

Changing Attitudes: Sexuality and Young People with Disability – *Every Body Needs to Know* Project

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Background/Purpose:

People with disability are often viewed as overly sexual or conversely as asexual. Often it is assumed that students with special needs do not need to access a comprehensive relationships & sexuality education program (CRSE). If access to CRSE is acknowledged, there is often a belief that these programs should be restricted to topics such as public and private and personal safety while evading topics such as sexual attraction, pleasure, STI prevention, and pornography.

Approach:

Without factual and accessible education during developing years, students with disability are more likely to be experience poor sexual health outcomes such as unplanned pregnancy and STI's. They are also more likely to be exploited, sexually abused, and experience domestic violence. There is substantial evidence showing poorer mental health and educational outcomes for LGBTIQ+ students who are not provided with inclusive education. *Every Body Needs to Know* was developed to provide accessible education for 5-18 year olds with disability.

Outcomes/Impact:

Children and young people have access to education and information about their bodies, keeping safe, making decisions, exploring healthy relationships and (when age-appropriate) caring for their sexual health.

Innovation and Significance:

Every Body Needs to Know has been around for almost 20 years! However, it is a unique program not widely known about despite its huge success. Recent evaluations show the excellent feedback it receives from students, parents/carers and school staff – and great outcomes.

Disclosure of Interest:

This project is funded by SDSS in Queensland (via the Department of Education). Natasha's role is funded by SDSS to coordinate the *Every Body Needs to Know* project at True.