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.

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.

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.



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