

PROVIDING RELATIONSHIPS & SEXUALITY EDUCATION AT A WHOLE-SCHOOL LEVEL: A MULTI-SITE CASE STUDY IN ACTION

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Background: The Curtin University RSE Project provides professional development services to Western Australian schools, to improve their capacity to deliver comprehensive relationships and sexuality education (RSE). The project is currently examining a whole-school approach to RSE delivery through an embedded, multi-site case study. International research highlights the need for inclusive and contemporary RSE; however few integrated whole-school approaches have been evaluated and reported.

Methods: Four unique school sites in Western Australia are currently enrolled: three metropolitan (primary K-6, secondary 7-12, Educational Support Centre 7-12) and one remote (K-12) with significant Aboriginal enrolment. Each site is being supported by the project team for a minimum of two years, to develop comprehensive RSE strategies unique to their school. Focus is on implementation of a whole-school approach (curriculum learning and teaching; school organisation, ethos and environment; and partnerships and services). Various partnerships and methods of engagement are being established.

Results: The comprehensive approach has resulted in schools establishing diverse school community committees. Use of multiple evaluation tools (including surveys, focus groups, interviews, document reviews and audit tools; involving students, school staff and parents) enables triangulation of data to strengthen validity. This presentation will focus on the establishment of partnerships, implementation strategies and report both baseline and some interim data.

Conclusion: Whilst generalisability of specific strategies is limited; this project seeks to provide 'real-world' examples of how comprehensive school-based RSE can be implemented in different school settings. Enablers and barriers to the implementation of a whole-school approach to RSE will be discussed. The research team hope to provide guidance for schools seeking to improve their delivery of RSE in a manner that is holistic, inclusive, effective and sustainable.

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