

## Changes in relationships

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### Curriculum links

#### WA HPE Curriculum

##### Sub-strand: Personal identity and change

- Ways that individuals and groups adapt to different contexts and situations

##### Sub-strand: Healthy and active communities

- Strategies that promote a safe, healthy lifestyle

##### Sub-strand: Interacting with others

- Skills and strategies to establish and maintain respectful relationships
- Ways in which inappropriate emotional response impact on relationships

#### International technical guidance on sexuality education

##### Key concept 1.1: Families

- Health and illness can affect families in terms of their structure, capacities and responsibilities.

##### Key concept 1.2 Friendship, love and romantic relationships

- Friendship and love help people feel positive about themselves

##### Key concept 5.5: Finding help and support

- There are different sources of help and support in the school and the wider community.

### Materials

- Student Activity Sheet: [Changes in relationships](#) [one per group]
- Student Activity Sheet: [Deal with it banana split](#) [one per student]

### Before you get started

- Be mindful that discussing significant changes in the family's routine, structure or dynamic might bring up issues for students (e.g. separation or divorce; or death of a parent, grandparent or pet).
- It is important for the teacher to consider and affirm a range of parenting styles, family contexts and cultural backgrounds students may describe, to ensure the traditional family structure is not held up as

the 'norm', or the only or best way.

- Teachers should know and understand the [protective interrupting](#) technique, and what, why, when and how it is needed and used, before facilitating this activity.

## 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](#).

### Good changes and bad changes

25 mins

2. Divide the class into small groups. Ask them to consider changes they have experienced in their lives within their family and friendships, e.g. new baby in the family, pet dying, starting a new school, joining a new sporting team, family break-up or the death of a grandparent. Stress that changes in relationships over time are a normal part of life.
3. Have groups complete the Student Activity Sheet: *Changes in relationships* listing 'Good changes in relationships' and 'Not-so-good changes in relationships'.
4. Once this has been completed, ask the groups to cut the sheet into half: the 'Good changes in relationships' column and the 'Not-so-good changes in relationships' column.
  - Now cut the responses to the 'Good changes in relationships' column into single cards and put them in order, with the best change first.
  - Ask each group to share their top two responses with the class. Discuss the similarities and differences.
5. Ask:

**How do things in the 'good changes' column make us feel?**

*(excited, happy, warm, connected, like we belong, proud)*

**How do things in the 'Not-so-good changes' column make us feel?**

*(sad, angry, nervous, powerless, agitated)*

**How could we support our friends when they have experienced 'Good changes' in their family and friends?**

*(celebrate, be happy with them, let them talk about the good things, ask for more information)*

**How could we support our friends when they have experienced 'Not-so-good changes' in their family and friends?**

*(let them talk, be nice to them, do nice things with them, spend with them)*

### **How could we support our family when they have experienced 'Good changes'?**

*(celebrate, be happy with them, let them talk about the good things, ask for more information)*

### **How could we support our family when they have experienced 'Not-so-good' changes'?**

*(make them something to feel special, spend time with them)*

6. Now cut the responses to the 'Not-so-good changes in relationships' column into single cards and arrange these in order from most to least difficult.
  - Ask each group to share two responses (those which are most difficult) and discuss the similarities and differences.
7. Groups select three or four of their 'Not-so-good changes' cards and change the statements into a question. For example, the statement 'The first day at a new school' could become 'What can I do to cope with the first day at a new school?'. Students write the question at the top of a piece of paper.
8. Have each group brainstorm and record the strategies or advice they would use for dealing with, or helping someone else deal with, this change in relationship.

## **Banana split**

**20 mins**

9. Independently, students reflect on a significant change that has occurred in their own family or friendships, it may be one they included in the previous activity.
10. Introduce the 'Banana Split' strategy by showing page 1 of the Student Activity Sheet: *Deal with it banana split* as a poster or PowerPoint slide. Explain the sections to be completed independently:
  - **Cheerful Cherry:** Changes in relationships are a normal part of growing up. There is hope for the future. Write a hopeful message to yourself.
  - **Rainbow Sprinkles:** Bad times don't last forever. Write down 2 two great things that have happened to you since this event.
  - **Ooey-Gooey Sauce Feelings:** Intense feelings are normal in these situations. Name feelings you have had or are still having.
  - **Cool Down Ice-cream:** Stay cool, stay calm. Write 1 way you could calm your body in this situation.
  - **Tough as Nuts:** It's always good to talk to others in these situations. Who could you talk to feel better or who did you talk to?
  - **Cool Down Ice-cream:** Stay cool, stay calm. Write one other way you could calm your body in this situation.
  - **Bendable Banana:** Write the one 'Not-so-good change' you have experienced and some of the things you have done to cope (or try to cope) with this change.
11. Provide each student with a copy of page 2 of the Student Activity Sheet: *Deal with it banana split* and discuss.
12. Students complete the worksheet independently, using one significant change that has occurred in their own family or friendship group.

## **3-2-1 Reflection**

### **Reflection**

**10 mins**

13. Have students share their Banana split responses with others in a small group.

14. Ask:

- *What are some useful things that people thought, or did that helped them cope with a 'Not so good change'? (their bendable bananas)*
- *What are some useful things people did to calm their bodies down in these situations? (their cool down ice cream)*
- *Who were some helpful people to talk to in these situations? (their tough as nuts)*
- *What were some common feelings that people had in these situations? (their ooey-goey sauce)*
- *What were some positive self-talk messages that people came up with? (their cherry on the top)*

15. Highlight that everybody deals with significant change and loss differently and that's okay. It is important that our sadness or anger does not hurt other people. Thinking about how to cope with our pain can help with this.

## **Health promoting schools**

Background teacher note: Health promoting schools framework.

### **Education**

#### **Professional development**

- Ensure all staff are aware of school policy and legal obligations to report suspected/confirmed abuse.

### **Environment**

#### **Policy and procedure**

- Ensure there are clear policies and procedure for staff on reporting suspected/confirmed abuse
- Ensure it is clear where to report suspected/confirmed child sexual abuse. Is there a link saved on every teacher's computer or signage in common teacher areas?

### **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.
- Order copies of [Puberty](#) and [Relationships, sex and other stuff](#) to be sent home for parents. Provide the link to parents on school websites and social media.
- Consider giving parents and family an additional heads-up for this lesson as you will be discussing bad changes or experiences.
- 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.

#### **School staff**

- Invite the school nurse to your class to answer some of the question box questions. This serves two purposes - they may be able to answer some of the questions you are unsure of and helps to build a relationship between the students and the nurse.
- The school nurse may like to take small groups of students requiring additional or specialised care to run separate activities with on this topic.

