; AIDS education resource materials

Year Three

Description of lesson

Useful resources

<p>3.1 Body image This lesson will help students to develop a positive appreciation of self.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On My Own Two Feet; <u>Identity and Self Esteem</u>, lesson 14, Sex Roles, p.204 and 16, Nobody's Perfect, p.208 • North Western Health Board; <u>Healthy Choices</u>, <i>Self Esteem</i>, lesson 4, Snapshot, p.85 and 5, Thinking Positive, p.87 • Visualisation exercises would be useful here
<p>3.2 Where am I now? This lesson will consist of a review of human growth and development with a view to the student identifying his/her own stage of development within the growth cycle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A true or false questionnaire on details and facts related to human growth and development • North Western Health Board; <u>Healthy Choices</u>, <i>Adolescence</i>, lesson 2, Changes During Adolescence, p.113
<p>3.3 Relationships - what's important? This lesson will help students to identify for themselves what is important in a mature relationship.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a selection of photographs to explore the idea that there's more to a person than meets the eye • North Western Health Board; <u>Healthy Choices</u>, <i>Relationship Building Skills</i>, lesson 2, Collage, p.142, lesson 3, What's Important?, p.143 and lesson 4, Mix and Match, p.145
<p>3.4 The three R's - respect, rights and responsibilities This lesson deals with respect for self and others and the rights and responsibilities involved in relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On My Own Two Feet; <u>Assertive Communication</u>, lessons 2, My Personal Rights, p.24, lesson 11 Saying No, p.78 and lesson 13, Accepting a No, p.89 • North Western Health Board; <u>Healthy Choices</u>, <i>Communication Skills</i>, lesson 4, Saying No, p.73

Description of lesson

Useful resources

<p>3.5 Conflict This lesson will help the students to identify sources of conflict in the context of relationships and to identify and develop strategies for resolution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• On My Own Two Feet; <u>Assertive Communication</u>, lesson 15, Criticism, p.100 and lesson 17, Resolving Conflict, p.110• North Western Health Board; <u>Healthy Times</u>, Authority Relationships, lesson 2, In the Other Persons Shoes, p.141 and lesson 3, Co-operation, p.143• Irish Commission for Justice and Peace; <u>So Everybody Fights?</u>, Section III, Conflict and Inequalities, pp.59-76.
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12. Development of themes at Senior Cycle

12.1 Human growth and development

- understanding the structure and function of sex organs
- awareness of fertility
- awareness of the importance and methods of family planning
- understanding of pregnancy and the development of the foetus
- appreciation of the importance of health care during pregnancy
- recognising the range of human emotions and ways to deal with these
- an understanding of the relationship between safe sexual practice and sexually transmitted diseases with particular reference to HIV/AIDS

12.2 Human sexuality

- understanding of what it means to be male or female
- consideration of male and female roles in relationships and in society
- awareness and understanding of sexual orientations
- exploration of some of the issues pertaining to equality
- understanding the concept of sexual harassment and its different forms
- awareness of sexual abuse and rape, including legal issues and the identification of help agencies in these areas
- skills for making choices about sexual activity
- exploration of the range of attitudes, values and beliefs regarding sexual behaviour in modern society

12.3 Human relationships

- understanding the nature of peer pressure
- developing skills for resolving conflict
- development of an awareness of the complex nature of love and loving relationships
- understanding marriage as a loving commitment
- deeper awareness of the importance of family life

13. Lesson themes for Senior Cycle

In the light of the constraints of time, the developmental and spiral nature of the subject and the requirement for age appropriateness, the following lesson content and sequence of lessons is **suggested**. These are exemplar lessons. The developmental stage of the students as well as their social and cultural context, must be considered in the planning of the school's own programme. A wide range of material and methodologies is **suggested**. A comprehensive list of resources will be provided in the context of training. The factors pertinent to the planning of a school programme will also have a bearing on the selection of materials for use in class. Each one of the lessons can cover one or more class periods. The division of material and lessons between the first and second year of senior cycle will depend on the particular arrangements for SPHE in place in the school post Junior Cycle.

Senior Cycle

Description of lesson

Useful resources

<p>S.1 Fertility awareness This lesson seeks to develop a deeper awareness and understanding of male and female fertility as an introduction to family planning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaving Certificate biology texts • Leaving Certificate home economics texts • Charts and videos available from a number of commercial sources
<p>S.2 Family planning In this lesson students develop their awareness of various methods of family planning.</p>	<p><i>Selection of and presentation of material should take account of school ethos.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of materials available from Health Boards • Texts in science, religious education and home economics • Boyle, Niall; <u>The Challenge of God, Family Planning</u>, p.141 • General books on health issues

Description of lesson

Useful resources

<p>S.3 Values and relationships This lesson will help the students to identify what they value in a relationship and think critically about idealised images of relationships presented by media and other sources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a collage based on the qualities valued in previous and present relationships • Dorr, F and Lynch, E; <u>Social and Health Education</u>, session 23, Living Well, p.195 • Hyland, Maura; <u>Lifeways</u>, Relationship, p.9
<p>S.4 Personal integrity Students will consider how affection is expressed in a variety of contexts, how to set boundaries and strike a balance within relationships in a way that protects personal integrity and respect for one's own sexuality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Western Health Board; <u>Healthy Choices, Growth and Development to Adulthood</u>, lesson 2, Sound Judgement, p.180 • Dorr, F. and Lynch, E.; <u>Social and Health Education</u>, session 27, It's A Date, p.225 • Boyle, Niall; <u>The Challenge of God; Love and Sex</u>, p.126 • Hyland Maura; <u>Lifeways</u>, Saying No, p.28 • Exercises based around 'problem pages' in magazines and case studies would be useful here.

Description of lesson

Useful resources

<p>S.5 Responsible parenthood Using models of decision making, students will explore the implications and consequences of pregnancy and parenthood for both male and female. Factors which impede responsible decision making should be considered, e.g. alcohol, drugs, lack of assertiveness, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming on the needs of babies and young children and the skills required to meet these needs • Examining the limitations to freedom imposed by parenthood, particularly single parenthood • Case studies focused on the early years of childminding • Veritas/Kairos; <u>The Lifeways Video</u>, part two, Becoming a Parent and part four, Unexpected Pregnancy • Dorr, F. and Lynch, E.; <u>Social and Health Education</u>; session 30, Nourishing New Life, p.238 • Visits to school by young parents
<p>S.6 Sexually transmitted diseases Students will be given an understanding of the nature of sexually transmitted diseases with particular reference to AIDS, how they are contracted and the importance of early medical intervention and the location of appropriate medical support. Issues of discrimination might be addressed here.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material from the Health Promotion Unit • Health Boards information leaflets • Departments of Health and Education; AIDS education resource materials. • Boyle, Niall; <u>The Challenge of God; Sexually Transmissible Diseases</u>, p.161
<p>S.7 Sexual harassment This lesson develops awareness of and skills for dealing with all forms of sexual harassment in a variety of contexts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information packs from trade unions • Working towards developing school policy on sexual harassment; comparing and contrasting with a variety of policies and statements on the issue

Description of lesson

Useful resources

<p>S.8 Gender orientation This lesson will examine some issues concerned with, and attitudes to, gender orientations in modern society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dorr, F. and Lynch, E.; <u>Social and Health Education</u>, session 26, How are we sexual? p.211
<p>S.9 Gender discrimination This lesson helps students understand that the roles assigned to people in life situations are coloured by our stereotyped views of what it is to be male and female. This might include issues of gender discrimination, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and pornography.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Education; <u>Exploring Sex Stereotyping</u>, lessons 5&6, pp.18-21 • Dorr F. and Lynch E.; <u>Social and Health Education</u>, session 26, How are we Sexual?, p. 211 • Hyland, Maura; <u>Lifeways, Stereotyping</u>, p.14 and Man and Woman God made Them, p.17 and Pornography, p.38
<p>S.10 Personal rights and personal safety In this lesson the students will reflect on the right to privacy and their own space, and the consequences when privacy and space are invaded. The students will understand the invasion of personal integrity and the issues of power and control involved in abuse and rape. Help agencies are also identified.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies (from newspapers etc.) • Statutory documents from Department of Equality and Law Reform • Information from National Women's Council • Hyland Maura; <u>Lifeways, Violations of Sexuality</u>, p.40
<p>S.11 Making, keeping and ending relationships In this lesson students will take steps towards developing and enhancing the skills necessary for making, keeping and ending relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dorr, F. and Lynch, E.; <u>Social and Health Education</u>, session 24, What are Friends For? p.202 • Exercises around 'problem pages' and the creation of spider diagrams of personal relationships would be useful. • Hyland, Maura; <u>Lifeways, Boy/Girl Relationships</u>, p.29

Description of lesson

Useful resources

<p>S.12 Love is... The students will explore the concept of love and the importance of love in its various aspects such as closeness, intimacy, distance, pleasure and commitment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Word Wizard Game - students write words related to love and then work at prioritising them• Magazine and newspaper searches for different aspects of love• Hyland Maura; <u>Lifeways</u>, What is Love? p.10 and Love or Infatuation, p. 13
<p>S.13 Commitment and marriage This lesson is to help students look at the various elements of marriage which help support life long love and family life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dorr, F. and Lynch, E.; <u>Social and Health Education</u>, session 30, Nourishing New Life, p.239• Hyland, Maura; <u>Lifeways</u>, Marriage, p.31

The teacher and RSE

14. RSE: the role of the teacher

How a teacher facilitates the RSE class and the relationship established with students are key elements in determining the effectiveness of RSE. The same is true for the whole SPHE programme.

14.1 Atmosphere

While all subject areas on the curriculum demand that students are respected and valued, it is essential to the success of the RSE programme that a supportive atmosphere be created and maintained in the classroom. The atmosphere should be relaxed and more informal than in other subject areas.

14.2 Language and tone

This supportive atmosphere is created by the use of appropriate language by the teacher and the use of a non-judgmental tone. The language of encouragement should be used where possible and student input reinforced and built into the lesson in a creative and constructive way.

14.3 Student-teacher relationship

Teachers of SPHE and RSE must be seen to be comfortable with the range of topics which might be covered in the programme. Students must see teachers as genuine and authentic people. Teachers of RSE must communicate an openness to the students' own opinions and ideas. At the same time ground rules for effective classroom management must be negotiated with students, agreed and constantly monitored.

15. RSE: training

All involved in the development and delivery of a programme of RSE in a second level school will require the support of a range of training and in-career development opportunities. Teachers who have already had training in the area of SPHE will be a valuable resource for others who are undertaking the delivery of RSE.

Support and training will be needed in the following areas:

Programme content

Teachers will need a high degree of familiarity with the materials being used in the school's RSE programme. Training in the physical aspects of human sexuality - diagrams etc. - is one area which may require attention. Training should also help teachers to be at ease with their own sexuality.

Student/teacher relationship

The creation and sustaining of the classroom atmosphere outlined above is a specialist task requiring particular skills. Training in these skills will be necessary, particularly for those who have had no experience of or training in SPHE.

Methodologies

While RSE will draw on a range of methodologies from across the curriculum, it will also call for the use of methodologies more usually associated with SPHE - participative and experiential learning methods. The management of effective group work or role play for example, are techniques in which teachers require training. Training might also be needed, for example in the judicious handling of questions and answers.

16. Assessment and evaluation

16.1 Assessment

Approaches to learning and teaching in the area of SPHE must include a view of assessment which encourages learners to recognise the processes of their own learning. Opportunities should be offered within SPHE for the review of progress and the recording of personal achievement. RSE, as an element of SPHE, should offer the same opportunities for students to recognise their own progression and that of others. This can be achieved through questionnaires and worksheets which ask students to note the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes they have developed. This self-assessment recognises that students will encounter out of school situations which will offer opportunities for further learning about sexuality and relationships. It encourages students to be aware of their own development.

16.2 Evaluation

The evaluation of RSE in the school should be ongoing and should involve all those who were involved in the planning process. Regular meetings between all involved in a particular section of the RSE programme would facilitate such ongoing evaluation.

Evaluation of RSE should be under the following headings:

Whole school evaluation

This will address the impact of the RSE programme on the whole school environment. It might include a range of issues from how students relate to each other inside and outside the RSE classroom, to the resource requirements for the effective running of the programme.

Programme evaluation

This will examine the programme itself, the relationship between the different stages of the programme, the building in of cross-curricular links, student and parent perception of the programme and resources and strategies useful in the delivery of the programme.

The evaluation undertaken should be recorded and presented to all involved in the planning process for the identification of implications for future planning and provision.