

Partners in Prevention

Network meeting notes Thursday 18 February 2010

Information sharing

- Federal relationships education funding – still no announcement
- Federal government social marketing campaign for young people (particularly young men) is due for release before the middle of the year
- Website overhaul for When Love Hurts – renamed: The good, the bad and the ugly – midyear launch, test site currently open for feedback
- My leave coverage – Renee occasional emails, Vig for partnership information, Delanie (DVRCV librarian, library@dvrcv.org.au) for resources.
- PiP website update – Jane Curtis at DVRCV will be redeveloping the PiP website while I am on leave, if you have any comments on the current website please email jcurtis@dvrcv.org.au
- Evaluation and sustainability working group – will be convened upon my return from leave. Six monthly meetings for 3 hours to workshop different aspects of PiP's evaluation and plan for the future, open to any PiP members.
- Evaluation peer support group will carry on from the Evaluation Working Group, also to be convened when I return from leave, open to any PiP members currently running projects with young people.

Renee Imbesi – DEECD demonstration project

(Renee was joined by Erika Turner and Karen Underwood from DEECD)

- This is the first step in a long process (the state plan to prevent violence against women has a 10 year scope).
- Renee appealed to all present to act as a 'critical friend' of the project. "We are grappling with how social action work moves into the mainstream."
- Some concerns were raised about the short timeline of the project, Erika commented that this project is a model they are investigating and expect to refine and improve over time. Even if it doesn't succeed it will produce valuable learning. There is a political imperative that is driving the timelines. This project is a small part of a larger agenda.
- Needs to be threaded through curriculum but also have a specific time for discussion.
- Will it link to Health Promotion nurses? This is not a criteria for school's inclusion in the demonstration project although they are good allies when they are around. The focus is on developing a model that can be applied in any school and not all schools have HP nurses.

Workshop: Best Practice and Respectful Relationships Education in Schools

The aim of this workshop was to discuss the limitations and challenges of engaging with the best practice principles outlined in the *Respectful Relationships Education* framework. The meeting split into 5 groups and each took one of the five principles and reflected on the following questions:

- Any surprises?
- Does anyone know of a program that addresses this? How?
- What are the limitations? What are the barriers to carrying this out?

Although there was generally great appreciation for the principles we took this opportunity to discuss the growing edges of our work and the things that we struggle with.

1 Whole-school approach

Programs should:

- Be based on a whole-school approach, operating across:
 - Curriculum, teaching and learning
 - School policy and practices
 - School culture, ethos and environment
 - The relationships between school, home and the community.
- And involve:
 - Comprehensive curriculum integration
 - Assessment and reporting
 - Specialised training and resources for teaching and support staff
 - Reinforcement of violence prevention programming through school policies, structures and processes.

Discussion:

- Will there be any resistance in the school? Limited by whether people will embrace the issue. Depends on the school's existing relationship with parents and the community and their familiarity with adopting whole of school approaches.
- Whole of school – what does this actually mean? Has become a jargon term, unwieldy.
- How would you get schools to assess a respectful relationships program? What would students be expected to demonstrate and how might this impact on their experience of the program (such as giving 'correct' answers rather than honest ones).
- You might not start with a whole of school approach. It might start through a particular connection and the trust develops over time. We need to model respectful relationships with the school and wait for them to be ready to come on board.
- This approach demands a strong commitment from the school and a strong partnership between the school and the agency.

2 Program framework and logic

Programs should:

- Incorporate an appropriate theoretical framework for understanding violence that draws on relevant feminist research, in particular in addressing the links between gender, power and violence, examining violence-supportive constructions of gender and sexuality, and fostering gender-equitable and egalitarian relations
- Incorporate a theory of change, that is, an account of the ways in which project content and processes will be used to achieve the project's intended outcomes.

Discussion:

- A logic model is a graphic representation of the project that links activities to outcomes so any assumptions you are making about the impact of your activities is made clear. (See PiP project logic model for example).
- One difficulty is getting the project partners to understand the logic model, what you are doing and why. This tool can alienate partners, make us look too 'expert' rather than acknowledging the expertise of everyone involved. We want to encourage contribution from partners.
- Need to acknowledge unintended outcomes; [University of Kansas](#) (follow link and go to 'event log' for relevant section) has an excellent resource for this. Unintended outcomes can be traced back to what might have led to it.

3 Effective curriculum delivery

Content

Programs should:

- Be informed by feminist research on violence against girls and women
- Address various forms of violence, including domestic and sexual violence
- Target the antecedents to or determinants of violent behaviour
- Address not only attitudes but also behaviours, interpersonal relations and collective and institutional contexts
- Avoid focusing only on strategies for minimising personal risks of victimisation, instead addressing systemic constraints on safety and teaching commitments to, and skills in, non-violence.

Pedagogy (teaching methods)

Programs should:

- Adopt the general characteristics of effective teaching and learning practice
- Involve the use of quality teaching materials
- Be interactive and participatory
- Address cognitive, affective and behavioural domains
- Be matched to stages of change
- Give specific attention to skills development
- Respond appropriately to participants' disclosures of victimisation and perpetration.

Structure

Programs should:

- Be of sufficient duration and intensity to produce change
- Be timed and crafted to suit children's and young people's developmental needs, including their developing identities and social and sexual relations
- Have clear rationales for their use of single-sex and/or mixed-sex groups, including the merits and drawbacks of each.

Teachers and educators

Programs should:

- Be delivered by skilled teachers and/or educators, supported by resources, training and ongoing support
- Have clear rationales for their use of teachers, community educators, and/or peer educators
- Have clear rationales for, or a critical understanding of, their use of female and/or male staff.

Discussion:

- Limitations of individual schools, environments, regions and ensuring we work with their values. Might be a compromise for us but a great outcome for others.
- Assumption that we need a curriculum, might stifle creativity.
- The value base of community might be a long way from the values of the program therefore might be some compromise. The people who will lead change in schools also live in that environment, need to have regard for the position we are putting our champions in.
- It's important to shape our message in a way that the community can hear it.
- Content may come from white, middle class understanding of the issues, doesn't necessarily relate to local contexts.
- Program needs its own logic model so that we look broadly and don't just focus on the content of classroom sessions. "Clear rationale" asks us to reflect on what we are doing and articulate why we think it will work.

4 Relevant, inclusive and culturally sensitive practice

Programs should:

- Be relevant, that is, informed in all cases by knowledge of their target group or population and their local contexts
- Be inclusive and culturally sensitive, embodying these principles in all stages of program design, implementation and evaluation
- Involve consultation with representatives or leaders from the population group(s) participating in the program, where appropriate.

Discussion:

- Can be hard to know the exact make up of any group of people (cultural, sexual orientation, disability). Even when you are aware it can be hard to cater to those.
- Are there universal concepts that apply across cultures? This is a complex issue, Sexual Assault Prevention Education framework had a more detailed discussion of this. The language of human rights and the law can be broadly applied but there are differences in how different cultural groups might be engaged in the issue.
- National survey on community attitudes is useful in thinking about cultural issues.
- Need to remain aware that we all have a 'culture' and every school has a different culture. Also that any 'culture' is not homogenous.
- 'Relevant, inclusive and culturally sensitive' can be a tool to challenge our own assumptions.

5 Impact evaluation

Programs should:

- Involve a comprehensive process of evaluation that, at a minimum:
 - Reflects the program framework and logic
 - Includes evaluation of impact or outcomes, through:
 - Pre- and post-intervention assessment
 - Long-term follow-up
 - Use of standard measures or portions of them
 - Measures of both attitudes and behaviours
 - Includes a process for dissemination of program findings in the violence prevention field.
- And which ideally includes:
 - Longitudinal evaluation, including lengthy follow-up at six months or longer
 - Examination of processes of change and their mediators
 - Process evaluation of program implementation and fidelity
 - Measures of school culture and context
 - Experimental or quasi-experimental design incorporating control or comparison schools, students or groups.

Discussion:

- Time constraints and pressures , ethics committee processes
- Tempting to get going without the preplanning, need to have confidence in evaluation process before you start.
- People don't always want to share resources and learnings
- Workers can be frightened by language eg 'randomised controlled trials'
- When a person leaves, their evaluation skill level may go with them.
- Factor in the evaluation costs in the initial funding proposal so that there is a balance between practice and evaluation.
- Pre and post tests to identify what's worked or not worked so that the program can be adapted.