



Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

Junior Cycle Social, Personal and Health Education

Professional Learning Booklet

2024-2025





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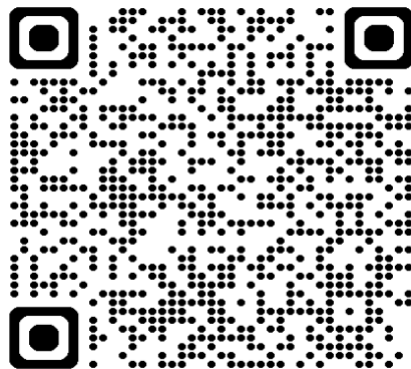
Day 1

Spectrum Life Employee Assistance Scheme



<https://wellbeingtogether.spectrum.life/login?org=yIVIU17>

Junior Cycle Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE) Padlet



Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE) Specification for Junior Cycle

The teaching and learning of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) provides a unique space where students can develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions and values needed to support their physical, emotional, social and spiritual¹ wellbeing, now and in the future. The SPHE specification is grounded in values of respect, equality, inclusivity, responsibility, dignity, compassion and empathy.

Adolescence is a time of important change and challenge for young people as they come to a clearer sense of their identity and gain a more secure sense of who they are. The lifelong process of 'becoming your own person' and gaining a secure sense of identity is a prime developmental concern in adolescence. All young people need knowledge and skills to help them develop a strong sense of self, make informed and healthy decisions, be able to take care of themselves and others, and manage life's challenges.

This course places a strong focus on the development of important life skills that young people need growing up in a fast changing and complex world. Specifically, it focuses on developing the core social and emotional skills of self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, social awareness and relationship skills. These have been shown to determine how well people manage changing and challenging environments and can influence many important life outcomes.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of, and connects with, aspects of SPHE. It is of particular importance for young people at this stage of their lives as they reflect on questions such as 'what kind of person am I?' and 'what matters for me in relationships?' As they continue to form their identity, they are making sense of life experiences, information, images and messages about relationships and sexuality from a range of informal sources such as their peers, family, the media, online world. Having the opportunity to think about and discuss relationships, sexuality and healthy sexual expression within a safe classroom setting and with a skilled teacher is vitally important.

Through the use of critical and participative pedagogies, SPHE can provide a safe, supportive and non-judgemental space where students' self-awareness and awareness of others can grow, and where they engage in reflection and dialogue, and identify actions they can take to protect and promote their own wellbeing and that of others. By affirming and developing young people's strengths and capacities as active agents in their own lives, SPHE can play an important role in enabling young people to find their voice and develop self-efficacy.

In junior cycle, six indicators have been identified as central to students' wellbeing. Teaching and learning within the SPHE classroom can provide meaningful learning opportunities to foster all six indicators of wellbeing, helping students become more Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware. SPHE is thereby a core pillar of a school's Wellbeing programme in junior cycle.

This specification supports teachers in adopting an approach that is inclusive in accordance with principles of equality, human rights and responsibilities.

This ensures that all students can see themselves, their families and their communities reflected across the learning and can learn to value diversity as a feature of humankind and as a source of enrichment. SPHE thus contributes to building a cohesive, compassionate and fair society; one that is inclusive of all genders, sexualities, ethnicities, religious beliefs/worldviews, social classes and abilities/disabilities. (NCCA, 2023, p.4)

¹ The spiritual dimension of wellbeing relates to being able to experience a sense of awe and wonder and knowing that life has meaning and purpose. (Primary Curriculum Framework, p12, NCCA, 2023) This is based on a human development approach to wellbeing that is holistic and interdisciplinary and recognises different aspects to wellbeing, including the spiritual aspect of life.

Cross-cutting Elements

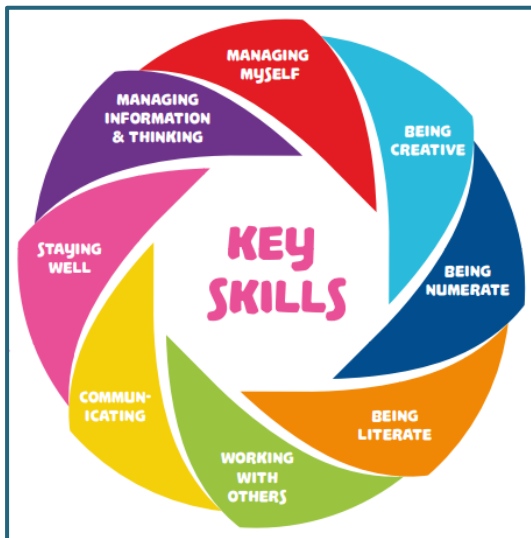


Awareness: is the ability to understand one's own thoughts, emotions, values and behaviour. It includes understanding how different factors influence our sense of self and how we live our lives, including the influence of family, peers, the internet, gender, culture and social norms. This element also includes an awareness that to be human is to be in relationships and that we all share a common humanity and dignity, have rights and responsibilities.

Dialogue: through dialogic teaching and learning students are facilitated to engage with a diversity of viewpoints; discuss and reflect on their own perspectives, values, and behaviours and those of others; enlarge their understanding of topics of relevance to their lives; and come to informed, thoughtful decisions based on their personal values, with due regard to their own rights and responsibilities and the rights and responsibilities of others. Respectful dialogue is aided by presuming a diversity of backgrounds, identities, cultures and experiences in every classroom and seeing this as a resource for learning.

Reflection and action: This cross-cutting element focuses on students reflecting on what they have learned and coming to their own personal insights and conclusions in response to their learning. It enables students to consider how the learning can inform their choices, behaviour and relationships, and discerning what it means for their lives now or for the future. Learning in SPHE is a 'praxis'; an ongoing process of critical reflection and action, nurtured by dialogue with others

Key Skills and Wellbeing Indicators



Book Walk Activity

Under the Cover of the Specification; Strands and Learning Outcomes

14

Junior Cycle
Specification
Social, Personal
and Health Education

Strand 1: Understanding myself and others

Awareness

Dialogue

Reflection and action

Students should be able to:

- 1.1 explore the physical, social and emotional changes that happen during adolescence
- 1.2 reflect on their personal strengths and values and how they bring these into relationships
- 1.3 explore the range of influences and life experiences that can impact on self-image and self-esteem and identify ways to nurture a positive sense of self-worth
- 1.4 recognise the factors and influences that shape young people's self-identity, such as family, peers, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, race/ethnic background, dis/abilities, religious beliefs/world-views
- 1.5 reflect on gender equity and how gender stereotypes impact on expectations, behaviour and relationships
- 1.6 discuss experiences/situations of bias, inequality or exclusion³ and devise ways to actively create more inclusive environments
- 1.7 communicate in a respectful and effective manner and listen openly and sensitively to the views/feelings of others
- 1.8 reflect on the meaning and importance of empathy and discuss ways that it can be expressed
- 1.9 demonstrate self-management skills, including setting personal goals, delaying gratification, and self-regulation of thoughts, emotions and impulses.

What's new?

What interests you about this strand?

Strand 2: Making healthy choices

Awareness

Dialogue

Reflection and action

Students should be able to:

- 2.1 consider the multifaceted nature of health and wellbeing, and evaluate what being healthy might look like for different adolescents, including how food, physical activity, sleep/rest and hygiene contribute to health and wellbeing
- 2.2 investigate how unhealthy products such as nicotine, vapes, alcohol, and unhealthy food and drinks are marketed and advertised
- 2.3 discuss societal, cultural and economic influences affecting young people when it comes to making healthy choices about smoking, alcohol and other addictive substances and behaviours, and how harmful influences can be overcome in real-life situations
- 2.4 demonstrate skills and strategies to help make informed choices that support health and wellbeing and apply them in real-life situations that may be stressful and/or involve difficult peer situations
- 2.5 discuss the physical, social, emotional and legal consequences of using addictive substances - immediate and long-term
- 2.6 consider scenarios where, for example, alcohol, nicotine, drugs, food and electronic devices might be used to cope with unpleasant feelings or stress, and discuss possible healthy ways of coping
- 2.7 assess the benefits and difficulties associated with their online world and discuss strategies for dealing with a range of scenarios that might arise
- 2.8 discuss how to share personal information, images, opinions and emotions in a safe, responsible and respectful manner online and in person
- 2.9 explore why young people share sexual imagery online and examine the risks and consequences of doing this
- 2.10 demonstrate how to access and appraise appropriate and trustworthy information, supports and services about health and wellbeing.

What's new?

What interests you about this strand?

Strand 3: Relationships and sexuality

Students should be able to:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Awareness | <p>3.1 reflect on the values, behaviours and skills that help to make, sustain and end relationships respectfully with friends, family and romantic/intimate relationships</p> <p>3.2 examine benefits and difficulties experienced by young people in a range of relationships - friendships, family relationships, and romantic/intimate relationships</p> <p>3.3 identify signs of healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships</p> <p>3.4 appreciate the importance of setting healthy boundaries in relationships and consider how to show respect for the boundaries of others</p> <p>3.5 consider the importance of taking care of their reproductive health</p> |
| Dialogue | <p>3.6 appreciate the breadth of what constitutes human sexuality, and how sexual orientation and gender identity are experienced and expressed in diverse ways</p> <p>3.7 explore the pressures to become sexually intimate and discuss ways to show respect for people's choices</p> |
| Reflection and action | <p>3.8 appreciate the importance of seeking, giving and receiving consent in sexual relationships, from the perspective of building caring relationships and from a legal perspective</p> <p>3.9 explain the importance of safer sexual activity with reference to methods of contraception and protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs)</p> <p>3.10 discuss the influence of popular culture and the online world, in particular, the influence of pornography, on young people's understanding, expectations and social norms in relation to sexual expression</p> <p>3.11 demonstrate how to access and appraise appropriate and trustworthy advice, support and services related to relationships and sexual health.</p> |

What's new?

What interests you about this strand?

Strand 4: Emotional wellbeing

Students should be able to:

- 4.1 discuss the fluid nature of emotional wellbeing and ways to nurture and protect it
- 4.2 recognise and acknowledge their emotions and recognise the links between thoughts, feelings and behaviour
- 4.3 consider the impact of stress and draw upon a variety of techniques to help self-regulate emotions and cope with the day-to-day stresses of life
- 4.4 discuss ways to support themselves and others in challenging times and where/how/when to seek support, if needed
- 4.5 explore how emotional wellbeing can be affected by factors within our control, such as sleep, diet, exercise, substance use and online exposure, and factors beyond our control
- 4.6 recognise different kinds of abusive and bullying behaviour that can occur in interactions online and in person
- 4.7 explain why noticing and responding to different kinds of abusive or bullying behaviour that can occur in person and online is important and discuss appropriate responses including, why, how, where and when to report
- 4.8 identify actions young people can take, without putting themselves at risk, in situations where they are aware of incidents of abusive behaviour or bullying happening and explore the barriers to standing up
- 4.9 demonstrate how to access and appraise appropriate and trustworthy information and services aimed at supporting young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health.

Awareness

Dialogue

Reflection and action

What's new?

What interests you about this strand?

APPENDIX 2: GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS FOR SPHE

Abusive behaviour: a general term for various behaviours which may be overtly or covertly aggressive, coercive, controlling, harassing, intimidating, isolating, or threatening. Abusive behaviour can be once-off or repeated, intentional or unintentional.

Active Bystander: a person who witnesses and recognises a harmful or potentially harmful act and doesn't ignore it or walk away.

Addictive behaviours: in the context of this specification this refers to addictive behaviours that may arise among young people such as alcohol/substance use, gaming, gambling and social media addictions.

Behaviour: refers to the way in which one acts or behaves towards self or others. It is helpful to view behaviour as a continuum. Behaviour can be appropriate, helpful, supportive, respectful, neutral, inappropriate, unhelpful, unsupportive, disrespectful or even harmful (physically or psychologically). Harmful behaviour might include abusive or bullying behaviours to self or others. Identifying and understanding our behaviour requires self-awareness and insight into the impact of behaviour and this is the first step to addressing behaviours we wish to change.

Bullying behaviour: intentional behaviour that is repeated over time by a group or individual with the intention of inflicting injury or discomfort through physical contact, verbal attacks or psychological manipulation.

Bystander: a person who is present when something happens and who sees it but does not take part in it.

Consent: a core principle of all respectful interpersonal relationships; it involves recognising and respecting one's own boundaries and the boundaries of others and always checking whenever one is unsure.

Consent in a sexual setting is defined in Irish law as follows: a person consents to a sexual act if he or she freely and voluntarily agrees to engage in that act. The age of consent to engage in sexual intercourse in Ireland is 17 years old.

Emotional wellbeing: being aware of one's emotions, being able to manage and express those emotions appropriately and being able to cope when confronted with adversity or stressful situations. Emotional wellbeing is fluid and involves managing the ups and downs which are a normal part of life. It should not be equated with happiness which is transitory. This course promotes emotional wellbeing for all students and while it does not focus on specific mental health problems (such as depression, anxiety) which may need professional support beyond the classroom, it helps students develop self-awareness and the skills to support and protect their emotional wellbeing throughout their lives.

Gender: Refers to the social and cultural factors influencing what it means to be male and female, i.e., the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. It is

important to distinguish gender from 'sex' which refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that are defined as being male and female (see definition of sex below).

Gender identity: a person's felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex registered at birth

Health: a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Health literacy: is the combination of personal competencies and resources needed for people to access, understand, appraise and use information and services to make decisions about health. It also includes the capacity to communicate, assert and act upon these decisions.

LGBTQI+: an umbrella term to signify gender and sexuality diversity and refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex. The 'plus' is used to signify additional gender identities and sexual orientations that are not specifically covered by the other five initials such as non-binary, pansexual and asexual identities.

Reproductive health: in the context of Junior Cycle SPHE this refers to learning about fertility - and how to protect it and learning about menstruation.

Romantic or intimate relationships: for the purpose of this specification, this refers to relationships that include but go beyond friendship to include a sexual attraction and may involve feelings of affection, infatuation, desire, and sensuality.

Sex: refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that are defined as being male and female. When children are born, their sex is largely decided or 'assigned' on the basis of their external genitalia, which generally – but not always – reflects their internal hormonal and chromosomal make-up.

Sexual activity/sexual intimacy: a range of activities from kissing, touching, fondling to sexual intercourse (in all its forms) which involve giving and receiving sexual pleasure. These activities can be solitary or involve other people.

Sexuality: the components of a person that include their biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual expression, sexual fantasies, attitudes and values related to sex. Aspects of sexuality can change as we go through different ages and relationships (see sexuality wheel).

Sexual expression: refers to the many ways we show our sexual selves. It includes communication and acceptance of love, expressing emotion, giving and receiving pleasure, having the ability to enjoy and control sexual and reproductive behaviour.

Sexual orientation: each person's capacity for emotional and sexual attraction to, and intimate sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender or the same gender or more than one gender. Some people do not feel sexual attraction or may have very low levels of sexual attraction, and this is termed asexuality.

Social and emotional skills: in the context of this specification, social and emotional skills refer to self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills and social awareness as set out in the CASEL Social and Emotional Skills Framework.

Social norms: the unwritten rules of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours that are considered acceptable in a particular social group or culture. In the context of working with young people, it is important to interrogate, question and critique social norms, especially those which may be harmful, unhelpful, or not reflective of what people feel is important.

Stereotypes: presenting an image of a person, a group or a culture based on an assumed range of characteristics, behaviours, or activities.

Substance use: in the context of this specification, substance use refers to alcohol, nicotine, vaping, and drugs.

Upstander: a person who is present when something happens and speaks up or acts in support of an individual or cause, particularly intervening.

(NCCA, 2023, pp. 21- 22)

Having read through the updated strands, learning outcomes and glossary of terms, are there any themes emerging across the learning outcomes for you?

NCCA Curriculum Online

SPHE Toolkit

<https://curriculumonline.ie/junior-cycle/short-courses/sphe/>



Qualities of a Teacher

What qualities do you think that teacher had?

What skills did they possess?

How did this quality/skill affect you?

Myself as an SPHE Teacher

<http://curriculumonline.ie/junior-cycle/short-courses/sphe/sphe-2023/sphe-toolkit/myself-as-an-sphe-teacher/>



NCCA SPHE Toolkit - Myself as an SPHE Teacher

CNQ Reflection Activity

What **Connections** did you make with the document from your own class experience?

Did you learn anything **New**?

Do you have any further **Questions**?

Looking at Myself and What I Bring to the Classroom

Myself as an SPHE teacher

What makes an inclusive SPHE classroom?

There is no such thing as a truly 'blank' or 'empty' person. Children and young people come to learning in SPHE from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences and abilities. It's important to accept and embrace each other – and all of us, as we are. Think about all the diversity that can be your SPHE classroom – diversity of family backgrounds, abilities, gender identities, social orientations, socio-economic circumstances, cultures, beliefs, and much more.

An inclusive SPHE classroom is one where students encounter diversity in a respectful way. It is grounded in a view of individual differences as a resource that can enrich the lives and learning of all.

The following strategies can help create a classroom where everyone has a sense of belonging:

- Develop caring relationships – get to know students' names, interests, abilities and experiences for their own sake and beyond that classroom.
- Agree clear ground rules/expectations and establish consequences that allow students to have honest discussions, but doesn't mean putting up with or tolerating negative and disrespectful behaviour that might be necessary to live with.
- Use respectful and understandable language when talking about people and challenge students if they use derogatory language or abusive discriminatory behaviour, even if they're 'being on target'. It's good to be checking if language isn't respectful to the all the students it's used for the way it can be used to describe someone they love.
- If a class appears to be relatively homogeneous (for example, in terms of ability, socio-economic background), imagine a more diverse environment within teaching. For example, imagine how would you feel if someone from another cultural group was to be on the wall observing the teaching and learning? This will act as a safeguard against sharing any 'stereotypical' language.
- Support students to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to recognise and address stereotypes, bias, prejudice and discrimination.
- When teaching on content and learning methods, make sure to include others – for example, consider how students who don't represent and reflect the diversity of children and young people feel, experience and identities.
- Recognise diversity in your student population, even if you don't see it – also think of you as a member of many aspects of students' lives, qualities or backgrounds. For example, teach with a consciousness that you have students from a range of socio-economic backgrounds in every class and this can shape their life experiences and choices.
- Create an inclusive physical space by displaying images that reflect a diversity of young people's experiences, e.g. images of diverse body types, ethnicities, ages, abilities, information about mental health, health and wellbeing information, including information resources for LGBT+ students.
- Ensure that all students have equal opportunities to express their views, respectfully and confidently. Seeking to meet their differing levels of confidence, learning and experience. Check in with the class regularly to make sure that this is happening.

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Myself as an SPHE teacher

Looking at Myself and What I Bring to the Classroom

Teaching involves a complex combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviours. How we approach teaching is shaped by who we are. Being self-aware in terms of what we bring to the classroom and ways in which we teach others are particularly important in the context of teaching SPHE.

Self-awareness means reflecting on how your own experiences, attitudes, values and beliefs and possible biases may affect you and considering how they might affect your approach to teaching in SPHE and your responses to student questions, views and opinions.

Everyone is included in the society, family and community in which they grow up. Class bias, is to be aware that students and teachers may bring different values and attitudes into the classroom. It's important to have ongoing, respectful, honest and open conversations. Reflecting on our own beliefs about the right of all our students and staff to an education first step is being able to facilitate open and respectful dialogue in our classrooms. This is rooted on that students can be safe and happy, and a respectful environment in which all our students have a sense of belonging and that values themselves are respected.

Recognising what we are and comfortable with, SPHE helps us to see all the differences within our SPHE classroom (the values and beliefs). Recognising topics in education, engaging with the curriculum in this healthy, professional environment, when possible, and a genuine collaboration with other teachers will help you to feel more comfortable and confident.

Other relevant topics

Teacher as facilitator

What makes a truly SPHE/SPW classroom? Creating a safe and trusting environment. Checking with the class about what needs to be done to make the class more comfortable and safe.

For Reflection

- Consider on how you may have experienced or SPHE related to your own experiences and beliefs?
- What new insights about what I learned? What was challenging or missing from the experience of SPHE in a young person?
- What was a positive and useful preparation for the role as an SPHE teacher?
- Did I have any positive role models for how to be a good SPHE teacher? What did I learn from them?
- Is there anything I need to consider to feel comfortable with the role of facilitating learning in SPHE?
- What topics do I feel most comfortable teaching and what do I feel least comfortable teaching? How can I feel more comfortable with the topics I feel least comfortable with? How can I feel more comfortable with the topics I feel least comfortable with? How can I feel more comfortable with the topics I feel least comfortable with?
- Reflecting on the own identity – what groups, religious, ethnic, social class and any other aspects that might be relevant. How might these have shaped and been shaped by social attitudes and beliefs?
- What might have been challenging or most important experiences/connections and allow us to approach topics in a respectful way (engagement and inclusion) way?
- How can I show a genuine respect and understanding for the diversity of views and beliefs of respect, equality, inclusion, respect for rights, citizenship and integrity?
- How can I show a genuine respect and understanding for the diversity of views and beliefs of respect, equality, inclusion, respect for rights, citizenship and integrity?
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What did you find helpful in these documents that could support you with your classroom practice?

Dealing with Sensitive/Challenging Conversations



What did you find helpful in this document that could support you with your classroom practice?

Case Studies

Diana

Diana is reading through a case study about body image with her 2nd year SPHE group. When she asks her students to provide feedback on the questions, one of her student's, Sophie, begins to tell the class about her older sister's eating disorder.



How could Diana respond to this during the class?

Is there anything that Diana could discuss with Sophie at the end of the class?

Is there anything that Diana could consider focusing on in SPHE classroom following this comment?

Jack

Jack created some lessons around the video clip 'Tea and Consent' with his 3rd years. During the discussion at their tables, he overhears one of his student's, Lauren, telling the others at the table that she feels that she can never say no and that if she does, nobody will ever want to be with her again.



How could Jack respond to this during class?

What might Jack remind the students of?

What should Jack do following this lesson?

Is there anything that Jack could consider focusing on in SPHE classroom following this comment?

Emma

Emma has planned to engage with the topic of smoking and vaping in January with her 1st years. She hopes to mention supports and challenges for young people around choices about smoking and vaping and other addictive behaviours. She is aware that these lessons might upset Mikey, one of her students in 1st year. Mikey's brother had an addiction and recently passed away.



What might Emma do to help maintain a safe space for Mikey, and the other students, before, during, and after the lesson?

HSE SPHE Resource

How to use this SPHE Resource:

Teachers can choose the learning activities that are appropriate for their class based on their students' needs and interests. There are currently 2 units for RSE and Making Healthy Choices, the learnings from unit 1 are further developed in unit 2, however the units are not aligned to year groups, therefore for example, activities in RSE 1 are not just suitable for 1st year students. Teachers can choose any of the learning activities in these resources to plan teaching and learning across their Junior Cycle SPHE Programme.

- [Understanding Myself and Others](#)
- [Making Healthy Choices 1](#)
- [Emotional Wellbeing 1](#)
- [Relationships and Sexuality Education 1](#)
- [Making Healthy Choices 2](#)
- [Relationships and Sexuality Education 2](#)



NCCA SPHE Toolkit

2023 Toolkit



Preparing to teach



Teaching SPHE/RSE



Resources for teaching and learning SPHE/RSE 2023



Effective Pedagogical Approaches in SPHE

SPHE Teaching Approaches

Effective pedagogical approaches in SPHE

When planning SPHE lessons, it is important to provide opportunities for **assessment, dialogue, reflection and action**.



Assessment
Assessment is the ability to recognise and understand one's own thoughts, emotions, values and behaviour. It includes understanding how different factors influence our sense of self and how we live our lives, including the influence of family, peers, the internet, gender, culture and social network norms. The aim is to be aware of ourselves, but to be honest to be in relationships and that we all share a common humanity, rights, rights and responsibilities.

Dialogue
The goal of dialogic teaching and learning is to facilitate an engagement with a diversity of perspectives, values and behaviours and those of others, leading to a better understanding of issues of relevance to their lives, and come to informed, thoughtful decisions based on their personal values, with due regard to their own rights and responsibilities and the rights and responsibilities of others. Dialogic dialogue is achieved by providing a diversity of viewpoints, identities, cultures and experiences through discussion and using this as a resource for learning.

Reflection and action
This is about understanding what they have learned and acting on their own personal insights and conclusions in response to their learning. It enables students to transfer from the learning experience their values, behaviour and relationships, and discussing what it means for their lives now or for the future. Learning in SPHE is a spiral, an ongoing process of critical reflection and action, reflective dialogue with others.

Participative and dialogic teaching methodologies are an essential part of effective teaching and learning in SPHE. The strategies employed in these teaching styles will help create an engaging and dialogic learning environment where everyone can discuss, reflect, and question what we question that make matter for their lives now and in the future.

In recommending methodologies, we are not suggesting that every class should be taught in a particular or uniform manner. Teachers will exercise professional judgement and flexibility in choosing the teaching and learning strategies best suited to supporting their students in achieving the learning outcomes.

David Kolb's **Experiential Learning Cycle** provides an important framework for planning learning in SPHE. Find out about [it here](#) before going any further. The methodologies below are the most often growing different stages in this cycle.

Experiences and enquiries
There are such activities that can be used to complete a process to create a shared and collaborative atmosphere for learning together. Some examples can be found [here](#).

Reflection and focusing techniques
Thinking education regularly in SPHE can help create a safe space for discussion and personal reflection. This can be challenging in a class context so how it should be done. This might use the end of the learning or end of class. It could be a breathing exercise, a short mindfulness or a piece of music, a poem, an inspirational quote, etc.

A post-act self-reflection technique from the National Psychological Support Service (NPSS) can be found [here](#).

www.curriculumonline.ie 

I think...

I believe...

I feel ...

I agree/disagree and this is why...

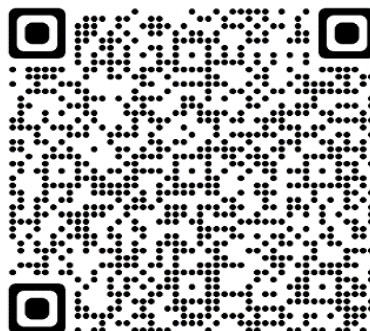
That's an interesting idea!

I respect that others think this but I think differently because...

I know some people might say ... although I see things a bit differently ...

Do I understand you correctly, are you saying...?

I'm not sure what you mean. Can you say a bit more about that?



Walking Debate/Class Discussion

Activity: Where do you Stand? Class Discussion

Place the numbers 1-10 along a wall. Put 'feel very strongly' or 'completely agree' above the number 10 and 'I do not feel strongly' or 'completely disagree' over the number 1. The facilitator calls out a statement and invites the participants to stand in the spot that mostly aligns with their feelings and opinions.

Use these to elicit discussion on the following statements taken from the *Lockers* resource:



<https://www.webwise.ie/lockers/>

'If the person really liked you, they wouldn't make you send a nude'

or

'Young people are under pressure to send intimate images'

or

'There is more pressure on girls than on boys to sext'

The statements link to Learning outcomes:1.7, 1.8, 2.7,2.8 ,2.9, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.6

OR

'Children and young people are particularly vulnerable to alcohol-related harms and risks, as their bodies and brains are still developing.' (Alcohol Action Ireland)

The statement links to Learning outcomes:1.1, 1.8,2.2, 2.3, 2.4,2.5,2.6, 2.10, 4.2, 4.5

Case Study

The Friendship of Alex and Sam

Worksheet – The Friendship of Alex and Sam

(Relationships and Sexuality Education 1, HSE, 2023, p.30)

Alex and Sam have been friends since primary school. They often chat and laugh about things that happened when they were small. Among the many things that make the friendship work, Alex appreciates how the more socially confident Sam has always included Alex with other friends, and Sam appreciates how they can tell each other things they wouldn't tell anyone else. Although Alex and Sam have common interests, they both also have interests that are independent of each other. Alex usually spends lunchtimes competing with the Chess Club, while Sam volunteers in the school shop a few times a week. They are both passionate basketball players. A few weeks ago, Alex got a place on the school team, whereas Sam did not. Alex tried to talk to Sam about it, but Sam ignored the attempts, saying it wasn't a big deal. After that, Sam didn't seem to be around much, and Alex, suspecting that Sam was jealous, decided that they wouldn't be the one to make the first contact. Last night, Sam was at home feeling miserable. Things had been tough at home lately, with mum losing her job. Sam knew that the reaction to the basketball team being announced was petty. Sam sent Alex a text, "sorry for being a plank" and was delighted when a text zoomed back, "me too, going to the gym?".

[hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/hse-education-programme/junior-cycle-sphe-training-resources/rse/relationships-and-sexuality-education-1-unit-of-learning1.pdf](https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/hse-education-programme/junior-cycle-sphe-training-resources/rse/relationships-and-sexuality-education-1-unit-of-learning1.pdf)

What learning outcomes could you link with this case study?

Suggested discussion points: What could the friends have done differently in order to try to prevent the situation from worsening? (Communication is the cornerstone of all healthy relationships. To prevent this situation from occurring in the first place, Sam could have confided in a friend about how they were feeling. Alex, as a good friend, might have been there to support Sam.)

What might help an unhealthy relationship to improve? (Communication between two people is key to finding out what is going wrong in a relationship. It is the first step to improving an unhealthy relationship.)

It is quite normal for relationships to be unbalanced at different times. Why might this be? (Perhaps one person in the relationship is going through something that requires extra support. This might last hours, days or weeks, but when a relationship is unbalanced for a long period of time, this can take its toll on the relationship. It is not good for either person in a relationship if it's always the one person giving and the other receiving.)

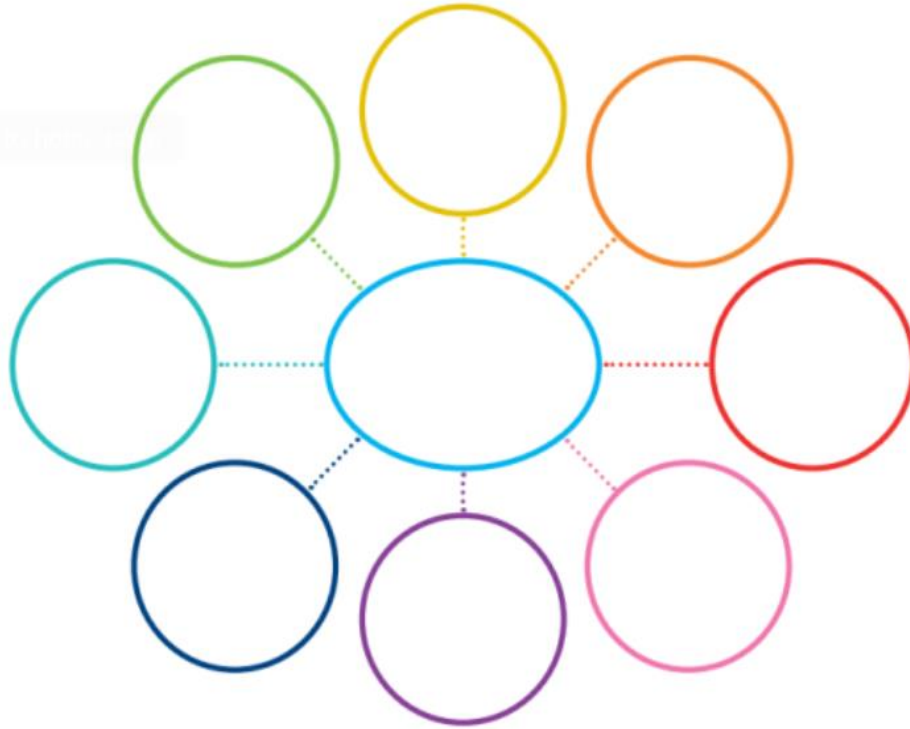
Is it ever healthy to end a relationship? (There are several circumstances where it may be better to end a relationship. For example, if your feelings for the other person have changed, if the relationship no longer makes you feel good about yourself, if you no longer feel good about the other person, if you cannot trust the other person or they do not trust you, or if you feel controlled or unsafe, then it may be best to end the relationship.)

What qualities and characteristics displayed here make for a strong, healthy relationship?

What did you learn from this activity?

Music as a Stimulus Material

As the song is played use the mind map to jot down what themes/key words you can identify in the video



What learning outcomes could you link if using this song for example?

Is there scope to use music in SPHE classes? Why or why not?

Is there an alternative song or stimulus materials you use or would think of using to prompt discussion (dialogue) in the SPHE classroom?

Video Clips and Edpuzzle

Have you used Edpuzzle previously?

List 2 opportunities and 2 challenges/limitations with this pedagogical approach?

Opportunities	Challenges

Would you consider setting a video clip within Edpuzzle as an assignment for a flipped classroom approach to learning in SPHE?

3-2-1

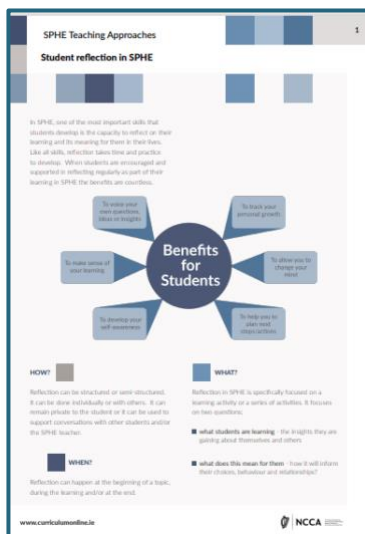
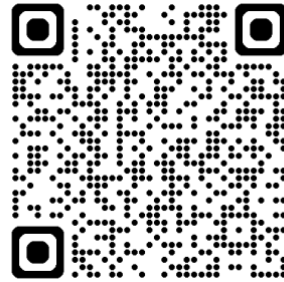
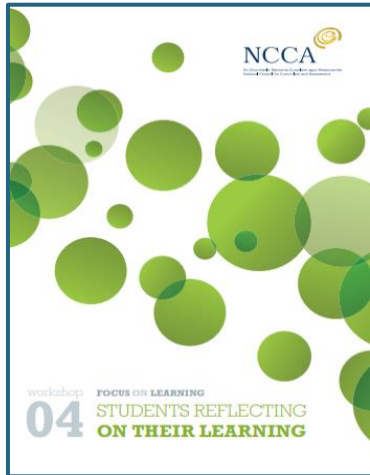
3 things you learned:

2 things you will implement in your SPHE class:

1 thing that you will read up on in more detail:

Day 2

Students Reflecting on their Learning



Prompts to support student reflection

It is important to provide different ways of reflecting to ensure that students do not become bored with the process and to provide students with a variety of prompts to support their reflections, such as those suggested below. Not all these should be used. Just pick a few!

- *What I enjoyed most today (or about this topic)...*
- *What I will remember is...*
- *What surprised me...*
- *What I found difficult or challenging...*
- *What made me think...*
- *A question I'm left with*
- *What still puzzles me...*
- *Something I want to do differently now..*
- *A new plan or goal I have...*
- *I know I'm learning in SPHE because...*
- *I felt during/after this topic*
- *Do I need to talk to someone? Where can I go for help?*
- *If I knew then what I know now what advice would I give myself?*
- *What do I like about learning in SPHE? What would I change?*

Reflection in the SPHE Classroom - Think/Pair/Share

How does reflection feature in your SPHE classes?

Do you ask your students to reflect orally, write their reflections down or do both?

How does reflection help the students with their learning?

Do you reflect as a teacher and if so, for what reason?

Ongoing Assessment in SPHE

Creative Approaches to Assessment in SPHE

Teaching SPHE/RSE
Creative approaches to assessment in SPHE/RSE

Why is assessment important in SPHE/RSE?

Giving students opportunities to demonstrate their learning benefits both the teacher and students.

- For the teacher - it enables you to best understand the learning the students gain, so that to adjust progress and identify future learning needs.
- For the student - it creates an awareness of the development of their knowledge, attitudes and skills, against the value of learning in SPHE, and promotes their motivation for future learning.

Assessment is most effective when it assesses beyond marks and grades and meeting focused and sets on how the student has done in the past but not on what the teacher thinks.

Junior Cycle SPHE short course specification

The main purpose of assessment is to support learning. It is indicated that most assessment in SPHE will be formative based and formative in nature. Being clear about the purpose of any assessment activity is really important so this allows you to share the goal with your students and provide relevant feedback.

Planning ongoing assessment in SPHE allows you, the teacher, and your students to engage in ongoing conversations about their learning.

Other relevant topics

- Student voice in SPHE
- Empowering student reflection in SPHE
- Teacher pedagogical approaches

Adapted from guidance published by NCCA, Association, UK
www.curriculumonline.ie

NCCA



NCCA Focus on Learning

NCCA

workshop **01** FOCUS ON LEARNING
LEARNING INTENTIONS & SUCCESS CRITERIA

NCCA

workshop **02** FOCUS ON LEARNING
EFFECTIVE QUESTIONING

NCCA

workshop **03** FOCUS ON LEARNING
FORMATIVE FEEDBACK

NCCA

workshop **04** FOCUS ON LEARNING
STUDENTS REFLECTING ON THEIR LEARNING

NCCA

workshop **05** FOCUS ON LEARNING
LEARNING OUTCOMES

Ongoing reporting for effective teaching and learning

Modes of Assessment

Creative Approaches to Assessment

Individual Reflection:

Read through the assessment approaches on the A-Z of Assessment.

Pick 2/3 new approaches that are new to you.

How could you use these in SPHE?

Assessment in Practice in the SPHE Classroom

Teacher Testimony on Assessment

From watching the video do you have any new ideas that you would consider useful to support ongoing assessment in your classroom?

Student Participation

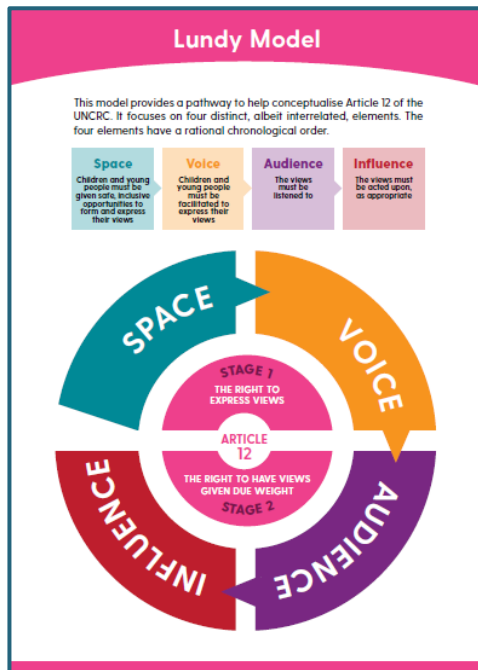
Teacher Testimony on Student Participation

While listening to the teacher please consider; How creating opportunities to enhance student participation has enriched the teacher's classroom experience.

Briefly describe how?

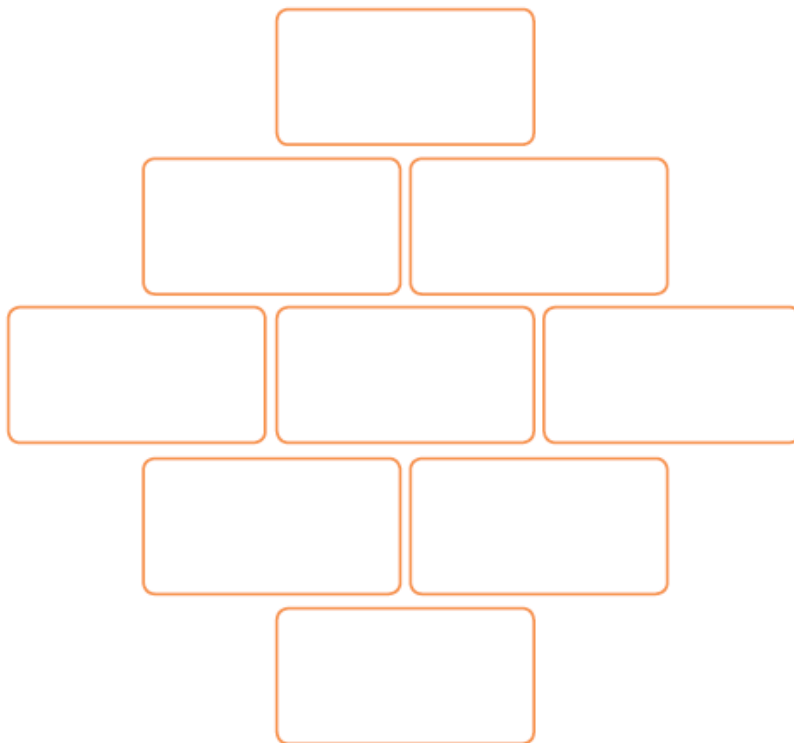
After listening to this video please consider; What does student voice mean in your school context, having heard from another SPHE teacher?

Lundy Model



<https://hubnanog.ie/participation-framework/>

Mural Activity



Case Study

Rushbrooke Community school is situated in a large urban area in the south of the country. The current enrolment is 900 students. It is a mixed DEIS school. The Home School Community Liaison officer has advised the staff of ongoing issues in the school's catchment area and the societal impacts of challenges such as addictive behaviours and violence. These issues are impacting upon the student's engagement with teaching, learning and assessment in the school.

There are five SPHE 1st year classes and planning will involve usage of the updated NCCA specification, as SPHE is a short course in the school. The students in 1st, 2nd and 3rd year have one hour of SPHE per week. The teachers hope to draft a long-term plan for the 3 years of Junior Cycle, which is flexible in nature and student centred. There is a core group of teachers in the SPHE department, and they plan collaboratively as a team. They are reviewing their SPHE programme in collaboration with students, teachers and parents and are working on a draft 3-year plan commencing in September 2023. The core team of teachers are very mindful of the age and stage of students, Wellbeing events and activities in the school and the context of their school. They have already consulted both students, staff and parents and want their expressed needs to be reflected in the plan, where appropriate.

Participant Reflection

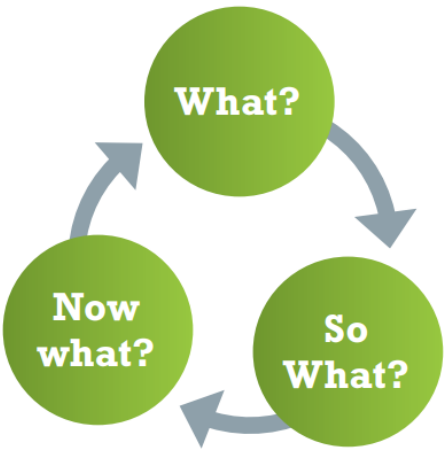
What? What have I learned?

So what? What does this tell me about my strengths and about my gaps in understanding?

Now what? What are my next steps? What are my targets and goals for moving forward?

Discussion card 1

What? So what? Now what?



Rolfe, Freshwater and Jasper (2001) propose using three simple questions when reflecting on learning: 'What? So what? Now what?'.

What?: What have I learned?

So what?: What does this tell me about my strengths and about my gaps in understanding?

Now what?: What can I do to improve my understanding? What are my next steps? What are my targets and goals for moving forward?

Discuss how you might use or adapt this approach in your classroom.

(Rolfe et al., 2001)

Designing a Lesson

Design a lesson that you could use with a 1st /2nd year group.
Choose from the array of resources already explored.

Discuss and document what stimulus materials (resources, video clips, websites etc) and/or pedagogical approaches you might use.

What assessment approaches could you use to check for understanding?

How will you prompt student reflection within this lesson?

Do I need to differentiate this lesson for the variety of learners in my classroom and if so, what will that look like?

Notes

Next Steps

Consider your next steps following this seminar...