

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

STAFF ASSESSMENT TOOL



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STAFF PROFILE FOR TEACHING RELATIONSHIPS & SEXUALITY EDUCATION

- 1. Facilitators know the subject they are teaching.** Teaching comes naturally when the chosen specialised area of training is underpinned by passion and dedication. Similarly, a successful facilitator of relationships and sexuality education understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline of relationships, sexuality and sexual health. Being comfortable and positive about this topic ensures a learning environment is created that makes relationships and sexuality education meaningful for learners.
- 2. Facilitators know how teens grow.** Teens develop at different rates, particularly with the interplay of hormones, physiological and neurological growth patterns. Adolescent learners also have broad ranges of ability to grasp relationships and sexuality concepts. A successful sexuality educator can provide instruction that supports differing social and personal development, including gender and sexual diversity.
- 3. Facilitators understand that learners learn differently.** All learners differ in their approaches to learning and experience barriers that impede learning. This has never been a truer statement than in sexual development. Within any given class you will have students with varying sexual awareness. Some students may be not interested in sexuality and relationships, and some may have been watching pornography for a number of years. Some may have been abused, and some young people may have already embraced plutonic sexual relationships. Facilitators need to be flexible to adapt instruction to meet the diverse needs of learners and bring practical support without judgement.
- 4. Facilitators know how to communicate well.** Clear communication is critical when delivering relationships and sexuality education. Different words mean different things to students. What may cause offence to one student may be completely normal for another.
- 5. Facilitators use correct terms.** Using anatomical terms and best practice approaches underpins success in this subject. It's also vitally important to ensure that language used creates an environment of tolerance and acceptance that contributes to students feeling safe and supported. The facilitator needs to use effective verbal and nonverbal communication techniques and incorporate a variety of instructional strategies, including the use of media & technology. Clear and effective communication will encourage development of critical thinking, active inquiry, problem solving, and skills for life.
- 6. Facilitators know how to manage the size of their learning group.** Variation of group sizes is something most educators and youth workers are familiar with. When transferring this skill to deliver sexuality education in class or small group sizes, facilitators will need to use individual and group motivation to create a learning environment that encourages positive behaviour, social interaction, active engagement and self-awareness.

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- 7. Facilitators are comfortable in their own skin.** Every person who delivers relationships and sexuality education will be challenged in his or her own understanding of sexuality, relationships and sexual health. It is important that the facilitator has reached a place in their emotional self-awareness that allows for holistic instruction in this area of learning. It's also important for facilitators to have had opportunity to work through personal issues such as abuse. It may be the case that significant life events (such as sexual trauma or painful memories) and/or embedded beliefs may affect the level of personal comfort of facilitators when discussing sexuality, relationships and sexual health. It is important to recognise this and either decline being involved in delivering Relationships and Sexuality Education or be willing to challenge and adapt personal reactions.
- 8. Facilitators understand and use appropriate sharing.** Teens are curious and whilst delivering relationships and sexuality classes, a facilitator will need to be aware that young people discuss topics relative to their personal circumstances. Facilitators may be asked personal questions and it is best to be prepared! It is important for facilitators to understand what is and is not suitable to share; and be comfortable with reframing the conversation to protect themselves and to provide safe learning for all students.
- 9. Facilitators know how to monitor learner progress.** Monitoring learner progress in relationships and sexuality education may be quite different to regular subjects. It's important to observe body language, verbal language, attitudes, and withdrawn or aggressive behaviour, as these may all be indicators that the student is struggling with this topic. It's important that formal and informal assessment strategies are used to evaluate and ensure the continuous social, emotional and personal development of the learner. Very few sexuality educators are equipped to deal with the complexities of concerning abusive behaviour exhibited by students, compulsive sexual behaviour such as regular viewing of pornography, or trauma related to sexual coercion or abuse. Access to internal and external referral services is essential to ensure student wellbeing for any who need further support.
- 10. Facilitators are able to evaluate themselves.** Self-reflection for facilitators is essential. Continually evaluating the effects of his or her personal values, choices and actions on learners, parents and the broader school community helps to bring a balanced and safe approach to sexuality education. An ethical approach grounded in integrity and fairness offers students a great example to model behaviour.
- 11. Facilitators are connected with other sexual health professionals.** Ongoing professional development in relationships and sexuality education and contact with other school colleagues and support services in the larger community are vital to the success of a sexuality educator. It's important for facilitators to actively seek out these opportunities to grow professionally and support learner sexual health and relationship wellbeing.

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	Comfort Level Scale low -- high				
	1	2	3	4	5
Has a keen interest in providing sexuality education that:					
Encourages healthy lifestyles and wellness					
Promotes behaviours which can prevent sexually transmitted infections and other health problems					
Is sensitive to cultural norms, and critical of cultural messages that normalise abusive, objectifying and derogatory behaviours (e.g. hypersexualised media & pornography)					
Discusses topics such as digital media literacy, abusive behaviours, consensual behaviours, pornography, sexual diversity, contraception and prevention of sexually transmitted infections					
Is delivered in collaboration with other specialists within the organization					
Relies on referral to internal and external support services					
Involves further learning and networking with other sexual health professionals (such as through the Sex Ed: Online Training Solutions provided by Youth Wellbeing Project)					
Personal values & skill set:					
Awareness that significant life events and beliefs may affect the level of personal comfort when discussing sexuality and willing to challenge personal reactions					
Awareness that personal value/belief system may affect delivery and is willing to challenge these beliefs against current best practice to increase respect for the personal values of others					
Has some form of education in social/relational wellbeing, psychology or human development					
Is comfortable to learn more about whole-person centred sexuality education (addressing dimensions of wellbeing: mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, social)					
Is a good communicator and comfortable speaking in public about sensitive sexuality topics					
Is sensitive to cultural differences and diversity, and willing to engage with people of varied backgrounds					
Is comfortable in taking a positive approach to sexuality education (i.e. it's not all about the risks and pitfalls)					