

A workshop on having conversations around sexual health



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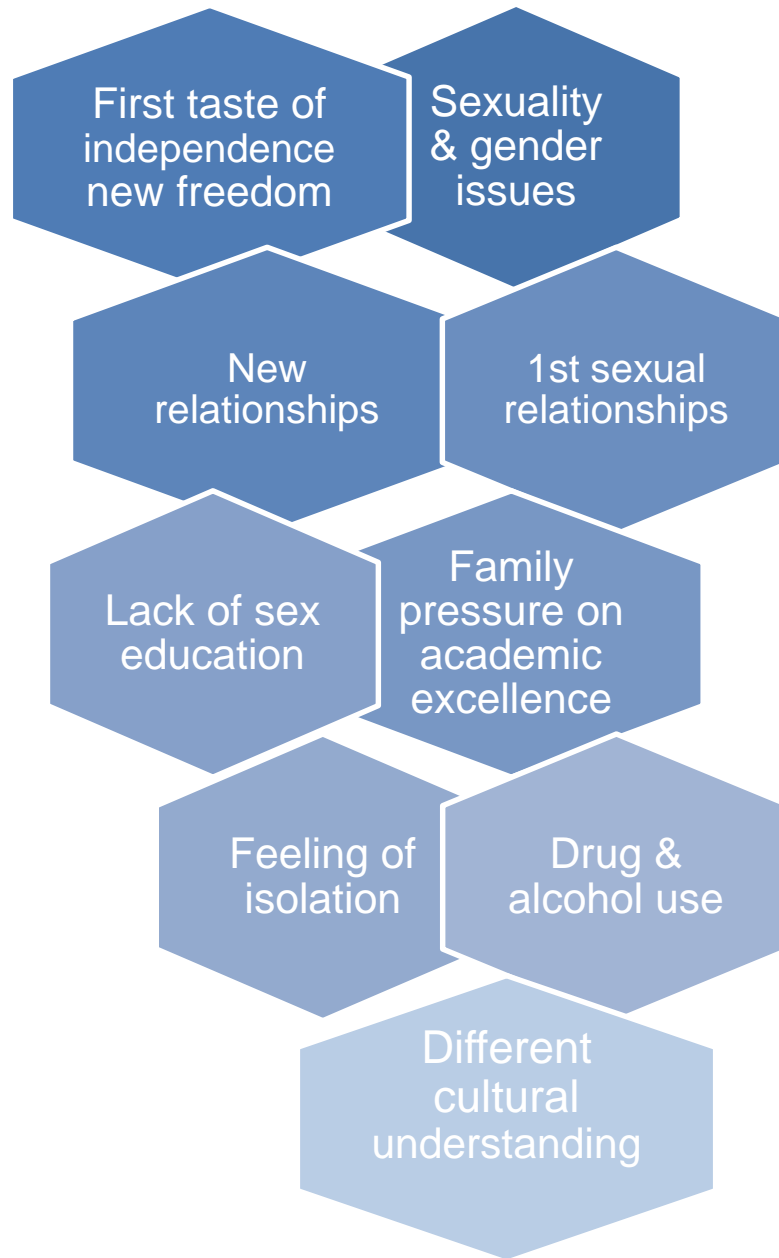
Student Development International, UNSW Sydney

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.



International students



GAME

More games and activities:

<https://stipu.nsw.gov.au/gp/sexual-health-for-young-people/working-with-young-people-around-sexual-health/>



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)

TALKING ABOUT SEXUAL HEALTH A TOOL FOR YOUTH WORKERS

Youth workers are trusted sources of sexual health information for young people. Young people want you to start 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 young people who trust you to have these conversations.
- + Don't know the answers? That's OK; you don't have to be an expert!
- + Use your own language and be authentic.

Look for opportunities to start a conversation or build on what young people are already asking or talking about.

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.”

See: Johnson, M. and Davis, J. (2009) The youth worker's role in young people's sexual health: A practical framework. Youth Studies Australia v.20, p.4

TALKING ABOUT SEXUAL HEALTH BRIEF INTERVENTION TOOL GUIDE



Youth workers are trusted as a source of information on sexual health by young people. They may want to talk to you about their relationships and sexual concerns, but want you to raise the subject first. So how do you start the conversation?

The *Talking About Sexual Health* brief intervention tool is a great approach to facilitate conversation with young people about sexual health. This resource can assist you to understand what their thoughts and concerns might be, and how you can support and assist them in making informed decisions in relation to their sexual health.

This guide has been developed to provide:

- some key messages about sexual health,
- suggestions and ideas for building a supportive and positive environment to talk about sexual health,
- examples for starting the conversation with young people and building upon it.

The tool is designed to jog your memory – with a quick glance you will be able to start the conversation and keep it on track. Adapt the tool as necessary for the young people you work with. The key steps of the conversation will generally be the same, however, the language you use or the opportunity to start the conversation will always be slightly different. This will depend on your service, the young person you are working with, and the amount of time you have.

We hope you find this tool and guide helpful in enabling conversations about sexual health with the young people you work with and creating an approachable environment.

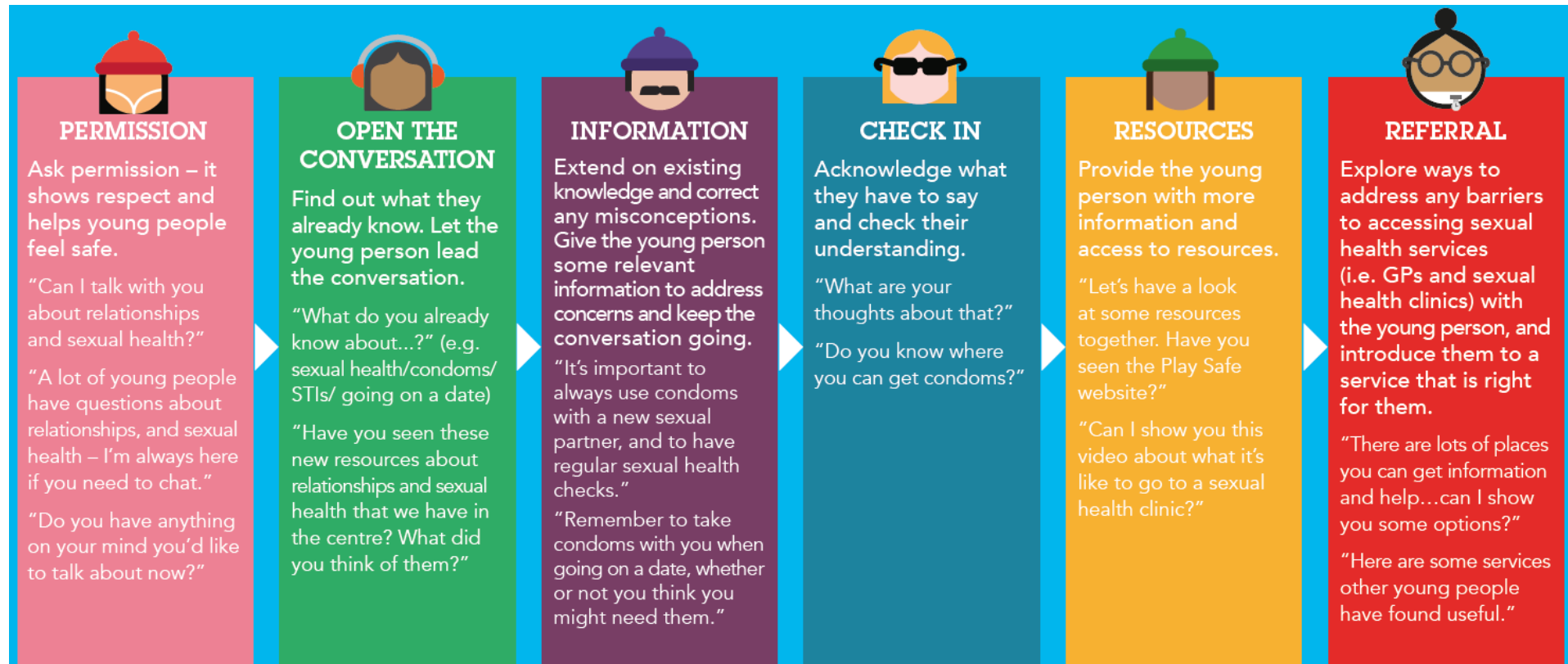
Available online: <https://stipu.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/Talking-About-Sexual-Health-Tool.pdf>

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



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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