Curriculum links

WA Curriculum

HPE: Personal, social and community health

- Changes associated with puberty.
- Strategies to manage changes associated with puberty.

International technical guidance on sexuality education

Key concept 6.3 Puberty (9-12 years)

- Puberty signals changes in a person's reproductive capability.

Materials

- A series of photographs of a person as a baby, toddler, young child and older child/teenager
- A3 paper [one per student]

Before you get started

- This activity is an introduction to puberty. It is appropriate for students to know and be able to name external parts of the body including the names for external sexual parts, e.g. penis, vulva, breast, testicles and buttocks (or bottom). Ensure students learn and use the correct names of the body parts.
- Age-appropriate education involves teaching students the correct names for, and functions of, their body parts and teaches them to care for, respect, and protect their bodies. Knowing these names enables children to communicate clearly if they need to get help, and in particular in cases of abuse or injury.
- The classroom teacher should send a letter home to parents/caregivers providing an overview of the learning sequence their child will be participating in. It is recommended to include a copy of, or a downloadable PDF link to, the free parent resource developed by the Western Australian Department of Health: *Talk soon. Talk often. A Guide For Parents Talking to their Kids About Sex*.
- Read the Educator note: *Puberty*.

Learning activities

Group Agreement

5 minutes

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

1. Revise of create the class group agreement.

What do we need to change and grow?

15 minutes

2. Present the students with an image of a baby. Invite them to guess the child's age, size and gender.
   - Present an image of the same child at a more advanced age and ask the students to describe how the child has changed from one picture to the next.
   - Continue to present the images of the child as they advance in age and discuss the obvious physical changes.
   - Have students make predictions of how the child will continue to change into the future.
3. Show the following examples of how people change over time:
   - YouTube clip: 21 Years (http://youtu.be/d-4i2ZlqLsI)
   - Perth | Now & Then (http://thewest.com.au/nowandthen/)
4. Use the brainstorm teaching strategy to discuss the below.
   1. Discuss the things that are needed for these physical changes to develop in a healthy way (e.g. care from family, love, personal hygiene, healthy food, sufficient exercise, healthy environments).
   2. Discuss the places where young people learn about physical changes that their bodies will undertake as they get older. For example, from parents, brothers and sisters, other family members, TV, books, internet, religious institutions. Ask which ones might be good sources of correct information? Why?
   3. Repeat the activity for emotional and social changes and discuss similar prerequisites for healthy development of emotional and social change. Talk about how, when we are very young, adults care for us and make all the decisions. But as we grow older, we can decide things too.
5. **Ask:**
   - *Do we have control over our physical changes? If so, which ones? Which physical changes don't we have control over?*
   - *Do we have control over our emotional changes?*
   - *What can help us control our emotional changes in a positive way?* (e.g. thinking positive thoughts about self and others, positive self-talk, having someone to talk to about uncomfortable feelings, having and being a good friend.)
   - *Do we have control over our social changes? (e.g. changes in friendships/ birth of new siblings/ separation of parents). If so, which ones? Which social changes do we often have little control over?*

How people change and grow

25 minutes

6. Independently or in small groups, have the students consider physical, emotional and social changes that have occurred in their lives over the last 5 years. Invite students to share their observations.
   - Students may be able to make observations about others if they have been friends or classmates during earlier years of schooling (use protective interrupting when required).
7. Give the opportunity for students to consider physical, emotional and social changes that might occur in the next ten years and encourage them to share their suggestions.
   - Discuss how some changes are inevitable and will happen to everybody at different rates and times.
   - Introduce the idea that each student will experience changes associated with puberty as they progress through adolescence and develop towards adulthood but that they will do so at their own rate. Stress that puberty is a normal part of growing up and there is little that can be done to slow or speed up puberty.
8. On an A3 sheet of paper, have students draw pictures of themselves at four years old, nine years old and 19 years old.
   - Have students make notes or lists of how they have changed physically, emotionally and socially changes from age four to nine and then anticipate the same types of changes from age nine to age 19 years. Ask them to focus on the differences between nine to 19 if you are running out of time.
   - Have the students identify aspects they believe will remain constant throughout these years and their lives.

Teaching tip: The year intervals could be increased or reduced at the teacher's discretion or specific ages could be identified.

9. Invite different students to share their predictions for the different ages.
10. Ask:
    - *Do you think all these changes happen all at the same time very quickly or do they happen slowly?*
    - *Which changes do you think might be good ones?*
    - *Which changes do you think might be challenging?*
    - *Are there any differences in changes for boys and girls?*
    - *What is easy or challenging about changes for girls/boys?*

3-2-1 Reflection

5 minutes

9. Ask:
    - *Which changes do you have most control over – physical, emotional or social?*
    - *Which changes are beyond your control?*
    - *How does this make you feel?*
    - *Have you noticed that many people share the same feelings about different aspects of growing up?*
    - *Where can you go for support? Who can you speak to or ask questions about growing up, becoming an adult, going through puberty?*

Health promoting schools

Educator note: Health promoting schools framework



Environment

Have copies of the puberty booklet other age-appropriate, puberty-related resources available in the classroom and/or library.

Partnership

Parents and families - Communicate with families that you will be talking about changes that occur when growing up, including introducing conversations about puberty. You can send home a copy of Talk Soon Talk Often: a guide for parents talking to their kids about sex or a link to the website.

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