A workshop on having conversations around sexual health

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Objectives

• Understand sexual health issues affecting students.
• Apply engagement tool to initiate conversations around sexual health.
• Reflect on personal and organisational capacity to respond to sexual health needs of students.
Sexual health issues

- High rates of new diagnosis of Chlamydia among young people (worldwide and Australia).
- Low rates of consistent condom use in the last year with casual partners (Australian Study of Health and Relationships, 2014).
- Relationships and coping with relationship difficulties.
- Exploring sexuality and identity, including same-sex attraction.
- Unwanted pregnancy.
- Coping with sexual assault and/or harassment and associated mental health issues.
More games and activities:
What we've done at UNSW

Raising awareness

Delivered Healthy Relationships workshop to Under 18 students (2017)

Reached more than 2000 students via a Love Sex? Love Condoms! Info booth (2013)

Engaged students in a chlamydia quiz during Sexual Health Week (2012)
What we've done at UNSW

Capacity building

- Incorporated wellbeing messages into peer mentor training and program (2015-17)
- Developed sexual health training for Residential Advisors in Campus accommodation (2015)
- Engaged staff from academic advising and support roles in a Sexual Health Forum for staff (2014)
Starting the conversation

• It's not complicated – it can be brief!
• It doesn’t have to be embarrassing – it’s not about you! It’s about helping the students who trust you to have these conversations.
• Don’t know the answers? That’s OK; you don’t have to be a sexual health expert!
• Use your own language and be authentic.

Look for opportunities to start a conversation or build on what students are already asking or talking about.
Conversation steps

**Permission**
Ask permission – it shows respect and helps young people feel safe.
- “Can I talk with you about relationships and sexual health?”
- “A lot of young people have questions about relationships, and sexual health – I’m always here if you need to chat.”
- “Do you have anything on your mind you’d like to talk about now?”

**Open the Conversation**
Find out what they already know. Let the young person lead the conversation.
- “What do you already know about…?” (e.g., sexual health/condoms/STIs/ going on a date)
- “Have you seen these new resources about relationships and sexual health that we have in the centre? What did you think of them?”

**Information**
Extend on existing knowledge and correct any misconceptions. Give the young person some relevant information to address concerns and keep the conversation going.
- “It’s important to always use condoms with a new sexual partner, and to have regular sexual health checks.”
- “Remember to take condoms with you when going on a date, whether or not you think you might need them.”

**Check In**
Acknowledge what they have to say and check their understanding.
- “What are your thoughts about that?”
- “Do you know where you can get condoms?”

**Resources**
Provide the young person with more information and access to resources.
- “Let’s have a look at some resources together. Have you seen the Play Safe website?”
- “Can I show you this video about what it’s like to go to a sexual health clinic?”

**Referral**
Explore ways to address any barriers to accessing sexual health services (i.e., GPs and sexual health clinics) with the young person, and introduce them to a service that is right for them.
- “There are lots of places you can get information and help... can I show you some options?”
- “Here are some services other young people have found useful.”
Short Role Play

Staff

Ensure that you do not assume the sexuality of the student character you are dealing with.

Student

This character is written to be either male or female. You will be playing your own gender.

Observer/s

Make notes and provide constructive feedback on what you observed (on the provided sheets).
How would you initiate a conversation about sexual health with a student if there are no obvious signs or indicators?
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