

Assessing health information from influencers

Learning objective

Students will consider what sources of health information they use and what sources of information they should trust. They will consider the role of influencers in disseminating health information and how to critique this information.

Take Home Messages

- It is important to seek reliable sources for information regarding health and wellbeing
- Influencers do not always promote accurate and reliable health information
- Influencers are businesses, and promote ideas that suit their opinions and make them money.

Curriculum Links

[WA HPE Curriculum](#)

Sub-strand: Personal identity and change

- Impact of societal and cultural influences on personal identities and health behaviour.

Sub-strand: Healthy and active communities

- Health information, support services and media messaging about relationships, lifestyle choices, health decisions and behaviours.

Sub-strand: Interacting with others

- Influences on sexuality and sexual health behaviours, including the impact decisions and actions have on own and other's health and wellbeing.

[International technical guidelines on sexuality education](#)

Key concept 2.3 Culture, society and sexuality

- It is important to be aware of how social and cultural norms impact sexual behaviour while developing one's own point of view.

Key concept 4.3 Safe use of information and communication technologies

- Social media use can result in many benefits, but also has the potential for moral, ethical and legal situations that require careful navigation

Key concept 5.5 Media literacy and sexuality

- It's important to assess sources of help and support, including services and media services, in order to access quality information and services.

Materials

- Butchers paper with the following questions/titles:
 - Why do influencers make posts/videos/content?
 - Why do people become influencers?
 - What type of content often gets the most attention/views?
 - Where do influencers get their health information from?

- Who checks what an influencer says/posts is correct and accurate?

Before You Get Started

- It is important to remember for students on social media, they may have high opinions about celebrities and social media influencers. This lesson is not about discrediting any influencers but about providing students with the skills to critique information.
- Teachers should know and understand the [protective interrupting](#) technique and what, why, when and how it is needed and used.

Learning Activities

Group agreement

5 mins

Teaching tip: A group agreement must be established before any Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) program begins to ensure a safe learning environment. Read [Essential Tool: Establishing a group agreement](#) for tips on how to create one and what to include.

1. Revise or create the class [group agreement](#).

Learning Activities

Where do young people get their health information?

20 mins

2. Use [Finding out: Brainstorm](#) technique and ask students to say all the people, places and resources young people get their health information from. Ensure that suggestions are specific e.g. if they say online, ask them where or who online specifically. Add influencers and any other common sources of health information to the list if it does not organically come up.

Teaching tip: You can ask students to specifically consider health information related to sexual health and/or healthy relationships.

3. Ask students, either as a whole class or in small groups, to rank or group the sources of health information based on how likely students are to use them. You can get students to create a ranking or group them using a 'traffic light' system.
4. Review the class or group's top three and bottom three sources of health information.

5. Ask:

Why are those three the top three?

(Easily accessible, trusted, know them, if they say it then it must be true)

Why are those three the bottom three?

(Not easy to find, inaccurate, boring)

6. Now, using the same method as the previous task, ask students to rank/group the sources of health information based on how reliable and accurate they are.
7. Review the class or group's top three and bottom three sources of health information.

8. Ask:

Why are those the top three most reliable sources?

(Have accurate information, based on research, trust them, know them, updates as new research emerges, aligns with other peak health bodies)

Why are those the bottom three least reliable sources?

(Does not have up-to-date information, based on opinion or one piece of information, trying to sell you something)

Are the top three most used sources the same as your top three most reliable? Why would the most reliable sources of information not be the most used? Why would the most used sources of information not be the most reliable?

Teaching tip: This discussion will be based on what was determined most reliable and most used. It is likely that most commonly used sources suggested are a family member, doctor, Google or influencer but these may not be the most reliable.

9. Point out that people often rely on health information that is easiest to access. Such as advice from a family member, the top result on Google, or appealing content, like a flashy website or a video from an influencer. Raise that even though those sources are the most accessible, does not mean they are not always the most reliable

10. Say:

"It is important that we get our health information, or any information, from reliable sources. Reliable source of information means that the information is formed and based on large bodies of research, not one or a couple pieces of research. The information is not based on or impacted by opinion. The information is not there to sell us a product; it exists only to help you."

Learning Activities

The influence of influencers

25 mins

11. We are going to specifically look and critique the health information social media influencers or celebrities tell us online. We are going to be making some generalisation about all influencers, and while not all will match these generalisations you will find many do. To start, let's think about what a social media influencer actually is, and what they are trying to achieve.
12. Using [Finding Out: Gallery Walk](#) and give each group a one of the pieces of butchers paper to complete. Say you will move quite quickly through the activity; each group will only have one to two minutes with each piece of paper.

13. Bring the class together and review the responses in this order.

Why do influencers make posts/videos/content?

(Share their life, storytelling, make money, promote their business or another business, modelling, get more followers, respond to current events)

Why do people become influencers?

(Get famous, share their story, make money, because it's fun).

Ask:

What do you think is the primary motivation for influencers to post content?

Say:

"Influencers are their own business. They make posts because they are paid to do so, or to grow their following so they can promote products to a larger audience. They may enjoy posting about health, fitness, travel, politics, but they are also getting paid. They may not be getting paid for every post or promoting products every post, but they are a business."

What type of content often gets the most attention/views?

(Sexualised/content which shows off people's bodies, content with controversial opinions, hot takes, aesthetically pleasing)

Say:

"Influencers are encouraged to post these kinds of things as it gains more views and engagement and therefore improves their business. This can mean they purposely post misinformation or disinformation for the purpose of gaining traction. They might post something and frame it as their experience or opinion as a way to prevent people from arguing against their point, but they can still spread a harmful message. It is also important to remember photos and videos are highly edited and filtered. Influencers often promote certain body types as attractive and desirable and that is not the case."

Where do influencers get their health information from?

(The internet, other influencers, their opinion, research, from the business they are promoting)

Ask:

How do you know where the influencer sourced their information?

Say:

"You cannot know where the influencer got their information from. Influencers don't have references. You can assume if it is an advertisement or promoted post that any information they are saying is from the company they are advertising for - meaning it is biased to get you to buy something."

Who checks what an influencer says/posts is correct or accurate?

(Themselves, their social media team, comments or backlash from others)

Say:

"There are no formal checks on what an influencer posts. This is what is dangerous. They can say things which are factually incorrect or harmful and there is no one checking the accuracy before it is posted. The only thing that may occur is that if the post goes against the social media's terms of service the post will be removed, or the influencer may remove it following backlash.

14. Say:

"This of course does not mean that everything influencers say are harmful or inaccurate. There are many influencers out there that post useful and accurate content. But it is important that we don't take what influencers post as accurate information and make health decisions based on this."

3-2-1 Reflection

Where to get accurate information

5 mins

15. Ask:

How can we determine if what an influencer is saying is accurate and reliable?

(Google what they are saying and see what reliable sources are saying, ask a trusted adult, think about what they are saying and whether it makes sense, check if the post is sponsored, think about whether they are trying to sell you something)

16. Ask students to reflect back on the first activity reorder or re-group any sources of information following this activity.

Health Promoting Schools

Background teacher note: [Health promoting schools framework](#).

Partnerships

Family

- [Talk Soon. Talk Often: a guide for parents talking to their kids about sex](#) is a free hardcopy resource that can be bulk ordered by schools and [website](#). Send a copy home to parents prior to starting your RSE program. The booklet offers ages and stage related information on puberty (and other topics) so that parents can reinforce the topics covered in class. ([How to order hard copies](#).) Provide the link to parents on school websites and social media.
- Run a parent workshop and run this activity with parents to model the content that will be covered in your RSE program.
- Run a parent and child evening session, where the children can teach the parents what they have been learning about.

Health campaigns - sexual health

Learning objective

Students explore the purpose of health campaigns and identify the components of a successful campaign. In groups, they develop their own campaign with a sexual health theme.

Take Home Messages

- Health literacy is having the knowledge to find, understand and use information about our own health and health care.
- Understanding health information helps us to make healthier and safer decisions.
- It's important to get health information from credible sources such as health websites.

Curriculum Links

[WA Curriculum](#)

[ACPPS095](#): Critically analyse and apply health information from a range of sources to health decisions and situations

[ACPPS096](#): Plan, implement and critique strategies to enhance health, safety and wellbeing of their communities

[International technical guidance on sexuality education](#)

- Skills for health and wellbeing

Materials

- Student Activity Sheet: [KWL – Health campaigns](#) [one per student]
- Student Activity Sheet: [Health campaign case studies](#) [one per pair]
- Teaching Resource: [Health campaign topics PowerPoint slides](#) [one per student/group]
- Student Activity Sheet: [Health campaign plan](#) [one per student/group]
- Student Activity Sheet: [Campaign evaluation](#) [one per student/group]

Before You Get Started

- This is a recommended 4-6 week unit of work. Students will require access to the internet. Prior to starting the unit, check websites and associated campaigns are accessible on school networks.
- Teachers need to understand the concept of health promotion to facilitate the delivery of this learning activity.

The World Health Organization defines health promotion as

“...the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health”.¹

Health promotion interventions include policy development; legislation and regulation; re-orienting health services; community development; creating healthy environments; and raising public awareness and engagement through health campaigns. This learning activity focuses on the impact of health campaigns on changing health behaviours through the use of mass media, social media and/or

community events.

1 [World Health Organization](#). Retrieved 16/07/2024

Learning Activities

Exploring health campaigns20 minutes

Students explore their understanding of health campaigns and determine what they need to know in order to develop a health campaign of their own.

1. Give each student a copy of the Student Activity Sheet: KWL – Health campaigns. Allow 5 minutes for each student to complete the 'What I know' about health campaigns section individually. Discuss student answers as a class.
2. Explain to the class what a health campaign is:

A health campaign aims to raise awareness and understanding of a health issue, and often aims to change people's health behaviours. This can be done in a number of ways including mass media, social media and community events.

3. Allow 2 minutes for each student to complete the 'What I want to know' section of the KWL chart. Discuss student answers as a class.

Note: Students will complete the 'What I have learnt' section at the end of this unit of work so should be encouraged to keep in a place easy to find later.

Campaign case studies25 minutes

Access to a computer lab and internet will be required for this activity as students will investigate case studies of local and national health campaigns. They will then develop a health campaign of their own on one of five sexual health and/or relationships topics: Growing Bodies; Respectful Relationships; Staying Safe; Emotional Wellbeing and/or Diversity.

1. Students form a pair or group of three. Provide each pair/group with one of the case studies from the Student Activity Sheet: Health campaign case studies.
 - Ask the students to visit the campaign website and familiarise themselves with the campaign. They then complete the activity sheet by identifying the target group; the positives, negatives and issues of the campaign; and if the campaign worked.
 - All students who worked on the same campaign are then joined together in a larger group to discuss their results. Each group then nominates a spokesperson to present their findings to the class.
2. Explain to students that they will be developing their own health campaign on a sexual health and/or relationship topic of their choice. This can be done individually, in pairs, or in small groups.
 - Display the Teaching Resource: Health campaign topics PowerPoint slides. Discuss ideas for health campaigns that can be developed for each of the topic areas. Explain that students will need to decide on a topic area and then a subject for their health campaign.
 - Distribute the Student Activity Sheet: Health campaign plan to each student or group. Explain each section of the activity sheet.
 - Each student/group has 4-6 weeks to research and develop their health campaign.

3-2-1 Reflection

1. Students present their health campaign to the class or to others (e.g. peers, parents, school or other community members).
 - Seek feedback from the audience as to how effective they thought your campaign was using a Rating Scale: use Student Activity Sheet: Campaign evaluation (students may decide to design and use their own format to seek feedback).
2. Students complete the 'What I have learnt' section of their KWL chart to describe what they have learnt from this activity.

External related resources

[The practical guide to love, sex and relationships](#)

A teaching resource from the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University.

[Topic 8: Authenticating online information](#)

Accessing and evaluating information on sexual health and relationships online.

Body Image

Learning objective

Students analyse how beauty is represented in the media through music and magazines and the impact this, and the perceptions of others, have on personal identities.

Take Home Messages

- Beauty can be stereotyped in the media for both males and females.
- Our personal identities can be influenced by the media and other people's perceptions.

Curriculum Links

[WA HPE curriculum](#)

Sub-strand: Personal identity and change

- Factors that shape personal identities and adolescent health behaviours
- Strategies for managing changes and transitions

[International technical guidance on sexuality education](#)

Key concept 5.4 Media literacy and sexuality

- Some media portray unrealistic images about sexuality and sexual relationships, which can influence our perceptions of gender and self-esteem

Key concept 6.4 Body image

- People's feelings about their bodies can affect their health, self-image and behaviour

Materials

- Butcher's paper [6 pieces]
- Old magazines and/or newspapers
- A5 coloured paper
- Video: [Try by Colbie Caillat](#) (3 min 51 sec video)

Before You Get Started

- [Protective interrupting](#) - Teachers need to know and understand how to use this technique to prevent students from potentially disclosing sensitive information or abuse in front of other students.
- [Dealing with disclosures](#) - Teachers must be aware of school and legal procedures if a student discloses personal issues, particularly disclosures of sexual abuse.
- With so many physical and emotional changes occurring during puberty, it is normal for young people to be more self-aware during this time. In [Mission Australia's Youth Survey 2024](#), 75% of young people are concerned about body image. See the Guide: [Body image](#) for more information.
- It is important to highlight the differences between beauty represented in the world around us and real life. This activity provides an opportunity to discuss and support students' confidence and self-esteem.
- [A group agreement](#) and classroom management are essential so students feel safe and respected during classroom activities.

Learning Activities

Group agreement

5 min

Teaching tip: A group agreement must be established before any Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) program begins to ensure a safe learning environment. Read [Essential Tool: Establishing a group agreement](#) for tips on how to create one and what to include.

1. Revise or create the class [group agreement](#).

Learning Activities

Character trait brainstorm

20 min

2. Attach 6 pieces of butcher's paper to the walls of the classroom. Label each piece of butcher's paper with one of the following titles: beautiful, sexy, ugly, handsome, creative, helpful.
3. Allocate a small group of students to each piece of paper.

Teaching tip: You may want to choose groups or allow students to self-select to reduce the potential for bullying or inappropriate comments. If this won't be an issue check out the Teaching strategies: [Group strategies](#) for ideas on grouping.

4. Give students 2 minutes to write things that come to mind when they think of the word that is on

their piece of butcher's paper. It might be other adjectives, or it might be celebrities. Ensure they do not write names of people they know personally (e.g. other people at school).

5. Move the groups to the next [gallery walk](#) to the right and repeat the process until each group has written on each of the pieces of butcher's paper.
6. As a whole group, discuss what the class has written for each concept and any similarities or differences.

Learning Activities

Beauty in the media

30 min

9. Give students old magazines/newspapers/print outs and more recent advertisements/pictures of celebrities.
10. Ask the students are to explore the magazines/newspapers for what they perceive to be natural beauty and consider what about beauty standards have changed over time.
11. Ask:

What do you perceive natural beauty to be?

What assumptions do we make from how someone looks?

What beauty standards have remained the same over time? What has changed/changing?

Trigger warning: Let students know we will be talking about beauty standards and some of its harmful impacts on how we think/feel about ourselves or other people.

Teaching tip: You may find it useful writing up and collecting the answers for the next four discussion questions on the whiteboard by splitting the whiteboard into three columns.

How would you describe the beauty standards of today? Think about the types of people and beauty young people like you are exposed to through movies, TV, musicians, influencers on Instagram and TikTok?

Think about the current beauty standards today we just defined. If you are an average young person today, seeing those beauty standards, how are you thinking about feeling about yourself or your body?

If you are thinking and feeling these things, how would you act - what would you do in response to these thoughts and feelings?

How would these thoughts/feelings impact how we act in relationships or when someone is trying to get a girlfriend/boyfriend/partner?

12. Say:

These often unrealised beauty standards can really impact how we see ourselves and the world around us. It can also impact how we treat ourselves, our friends and even our boyfriend/girlfriend/partners.

13. Watch 'Try' by Colbie Caillat on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXoZLPSw8U8>) [3:51min]
14. Ask students to reflect independently and silently for two minutes.

1. How do they perceive themselves physically?
 2. Do they see themselves differently after seeing the clip?
15. Ask:

What are thoughts and feelings were after seeing the clip?

What is the key message of the song?

What impact does the media have on our perceptions of what beauty is and how we perceive ourselves?

16. Say:

"We are constantly receiving image-related messages from different sources about what the 'beautiful' or 'ideal' body. Therefore, it is not surprising that instead of embracing diversity in all body types, we focus on achieving perfection and judging ourselves or others. It is important to remember the filters people use, the lighting and angles when viewing images. It is okay if your body does not match with the people you see online. Every body is different and diversity is wonderful. What is healthy, strong and beautiful and happy look different for everyone."

3-2-1 Reflection

Snowball

10 minutes

17. Give each person in a small group a piece of the same coloured paper. Make sure each small group has a different colour.
18. Each person writes their name on their piece of paper then scrunches it up to resemble a snowball.
19. Teacher says 'snowball' and everyone throws their snowball to the group to the right of them.
20. Each person then picks up or catches a snowball from the group to the left of them.
21. The snowballs are unravelled, and one positive, non-physical affirmation is written about the person whose name is on the piece of paper (e.g. thank you for being caring).
22. The snowballs are then scrunched up and thrown to the right again and the process continues until each person has received their snowball back.
23. Give the students 2 minutes to read and reflect on the positive affirmations other people have written about them.
24. Discuss as a whole group how it feels to receive positive comments about yourself. What other comments would you write about yourself? Why?
25. Give students 1 minute to add to their own snowball.
26. Discuss as a whole group how the comments from others can impact on our identities positively and negatively.

Health Promoting Schools

Background teacher note: [health promoting schools framework](#).

Partnerships

School staff

- Have the school psychologist, youth worker or student support team provide information on what services are available to support students who may be struggling.

Families

- Give parents awareness on when this lesson will occur so they can provide extra support to their young person if required.

Education

Professional development

- The student services/student wellbeing teams are training and equipped to support students who are struggling with their body image.

Environment

Policy

- Healthy eating policies are clear not to make judgements about people.