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.

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."

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 are 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 influences 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.

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