

Relationships and sexuality education mapped to global standards for health promoting schools

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Background:

A health-promoting schools (HPS) approach was introduced 25 years ago but few countries have sustained the approach at scale. The World Health Organisation developed eight global standards to bridge the gap between current practices and a fully-embedded, sustainable HPS system.

Approach:

The WA Department of Health (WA DoH) has invested in school-based relationships and sexuality education (RSE) and teacher training as part of a comprehensive approach to the prevention and control of sexually transmissible infections (STIs) for over 20 years. This includes a suite of education initiatives and resources including the Growing and Developing Healthy Relationships (GDHR) website, Talk soon. Talk often parent resource, an undergraduate teacher program and free in-service teacher training.

WA DoH has mapped their initiatives against the eight standards to identify strengths and opportunities.

Outcome:

Health, Community, Justice and Education sectors across the state and country have implemented a variety of segmented RSE initiatives from different funding streams and policy perspectives - consent education, gender-based violence prevention, respectful relationships, sexual violence, and abortion access. Best practice RSE, implemented in schools facing a packed curriculum, requires a more cohesive response. Moving forward, a united national approach is required to best utilise resources and ensure comprehensive, high-quality, equitable access to RSE programs across Australia.

Innovation and Significance:

WA DoH has established an expanded advisory group to encourage a partnership approach across government and non-government sectors and is advocating for a national body to further the cohesive response.

A new GDHR website is under development with K-12 lesson plans mapped to the new National and WA curriculum and the *International Technical Guidance for Sexuality Education* with focus on consent education as part of comprehensive RSE. The current website has an annual reach of 200,000 users

National and state strategies are currently being reviewed and written to include these innovations.

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