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Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

Teaching RSE across the post-primary continuum

Day 1

Facilitator:



Padlet



tinyurl.com/RSEContinuum



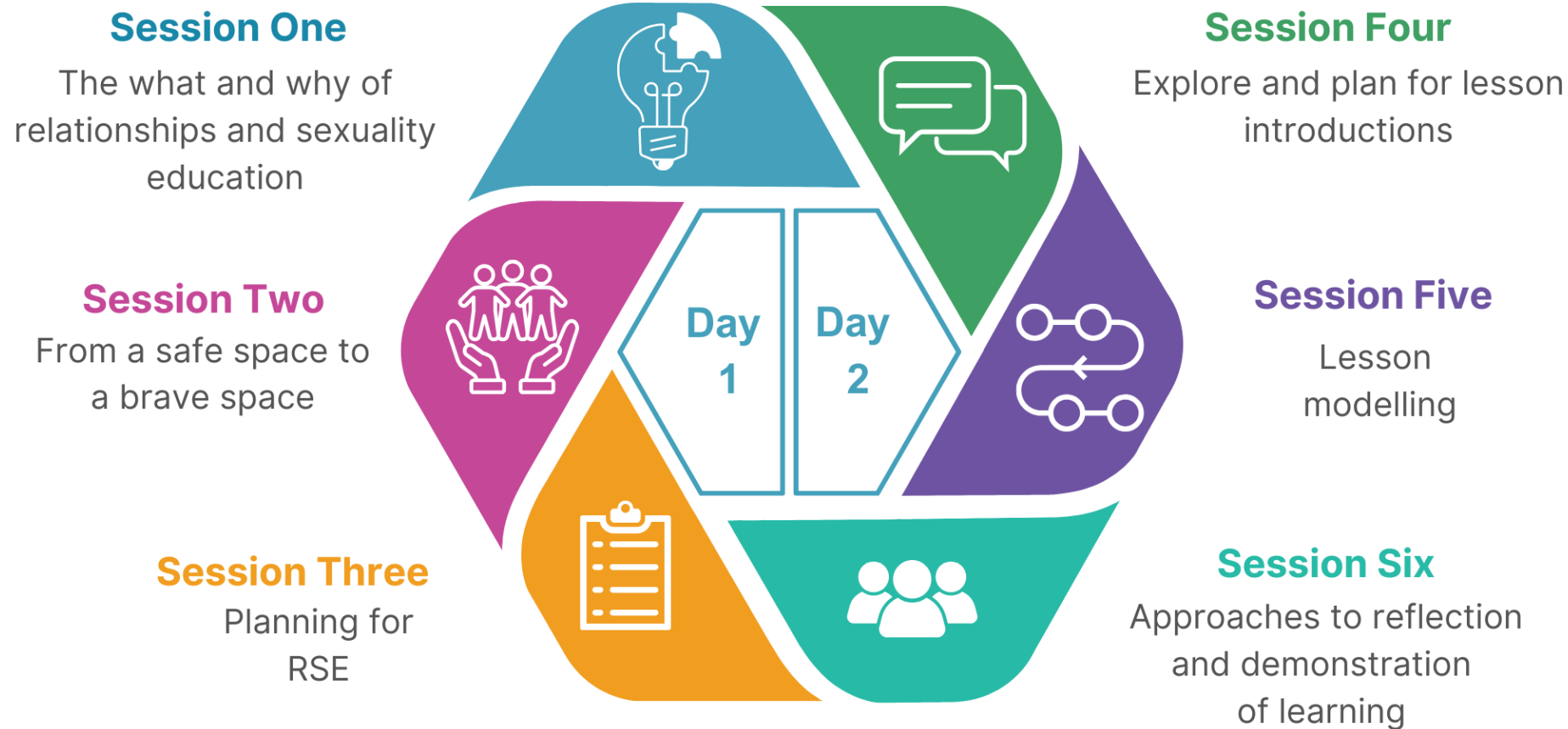
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Two day overview





Signposts



Discussion



Stop and Jot



Groupwork



Reflection

Overview of day one



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Session 1	The what and why of relationships and sexuality education • Policies and provision relating to RSE • The developmental approach in RSE • RSE learning outcomes
Tea/Coffee Break 11:00 – 11:20	
Session 2	From a safe space to a brave space • Establishing a brave space • Responding to student questions • Facilitating respectful conversations
Lunch 13:00 – 14:00	
Session 3	Planning for RSE • Creating a unit of learning • Explore resources to support planning • Focus on the structure and features of an effective lesson



Introductions

“Name and Context”





Icebreaker...this or that?

Tea or
coffee

Pizza or
pasta

Cheesecake
or brownie

Train or
plane

Swimming
or cycling

Dublin or
Cork





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Session 1

The what and why of relationships and sexuality education



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During day one of this PLE participants will:

consider the what and why of relationships and sexuality education

explore moving from a safe space to a brave space

examine the structure and features of an effective RSE lesson



Our focus for this session

Consider the what and why of relationships and sexuality education

Provision for RSE

The developmental approach in RSE

RSE learning outcomes



Report on the review of RSE

“The NCCA describes RSE as a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of relationships and sexuality. It aims to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to develop self-awareness and self-esteem, realise their health, wellbeing and dignity; develop positive and respectful, social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own wellbeing and that of others; and understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to themselves and others.”

Report on the Review of RSE p.72 December 2019



Values of SPHE

The JC and SC SPHE specifications are grounded in values of respect, equality, inclusivity, responsibility, dignity, compassion and empathy.

Note:

At both Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle, all lessons should be taught in a way that LGBTQ+ identities, relationships and families are fully integrated and reflected in teaching and learning, as opposed to being addressed within stand-alone lessons.

Adapted from JC SPHE specification p.4 and p.14 and SC SPHE specification p.13.



Exploring the aim of RSE across the continuum

Junior cycle RSE

"This strand explores the cognitive, physical, emotional & social aspects of relationships and sexuality through a positive, inclusive, rights & responsibilities-based approach. The focus is on family relationships, friendships, romantic & potential sexual relationships in the future."

NCCA, 2023, p.12

Senior Cycle RSE

"Within this strand students will explore the wide range of relationships that are important for their lives with a particular focus on gaining the awareness, knowledge & skills to support them in creating & nurturing respectful, caring & healthy relationships. This strand also supports students to recognise & be empowered to respond to instances of abuse or violence in relationships."

NCCA, 2024, p.13

What does each RSE strand aim to explore?

What approach to teaching about relationships is advocated for in each strand?





Student perspectives on RSE

Students want schools to provide comprehensive, relevant and age-appropriate RSE throughout all stages of education

Students don't want RSE that focuses mainly on biological facts and fails to provide opportunities to discuss the emotional aspects of growing up and forming healthy relationships



Students want a safe and inclusive environment where they can discuss, ask questions and talk about all aspects of RSE

Older students spoke about the need to discuss 'real-world' topics openly and honestly within the context of rights and responsibilities, attitudes and values

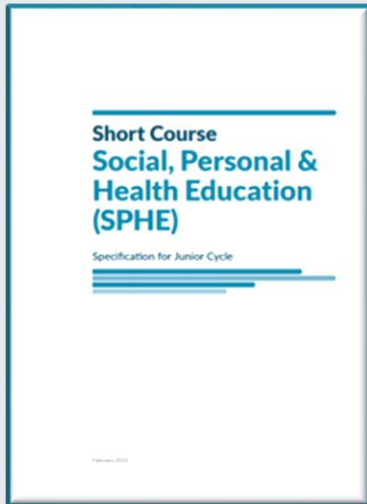
Provision for SPHE



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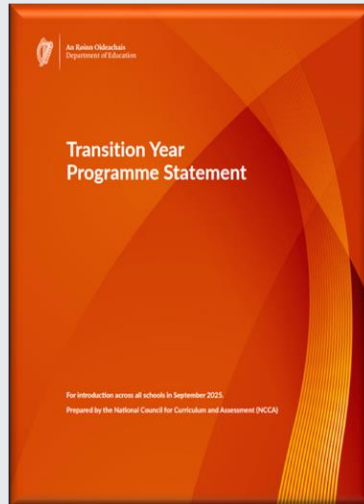
Junior Cycle SPHE

Schools must provide 100 hours spread across 1st, 2nd and 3rd year (and must be provided in each of the three years).



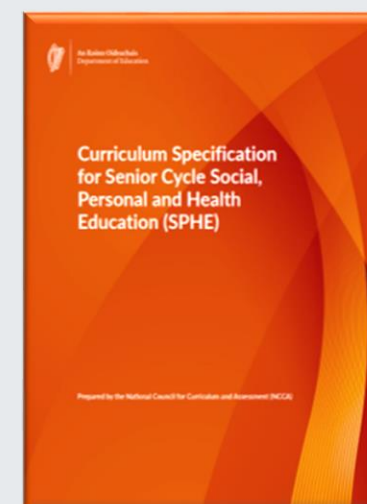
Transition Year SPHE

SPHE comes under the dimension of personal growth. It should be once per week, not exceeding one hour per class.



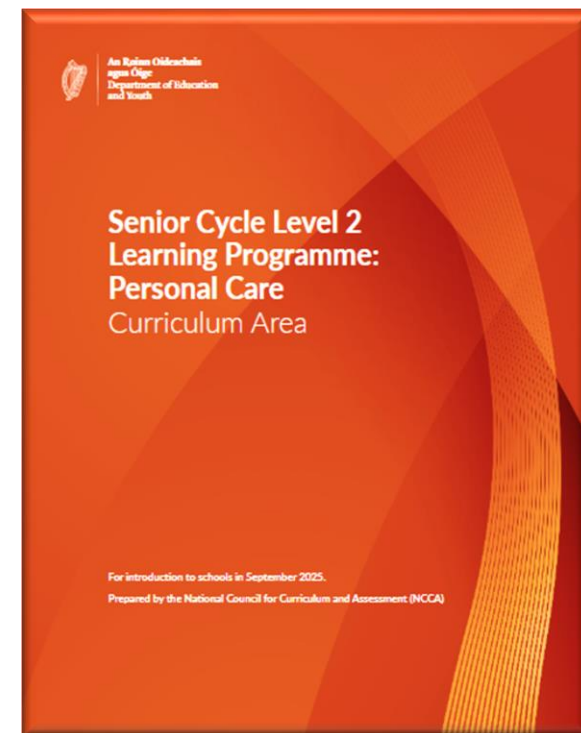
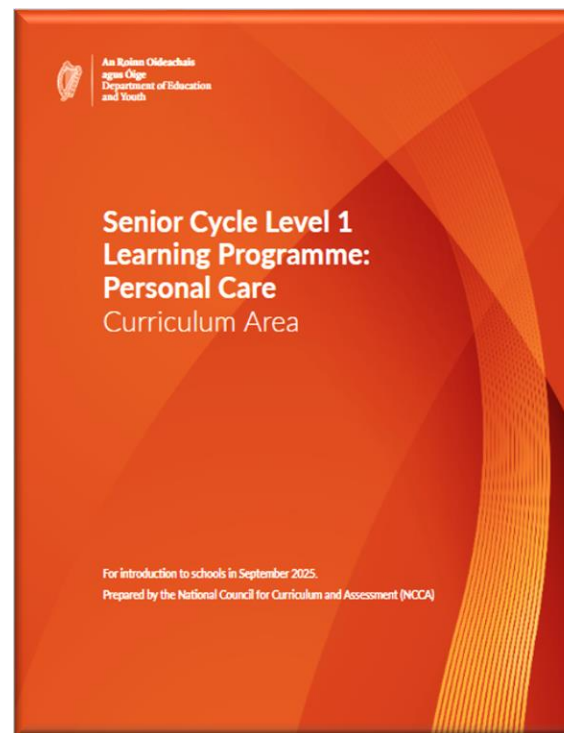
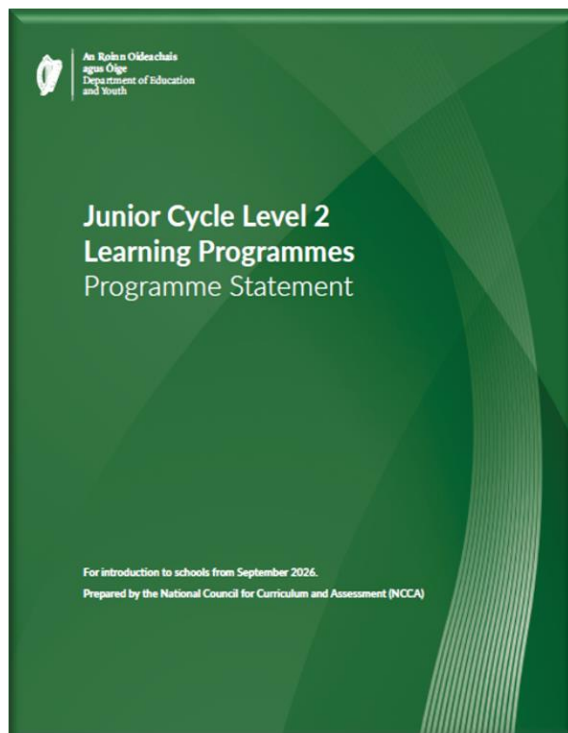
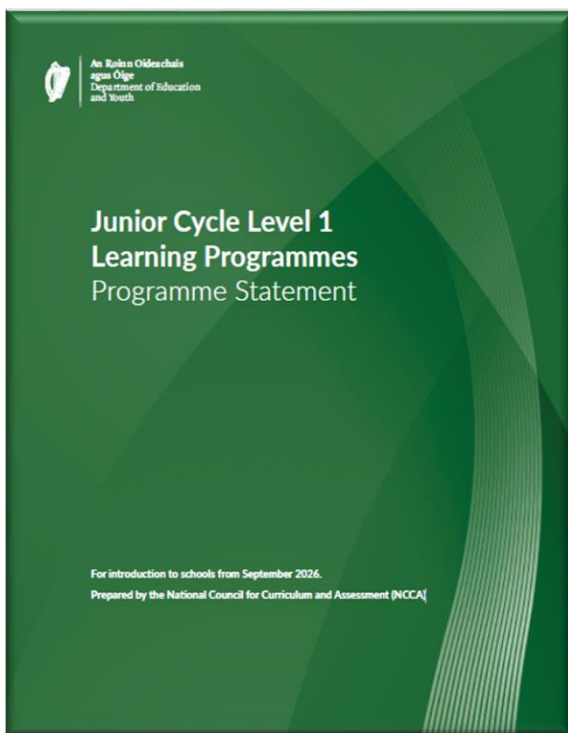
Senior Cycle SPHE

This SPHE specification is designed for a minimum of 60 hours of class contact time over the final two years of senior cycle education for both LCA and LCE.





L1LP/L2LP





Why is RSE important for young people?





Why is RSE important for young people?

- Improves young people's knowledge, attitudes and skills to make healthy, informed choices.
- Supports better sexual health outcomes, including unintended, adolescence pregnancy.
- Encourages safer behaviours, such as increased condom and contraception use and reduced risk-taking.
- Contributes to positive relationship skills, including communication, respectful and managing boundaries.
- Promotes values of gender equality, human rights and diversity.





Rationale for relationships and sexuality education at junior cycle

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.

JC SPHE Specification p.4



Rationale for relationships and sexuality education at senior cycle

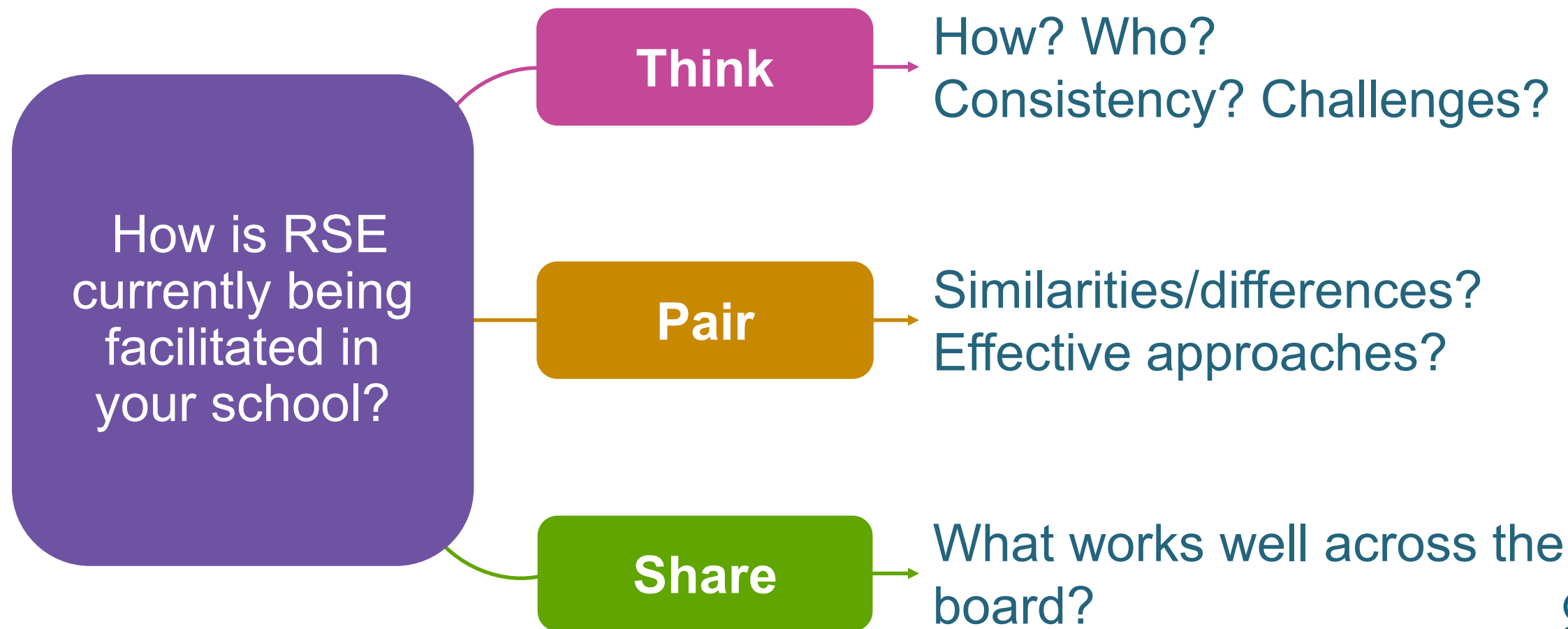
By building on the learning in Junior Cycle SPHE, learning in Senior Cycle SPHE enables students to deepen the core skills of self-awareness, self-management, self-regulation, responsible decision-making, social awareness and relationship skills.

Senior Cycle SPHE also provides an opportunity for students to extend their health literacy skills, as they learn how to access, understand, appraise and use information and services related to health and wellbeing and build their confidence to communicate and act upon this information.

SC SPHE Specification p.4



Think-Pair-Share



RSE: Learning Outcomes



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Junior Cycle RSE

- 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
- 3.2 examine benefits and difficulties experienced by young people in a range of relationships - friendships, family relationships, and romantic/intimate relationships
- 3.3 identify signs of healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships
- 3.4 appreciate the importance of setting healthy boundaries in relationships and consider how to show respect for the boundaries of others
- 3.5 consider the importance of taking care of their reproductive health
- 3.6 appreciate the breadth of what constitutes human sexuality, and how sexual orientation and gender identity are experienced and expressed in diverse ways
- 3.7 explore the pressures to become sexually intimate and discuss ways to show respect for people's choices
- 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
- 3.9 explain the importance of safer sexual activity with reference to methods of contraception and protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- 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
- 3.11 demonstrate how to access and appraise appropriate and trustworthy advice, support and services related to relationships and sexual health.

Senior Cycle RSE

Healthy relationships

- 2.1 demonstrate the awareness and skills needed for nurturing healthy in-person and online relationships, including respecting boundaries, communicating effectively, navigating difficult conversations, preventing and managing conflict and dealing with break-ups
- 2.2 reflect on how their attitudes, beliefs, values and identity, and those of others, can influence the dynamics of families, friendships and romantic relationships
- 2.3 discuss the need for consent and the importance of care, respect, empathy, trust and mutual pleasure within a sexual relationship.

Gender, culture and social norms

- 2.4 examine how both positive and harmful attitudes around gender are perpetuated in the media, online, and in society and discuss strategies for challenging and changing harmful attitudes and narratives.

Abusive and violent relationships

- 2.5 identify and consider common signs of abusive relationships, including coercive control
- 2.6 explore the root causes and consequences of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence (DSGBV), and outline the supports and services available, and protections under the law
- 2.7 investigate the possible influence of pornography on attitudes, behaviours and relationship expectations and what supports are available for those impacted by pornography
- 2.8 discuss image-based abuse, sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, and what to do and how to seek support if they or someone they know has experienced any of these.

Sexual health

- 2.9 understand the components of sexual health including fertility across the life-cycle, reproductive choices, sexual functioning, safer sexual practices, possible responses to an unplanned pregnancy, and how to access sexual health information and services.



5 minutes



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Mapping L2LP to JC Learning Outcomes

JC RSE	JC L2LP Personal Care
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	Knowing how to stay safe 3.27 identify key safety risks in the workplace/home/community 3.28 recognise when personal safety is threatened 3.29 name daily practices that promote personal safety 3.30 describe appropriate response when a risk is identified
3.2 examine benefits and difficulties experienced by young people in a range of relationships - friendships, family relationships, and romantic/intimate relationships	Becoming aware of one's sexuality 3.31 identify the standard names of the sexual organs 3.32 describe the functions of the sexual parts of the body 3.33 recognise the physical and emotional changes which occur in girls and boys during adolescence 3.34 recognise the difference between appropriate and inappropriate ways of expressing feelings 3.35 recognise the difference between a friendship and a more intimate relationship
3.3 identify signs of healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships	Recognising emotions 3.36 identify common emotions and associated words used to express them 3.37 recognise their own emotional responses to a range of situations 3.38 describe appropriate ways of expressing their emotions 3.39 recognise the emotions of others 3.40 react in an emotionally appropriate way in a given situation
3.4 appreciate the importance of setting healthy boundaries in relationships and consider how to show respect for the boundaries of others	Making personal decisions 3.41 list the main values in the student's life 3.42 describe how values are linked to making decisions in a range of scenarios 3.43 make a list of what and who can influence decision-making 3.44 identify the choices and consequences involved in an imminent short term decision 3.45 explore the consequences of decisions made, both while implementing and on conclusion
3.5 consider the importance of taking care of their reproductive health	
3.6 appreciate the breadth of what constitutes human sexuality, and how sexual orientation and gender identity are experienced and expressed in diverse ways	
3.7 explore the pressures to become sexually intimate and discuss ways to show respect for people's choices	
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	
3.9 explain the importance of safer sexual activity with reference to methods of contraception and protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs)	
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	
3.11 demonstrate how to access and appraise appropriate and trustworthy advice, support and services related to relationships and sexual health.	

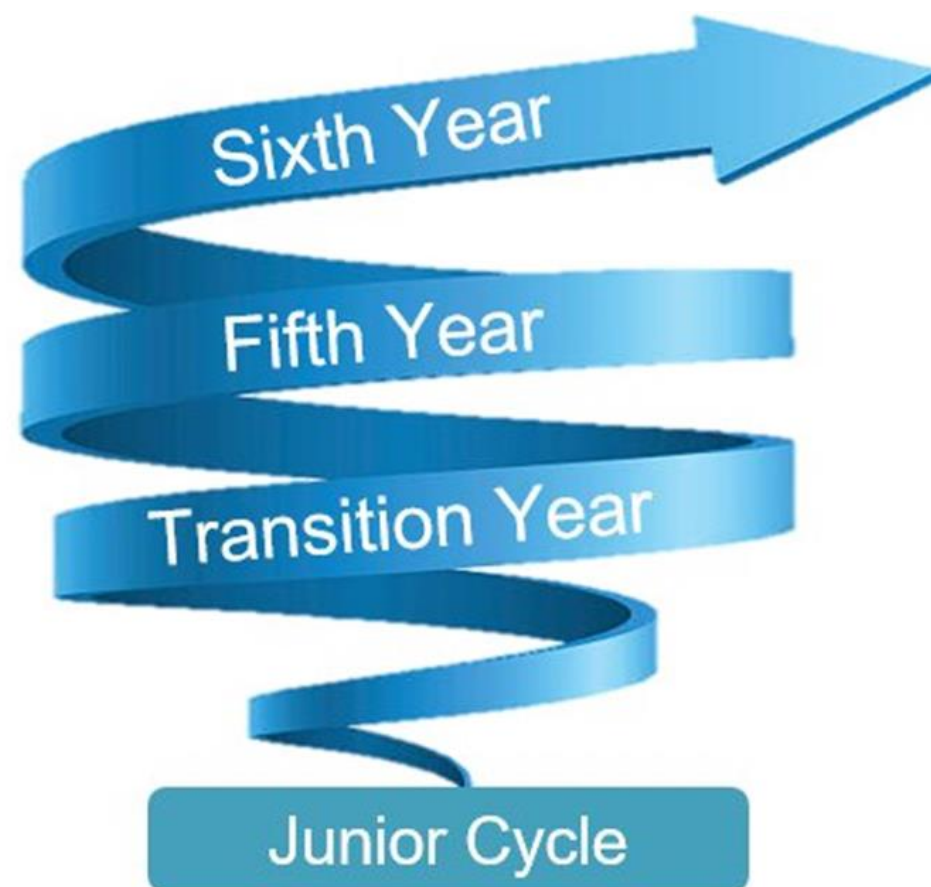


Mapping L2LP to SC Learning Outcomes

SC RSE		SC L2LP Personal Care	
Healthy relationships	2.1 demonstrate the awareness and skills needed for nurturing healthy in-person and online relationships, including respecting boundaries, communicating effectively, navigating difficult conversations, preventing and managing conflict and dealing with break-ups 2.2 reflect on how their attitudes, beliefs, values and identity, and those of others, can influence the dynamics of families, friendships and romantic relationships 2.3 discuss the need for consent and the importance of care, respect, empathy, trust and mutual pleasure within a sexual relationship.	Skills needed to nurture and maintain healthy relationships	o. recognise and appreciate their own unique identities p. explore the range of relationships that are important to them and ways to nurture these q. demonstrate the skills needed for healthy relationships, both in person and online, including communicating respectfully, managing emotions, respecting boundaries r. recognise examples/situations where people are treated unfairly or experience exclusion and identify helpful responses
Gender, culture and social norms	2.4 examine how both positive and harmful attitudes around gender are perpetuated in the media, online, and in society and discuss strategies for challenging and changing harmful attitudes and narratives.	Sexuality	s. recognise what sexual activity is, in the context of an adult healthy, respectful relationship t. appreciate the need to give and receive consent in the context of all interpersonal relationships, including within an adult sexual relationship u. explore ways to support their sexual health
Abusive and violent relationships	2.5 identify and consider common signs of abusive relationships, including coercive control 2.6 explore the root causes and consequences of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence (DSGBV), and outline the supports and services available, and protections under the law 2.7 investigate the possible influence of pornography on attitudes, behaviours and relationship expectations and what supports are available for those impacted by pornography 2.8 discuss image-based abuse, sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, and what to do and how to seek support if they or someone they know has experienced any of these.	Students learn about	Students should be able to
Sexual health	2.9 understand the components of sexual health including fertility across the life-cycle, reproductive choices, sexual functioning, safer sexual practices, possible responses to an unplanned pregnancy, and how to access sexual health information and services.	Recognising and responding to risks or challenges	v. identify places and/or situations where they do and don't feel safe and demonstrate skills for assessing and avoiding risks w. discuss ways to manage scenarios where they may feel pressure to engage in unhealthy or harmful behaviours x. identify ways in which substance use can impact on physical, social and emotional health y. understand the consequences, including legal consequences, of accessing or sharing sexually explicit material z. recognise health services and supports available locally and online and demonstrate how to access them

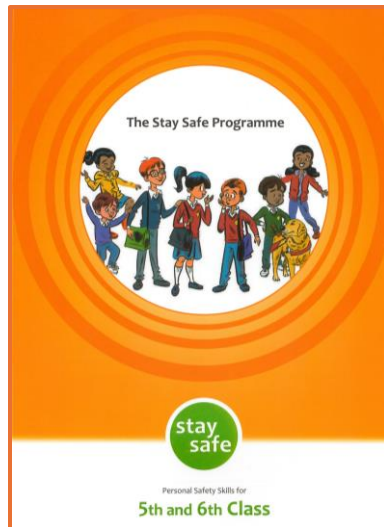


The developmental approach



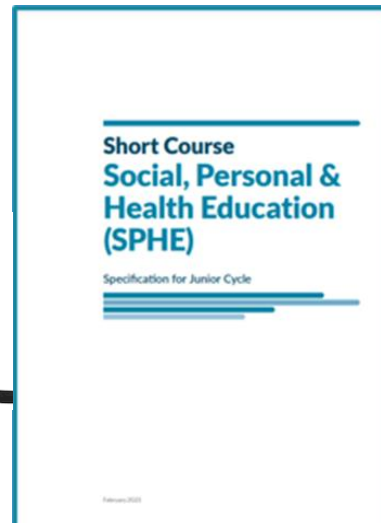


Consent through the developmental approach



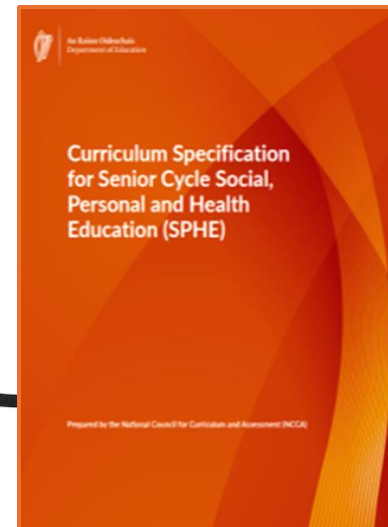
Topic 3 – Touches

Children are given the opportunity to discuss and value appropriate touches. They are taught explicitly about inappropriate touching and helped to understand that no one has a right to touch their body in a way that worries them or makes them feel unsafe.



LO 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.



LO 2.3

Discuss the need for consent and the importance of care, respect, empathy, trust and mutual pleasure within a sexual relationship.



Mapping learning outcomes using the developmental approach

Using the junior and senior cycle learning outcomes, where can you identify examples of the developmental approach?



15 minutes





Further examples of the developmental approach

Junior Cycle	Related Senior Cycle	Nature of Progression
3.3 Identify signs of healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships.	2.5 identify and consider common signs of abusive relationships, including coercive control. 2.6 explore the root causes and consequences of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence (DSGBV), and outline the supports and services available, and protections under the law.	Progresses from understanding characteristics of healthy/unhealthy relationships to abusive and violent relationships and promoting help-seeking behaviour if effected by DSGBV.
3.10 Discuss the influence of popular culture and online world, especially pornography, on social norms.	2.4 examine how both positive and harmful attitudes around gender are perpetuated in the media, online, and in society and discuss strategies for challenging and changing harmful attitudes and narratives. 2.7 investigate the possible influence of pornography on attitudes, behaviours and relationship expectations and what supports are available for those impacted by pornography.	Progresses to critical evaluation of media and pornography's effects on attitudes, and awareness of supports for those impacted.



Reflection

Choose **one** of the following reflective prompts:

- The most important thing I learned was...
- What I enjoyed most was...
- What surprised me was...
- What I have learned that is new is...
- What really made me think was...





20 minutes





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Session 2

From a safe space to a
brave space



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During day one of this PLE participants will:

consider the what and why of relationships and sexuality education

explore moving from a safe space to a brave space

examine the structure and features of an effective RSE lesson



Our focus for this session

Explore moving from a safe space to a brave space

Establishing a
brave space

Responding to
student questions

Facilitating
respectful
conversations



Activity

Write down a
SPHE/RSE
related question
that you found
challenging to
answer.





Establishing a brave space



Setting ground rules



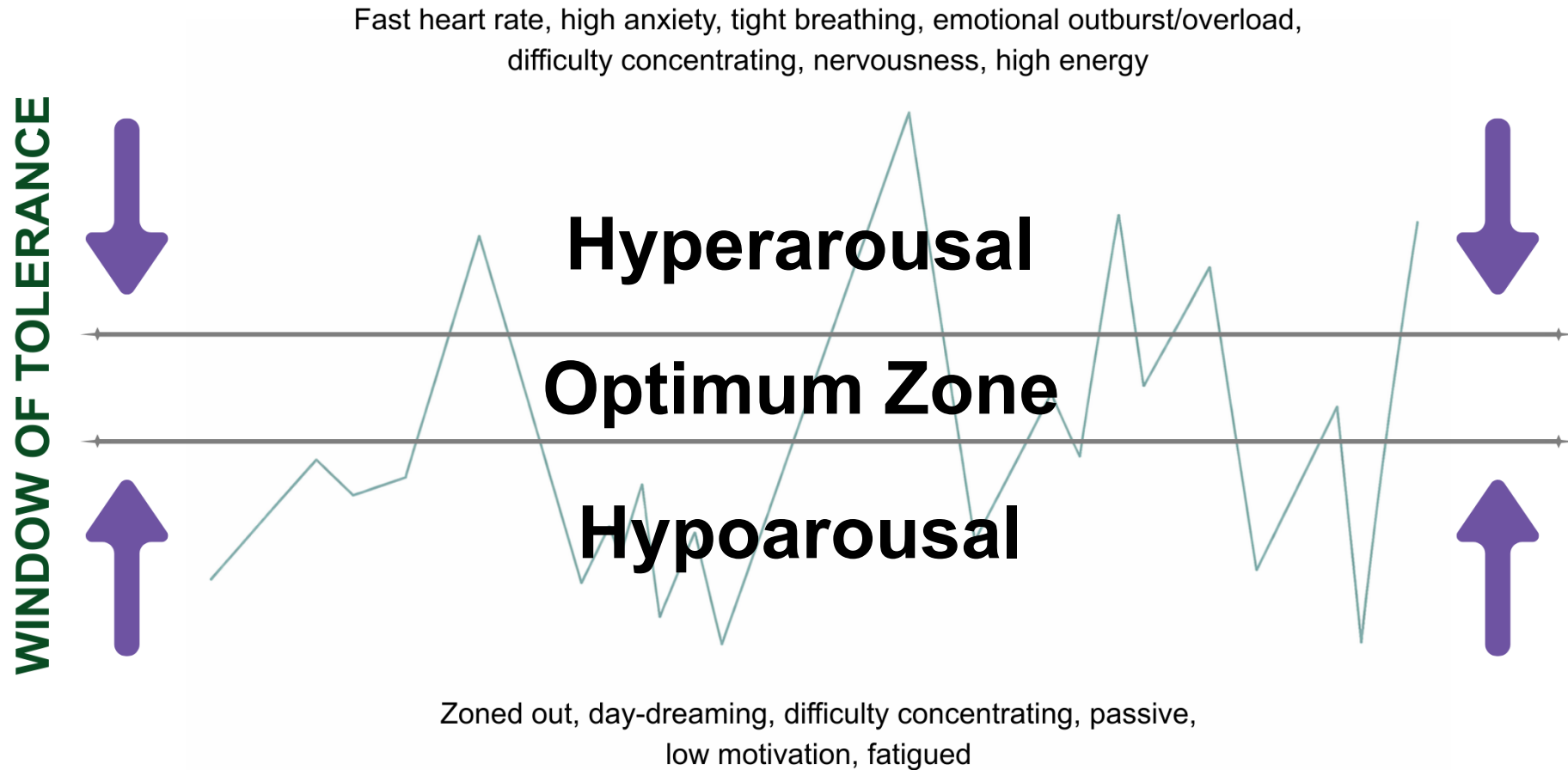
Facilitating dialogue



Encouraging
reflection



The window of tolerance

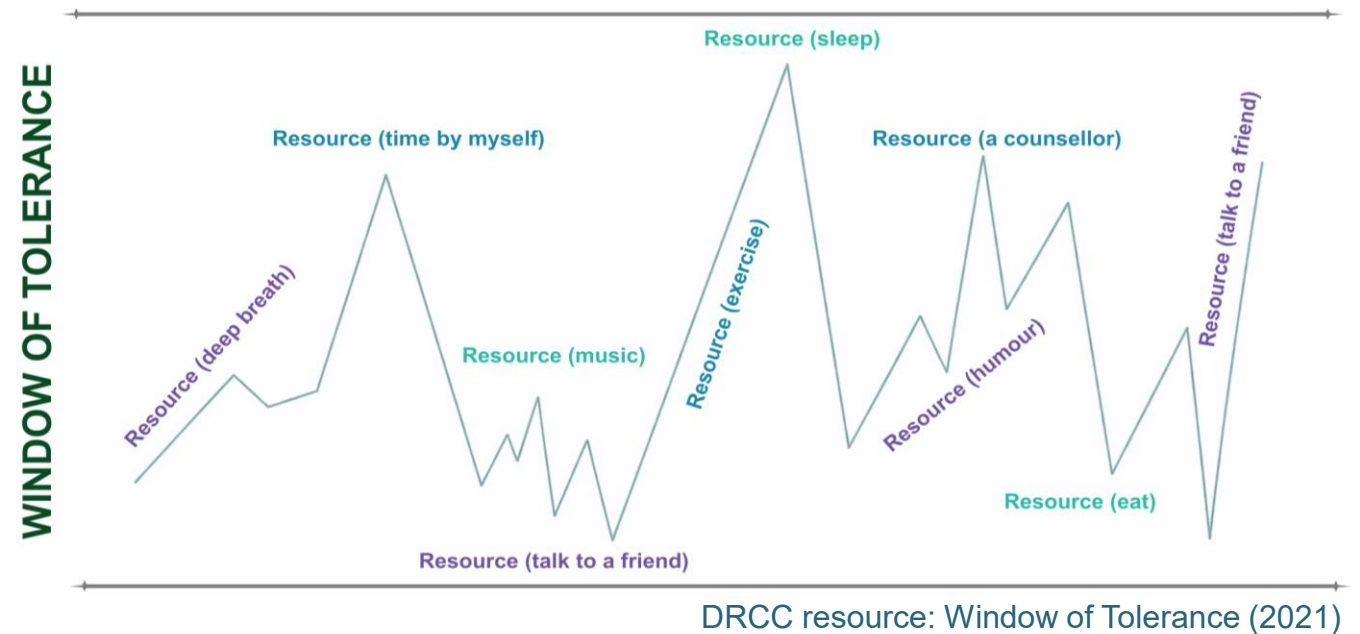




The window of tolerance

What tools might support you to widen your window of tolerance?

What tools might support your students to widen their window of tolerance?



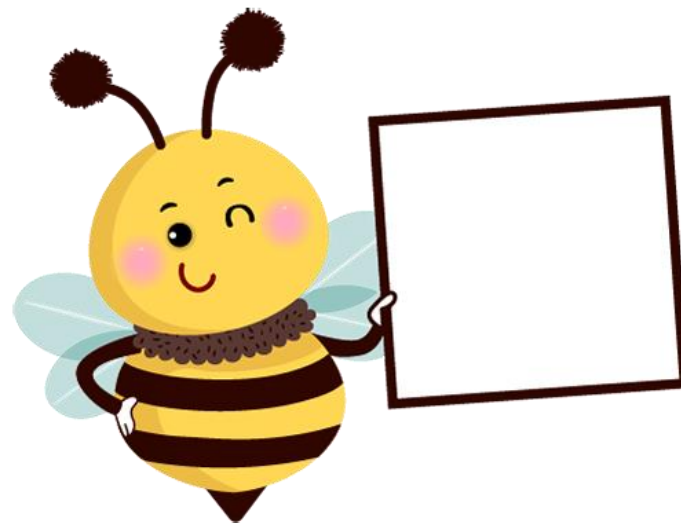


A teacher's perspective on RSE

How do you prepare to teach RSE?

Are there any RSE topics you have found challenging to teach?

How do you encourage respectful communication in the RSE classroom?



What advice would you give to teachers new to teaching RSE?



A teacher's perspective on RSE



Can you identify features of a brave space in the video?



3 minutes





What jars you? Responses



Think - Pair - Share

Why do you think these topics might require a brave space?





Responding to student questions



How do you currently encourage students to share their questions in SPHE/RSE?

What strategies do you use to respond to student questions?





Good practice when responding to student questions

Collecting questions at the beginning of a topic

Allowing time to consider responses

Remind students you are not an expert

Neutral, non-judgemental tone

Seeking support from colleagues

Start a shared FAQ doc as a department





NCCA: Making the most of sensitive/challenging discussions

Myself as an SPHE teacher

Making the most of sensitive/challenging discussions

Any teacher can find themselves dealing with sensitive and challenging topics, although the likelihood for SPHE teachers is greater due to the nature of the topics explored and their personal importance for students.

Discussions on sensitive/challenging topics can be challenging, but they can become opportunities for learning as they challenge students to think about and question not only their opinions, values, beliefs and worldviews but also those of others. Sensitive/challenging topics should not be avoided, but they do need careful facilitation.

The following suggestions will help you to make the most of sensitive/challenging discussions in SPHE.

Know your own triggers and limitations

There will be questions and topics which you may feel more or less comfortable discussing. Be aware of your own triggers and limitations on specific topics when facilitating discussions. It might sometimes be appropriate to share your stance or perspective with your students. On other occasions, you may need to take a deep breath and allow time to think before speaking. It's also okay to admit your own lack of knowledge and tell students that you need to do some research and return to the topic later.

Share the learning intention(s)

In preparation for each lesson, be clear on the learning intention(s), that is, the learning you want to achieve with your students. By sharing the learning intention(s) with your students, you will be better able to keep the learning on track and focused.

Find out what students know and anticipate how the discussion might develop

Find out what students know about a topic, what they aren't sure about, where their information comes from,

and what questions they have. This can be done through anonymous surveys, question box, brainstorming, KWL, etc.

Anticipate what students might say in discussing certain topics. By considering in advance the differing opinions and viewpoints that may arise you will be more able to respond appropriately to questions and viewpoints and be ready to gently challenge misinformation, disinformation, stereotypes or unhealthy attitudes.

Appeal to students' better nature

Most students do not want to intentionally hurt others. In introducing a potentially sensitive/challenging topic, appeal to students' better nature by reminding them that personal or thoughtless remarks may offend or embarrass their classmates. Reminding students of the agreed class contract/ground rules at the beginning of class may also help.

Encourage participation

Encourage student participation from the outset. This begins by consulting with them regularly on what they need to learn about in SPHE, and on how the class is going. While the SPHE class should be a safe space where students can discuss matters of importance in and for their lives, participation should never be forced. There may be times when individuals may wish to participate by simply listening and observing.

Other relevant topics

Teacher as facilitator
What makes a safe SPHE/RSE classroom?
What makes an inclusive SPHE/RSE classroom?
Dealing with disclosure about sexual abuse

www.curriculumonline.ie

Myself as an SPHE teacher

Making the most of sensitive/challenging discussions

Depersonalise the discussion

Ask probing questions using the third person like...

'What do you think someone your age might think or say about...?'

What are the reasons why young people might feel under pressure to ...?

instead of...

'what do you think?' 'What are the pressures that you are experiencing?'

If a student voices an opinion or displays an attitude that is judgemental or unhealthy, respond by broadening out the question and asking 'if this is a prevalent opinion or attitude in society. In this way the discussion becomes more generalised without focusing on the individual student.

When and how to safely interrupt

There will be times in the SPHE classroom when the teacher, as facilitator, will need to interrupt, pause or close down a particular line of discussion. It may be obvious when this is needed, for example, if someone is being disrespectful or if it seems that a disclosure is imminent. However, at other times it may not be so obvious. Be attuned to your gut feelings as this alert you when boundaries are being crossed or the discussion is branching off into issues that might be best dealt with beyond the classroom setting.

Establish a means of closure

It is important to conclude discussions in a way that is sensitive to the feelings that may have been aroused. Acknowledge to students that these challenging discussions can be positive experiences because of the opportunities for learning and gaining a broader perspective on the specific topic(s), and for building our skills or competencies around communicating and working with others.

Tell students you are available after class to talk about anything that might have come up in class. Make available a list of in school and community supports that they can access. Finally, be sure to check in with yourself and seek support to manage any concerns that may have arisen.

An individual or group goes off topic

I see we are moving off our agreed topic. So I'd like to press the pause button on this discussion and go back to our earlier question.

or

Move to where the learning intention(s) are displayed and draw the attention of the class to this.

One or more students seem to be attempting to raise a personal concern that is not directly related to the learning intention(s).

Can I pause you at this point? It sounds like you have something important to say and I want to give you the time to do that. Can we talk after class?

One or more students seem to be about to open up a topic that should not be discussed in class.

Can I hold you there? It seems to me that it might be best to have this conversation after class/ later/privately.

Possible classroom scenario

An individual or group is not adhering to the ground rules/group contract

Sample teacher response

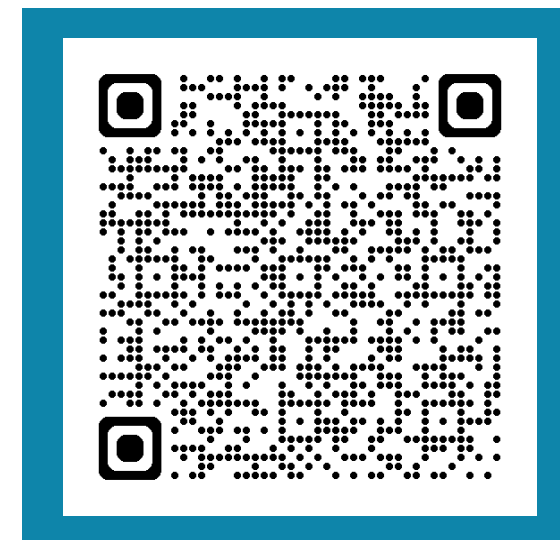
Move towards where the ground rule/group contract are displayed and highlight the relevant extract to the entire class.

Students raise something that you need time to consider or reflect upon or seek support/guidance from colleagues.

Let me think about that first.

I will come back to you on that.

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Group Activity: Responding to student questions

How would you answer your assigned questions?



10 minutes





Group activity: Carousel



We will now have an opportunity to examine other groups responses and add to them.



15 minutes





Facilitating brave and respectful conversations

- Focus on the opinion and not the

What strategies do you use to facilitate brave and respectful conversations in your SPHE classroom?

- Invite pauses and breaks if needed
- Return to class agreement

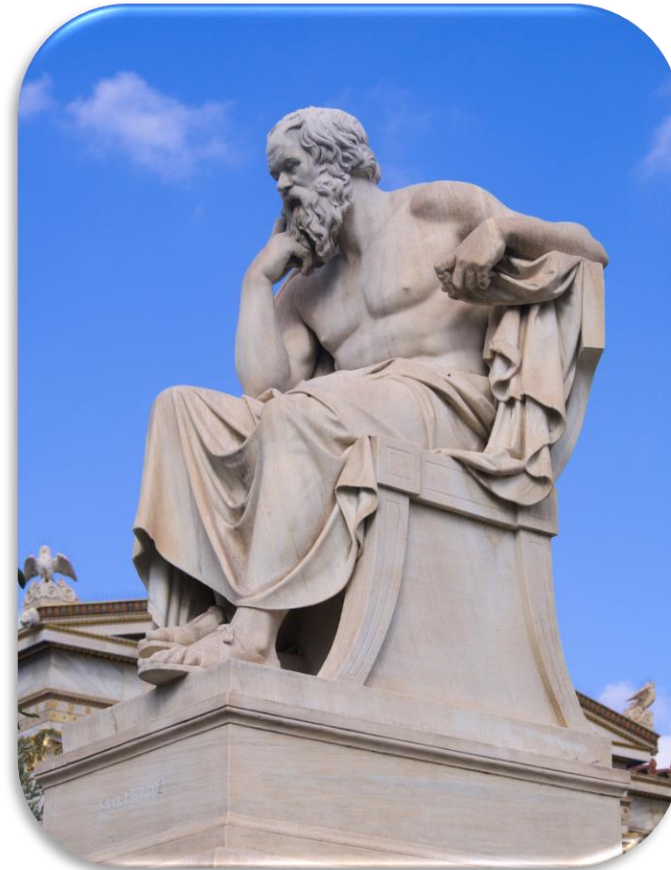




What is socratic questioning?

Socrates, the early Greek philosopher and teacher, believed that disciplined and thoughtful questioning enabled the student to logically examine and validate ideas.

Using Socratic questioning, teachers promote independent, higher-level thinking in their students, giving them ownership of what they are learning through discussion, debate, evaluation, and analysis of material.





Why use socratic questioning?

Builds critical thinking

Helps students clarify values and decision-making

Encourages safe, respectful discussion of sensitive topics

Supports emotional and social skills development



Examples of Socratic questioning

Could you put that another way?

What might have influenced your thinking on saying this?

What assumptions are being made?

Could you explain that further?

What led you to that belief?

What would someone who disagrees say?

Do you have evidence to support this opinion?

How did you reach that conclusion?



Activity: Role play



Sam



Rob



Sheila



Louise

Use your assigned scenario to role play and apply the brave space techniques.



15 minutes



Bee reflective

What have you
learned from session
2 that you will now
apply in your SPHE
class?





Enjoy your lunch!



60 minutes



Energiser: Guided meditation





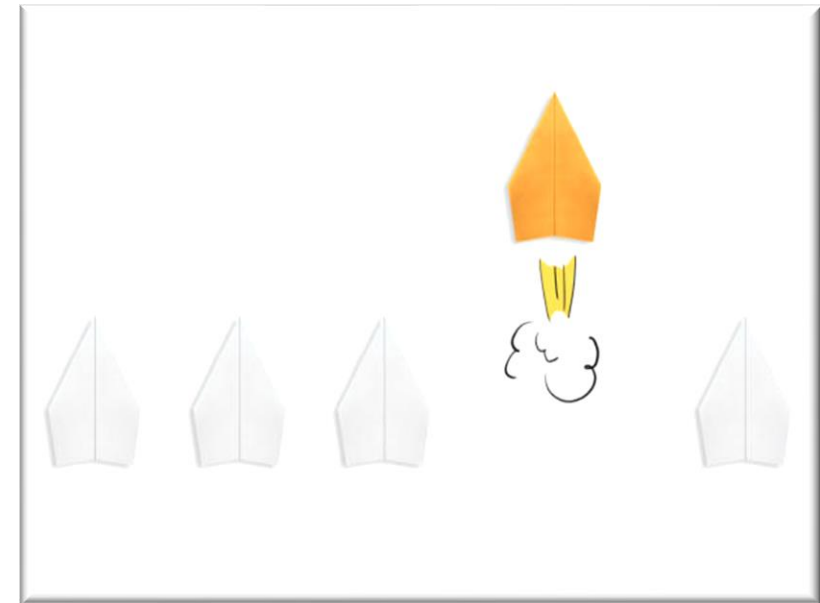
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Supporting the Professional
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and Teachers

Session 3

Planning for RSE





During day one of this PLE participants will:

consider the what and why of relationships and sexuality education

explore moving from a safe space to a brave space

examine the structure and features of an effective RSE lesson



Our focus for this session

Examine the structure and features of an effective RSE lesson

Collaboratively
create a unit of
learning

Explore resources
to support planning
for RSE

Focus on the
structure and
features of an
effective lesson



Creating a unit of learning

Consent

Sexual Relationships

Gender Identity

Gender-based Violence

Pornography

1. Link your designated learning outcomes with an identified theme

2. With 5th years in mind, fill in the learning outcomes and key learning sections of the unit of learning template.



15 minutes

Unit of Learning Planning Aid

Learning Outcomes

Learning Objectives

Resources

Reflection

Oide

Unit of Learning SPHE Department Planning Aid

Year Group: _____ Duration of Unit: _____

Theme: _____

Learning Outcomes

Key Learning

Resources

Reflection

Individual Department





Accessing resources to support planning



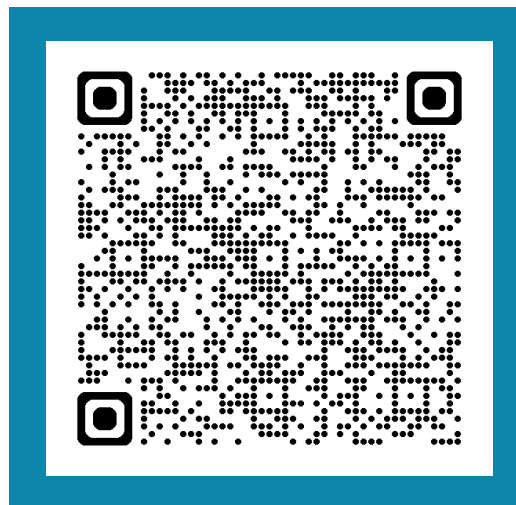
Preparing to teach



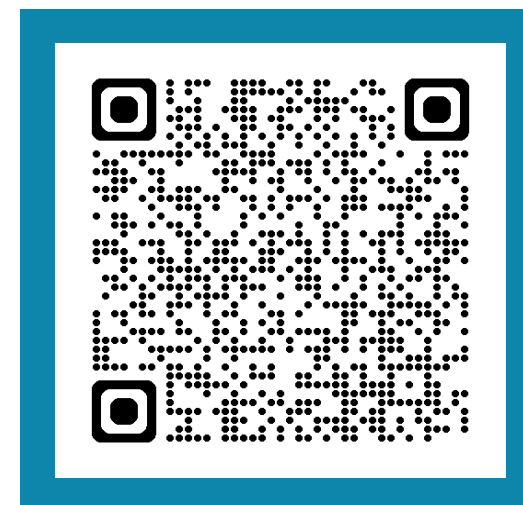
Teaching SPHE



Resources for
teaching and learning
SPHE/RSE



Junior Cycle Toolkit



Senior Cycle Toolkit

NCCA SPHE/ RSE toolkit



Further elaboration documents

JC learning outcomes	SC learning outcomes
3.6	1.1
3.8	1.3
3.10	2.3
4.1	2.4
4.2	2.6
4.3	2.7
4.4	2.8
Health literacy (2.10, 3.11, 4.9)	2.9
	3.6

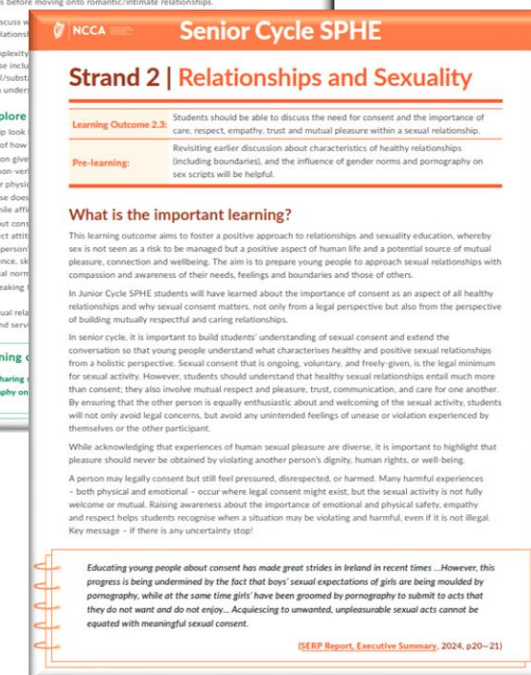
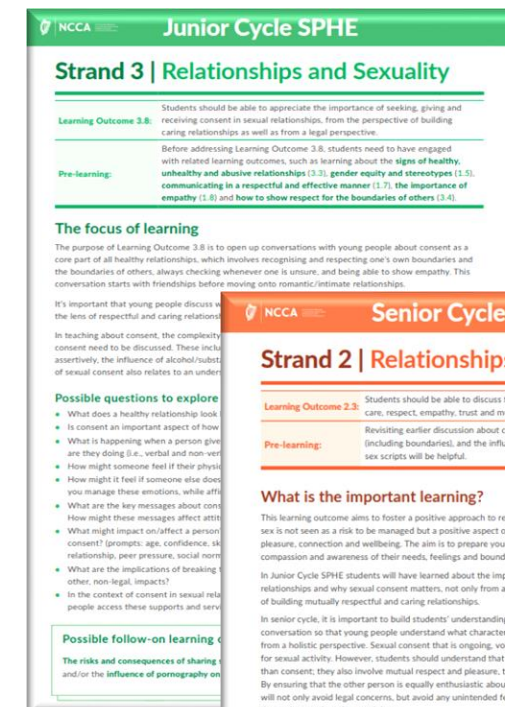
Relationships and Sexuality

Emotional Wellbeing

Health and Wellbeing

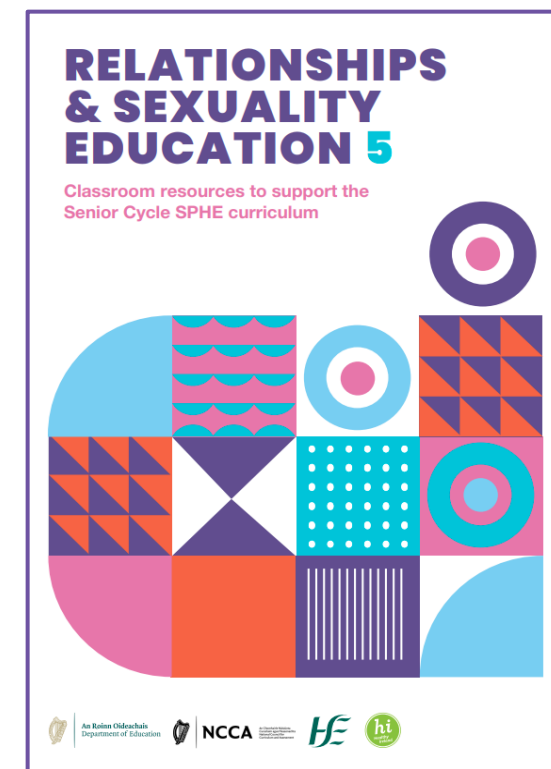
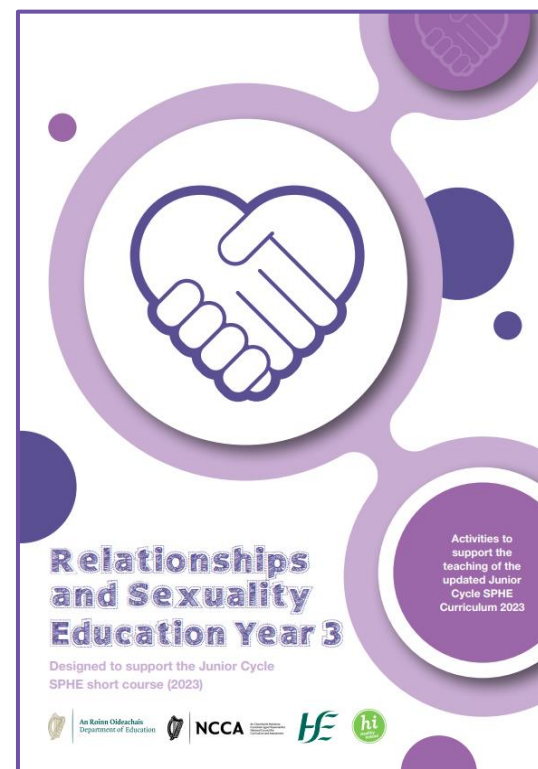
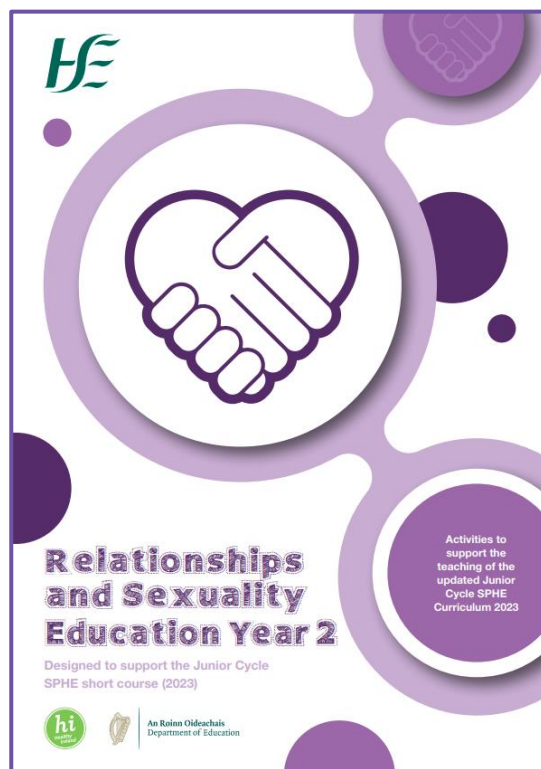
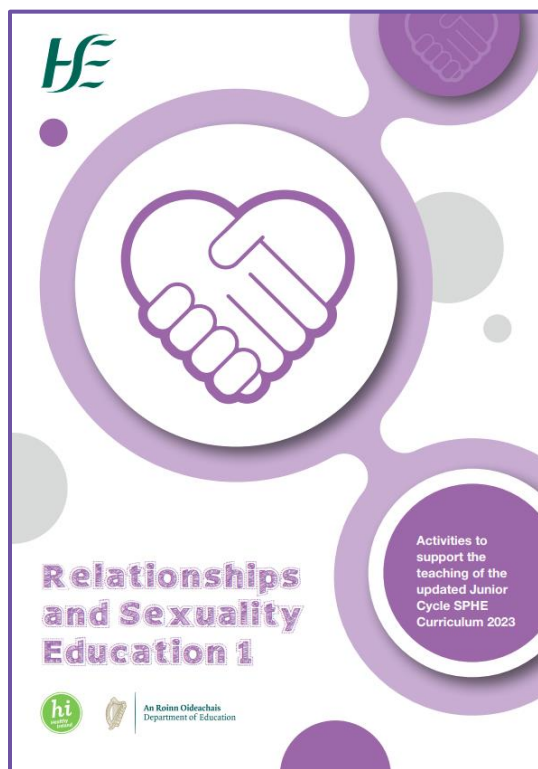
Relationships and Sexuality

Into adulthood





DEY classroom supports





Creating a unit of learning

1. Using the toolkit and the further elaboration documents, identify relevant resources suitable for your unit of learning.
2. Are any of the resources adaptable/suitable for L2LP learners?



10 minutes

Unit of Learning Planning Aid

Learning Outcomes

Learning Objectives

Resources

Reflection

Unit of Learning SPHE Department Planning Aid

Assessment

Resources

Reflection

Unit of Learning SPHE Department Planning Aid

Learning Outcomes

Key Learning





What are the features of an effective RSE lesson?

Planning

Focusing activity

Well planned questions

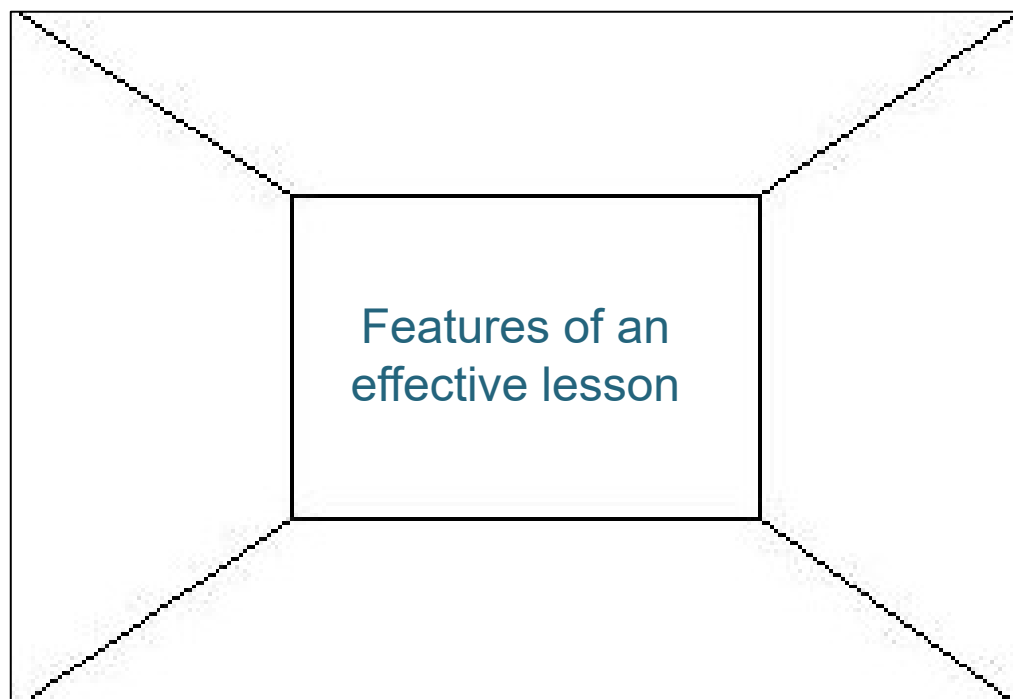
Assessment

Relevant resources





Placemat activity



1. What makes an effective introduction to a lesson?
2. What is effective development of learning?
3. How might students be enabled to reflect upon/apply the learning?
4. How might students demonstrate their learning?



20 minutes



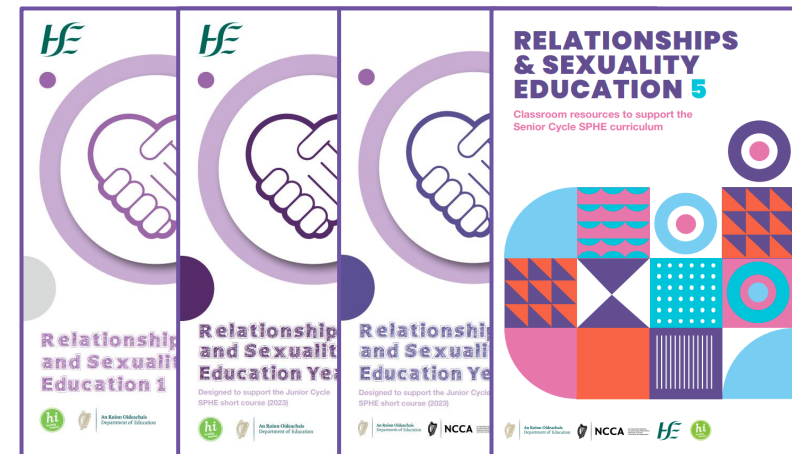
Feedback

What makes an introduction effective?

What is effective development of learning?

How might students be enabled to reflect upon/apply the learning?

How might students demonstrate their learning?



Preparing to teach



Teaching SPHE



Resources for teaching and learning SPHE/RSE



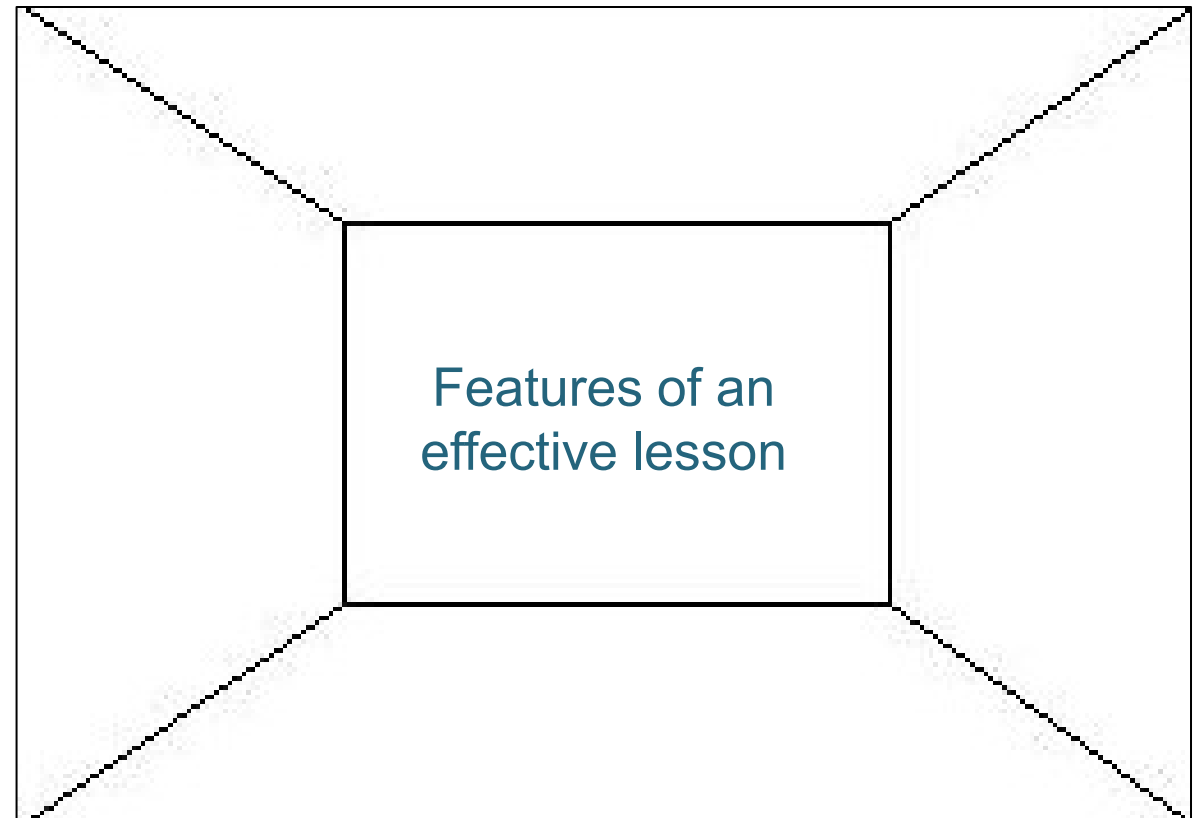
5 minutes





Example structure of an effective lesson

1. Introduction
2. Development of learning
 - Experiential and multi-modal in design
3. Reflection
4. Demonstration of learning
 - Assessment





During day one we have:

considered the what and why of relationships and sexuality education

explored moving from a safe space to a brave space

examined the structure and features of an effective RSE lesson



Reflection



Mirror (internal)

How has this experience changed my thinking?



Microscope (close inspection)

How can this be applied?



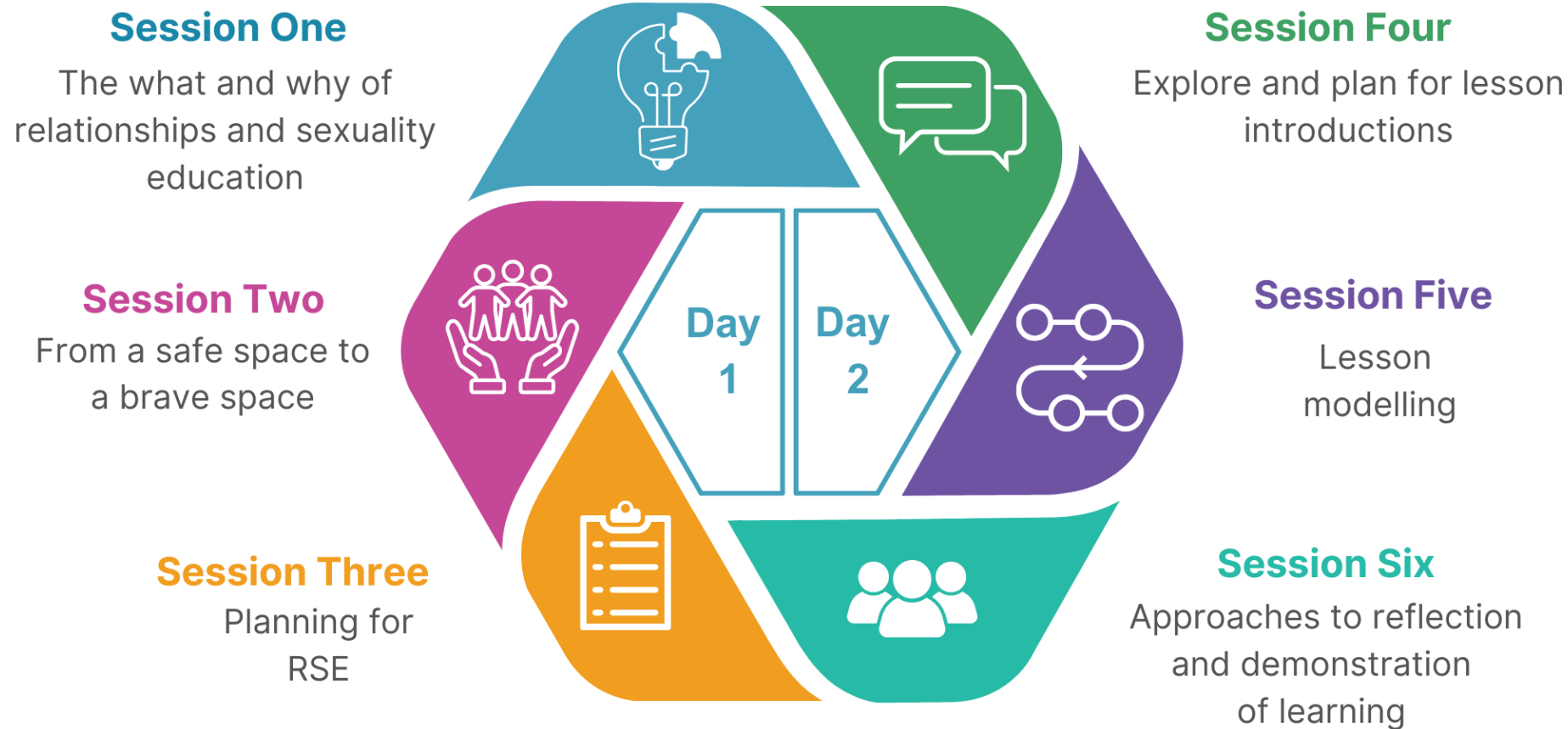
Binoculars (global lens)

How will this impact my lessons?





Two day overview



Supports



**Folláine le Chéile
Wellbeing Together**

SMS:

Text 'Hi' to 087 145 2056

WhatsApp:

Text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010

Freephone IRE:

1800 411 057



Oide

 spectrum.life



**Folláine le Chéile
Wellbeing Together**

Employee Assistance Service.

The Employee Assistance Service is a free and confidential service that provides wellbeing support to teachers, SNAs and all school staff. This service is provided by Spectrum.Life.

Your Employee Assistance Service is
available 24/7, 365 days a year, providing*:

**'In The Moment'
Support**

**Online Cognitive
Behavioural Therapy**

**Referral to
Counselling**

*On the initial contact, our case manager will complete a quick assessment and when appropriate, referral to short term counselling will be made.

Register for your wellbeing app:
wellbeingtogether.spectrum.life/login
Organisation code: y1V1U17

SMS:

Text 'Hi' to 087 145 2056

WhatsApp:

Text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010

Freephone IRE:

1800 411 057



**Scan the QR Code
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Teaching RSE across the post-primary Continuum

Day 2

Facilitator:



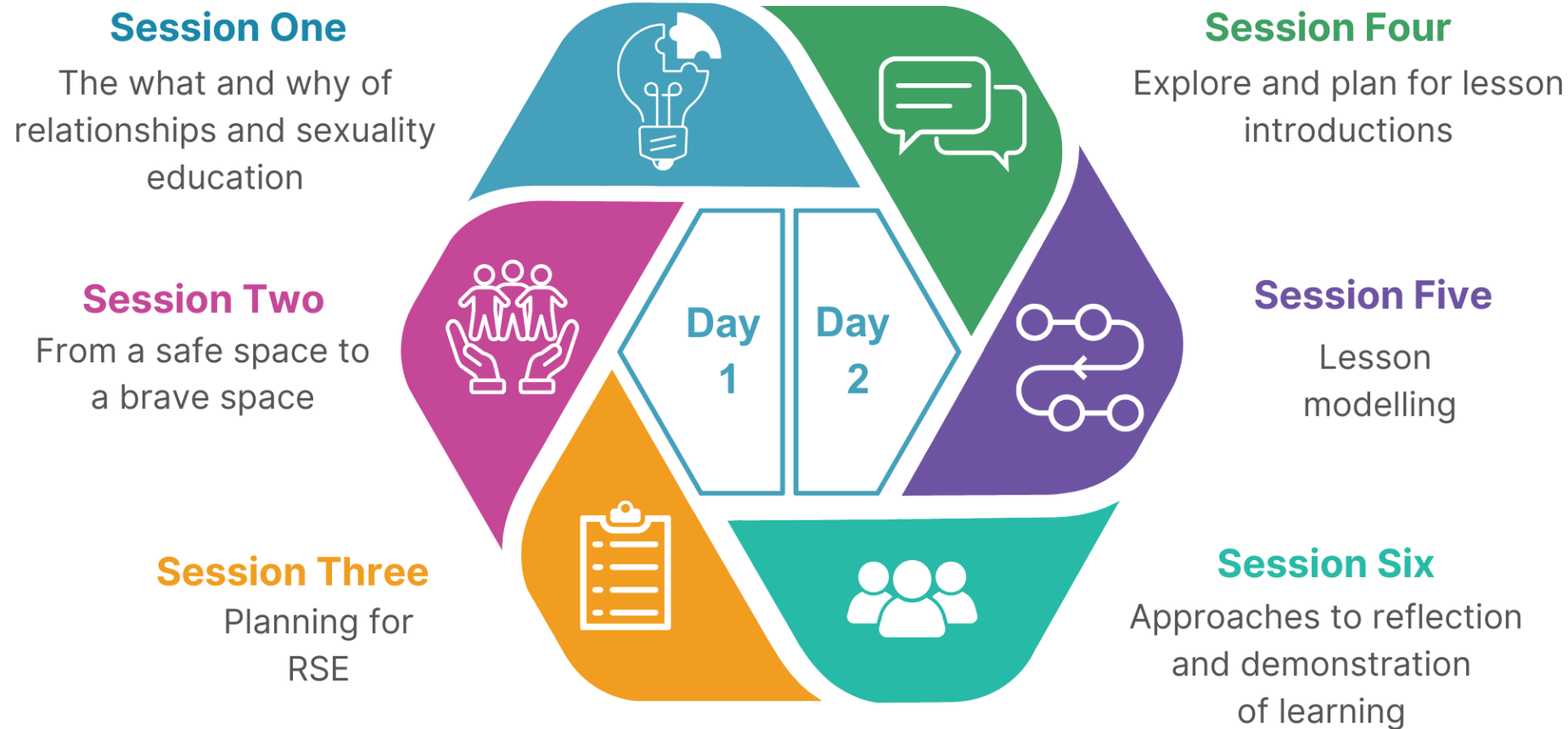
Padlet



tinyurl.com/RSEContinuum



Two day overview





Connection to day one



Ladder What did you climb on Day 1?

Bridge What connections did you make?

Window What can you see more clearly now?





Signposts



Discussion



Stop and Jot



Groupwork



Reflection

Overview of day two



Oide

Session 4	Lesson introductions • Supporting classroom boundaries • Introducing the theme of sexual health and functioning • Planning introductions to SPHE/RSE lessons
Tea/Coffee Break 11:00 – 11:20	
Session 5	Lesson modelling • Model lesson introduction and development • Lesson analysis • Planning for the development of learning in SPHE/RSE lessons
Lunch 13:00 – 14:00	
Session 6	Approaches to reflection and demonstration of learning • Planning for reflection in SPHE/RSE lessons • Assessment in SPHE/RSE • Sharing your lesson plan



Ice breaker: Two truths and a lie

1. You each have 2 minutes to come up with two truths and a lie about your life. They can be as simple as where you are from, number of siblings you have, achievements, pets.
2. Your table is allowed to ask 5 questions in total to help identify what the lie may be, e.g., What are the names and ages of your siblings?
3. After the 5 questions have been asked, the lie must be revealed to the table.



10 minutes





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Session 4

Explore and plan for
lesson introductions



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During day two of this PLE participants will:

explore and plan for lesson introductions

actively engage in the introduction and development of a lesson

experience reflection and demonstration of learning



Our focus for this session

Explore and plan for lesson introductions

Supporting
classroom
boundaries

Introducing the
theme of sexual
health and
functioning through
an activity

Plan the
introduction of an
RSE lesson



Introducing a new topic in RSE

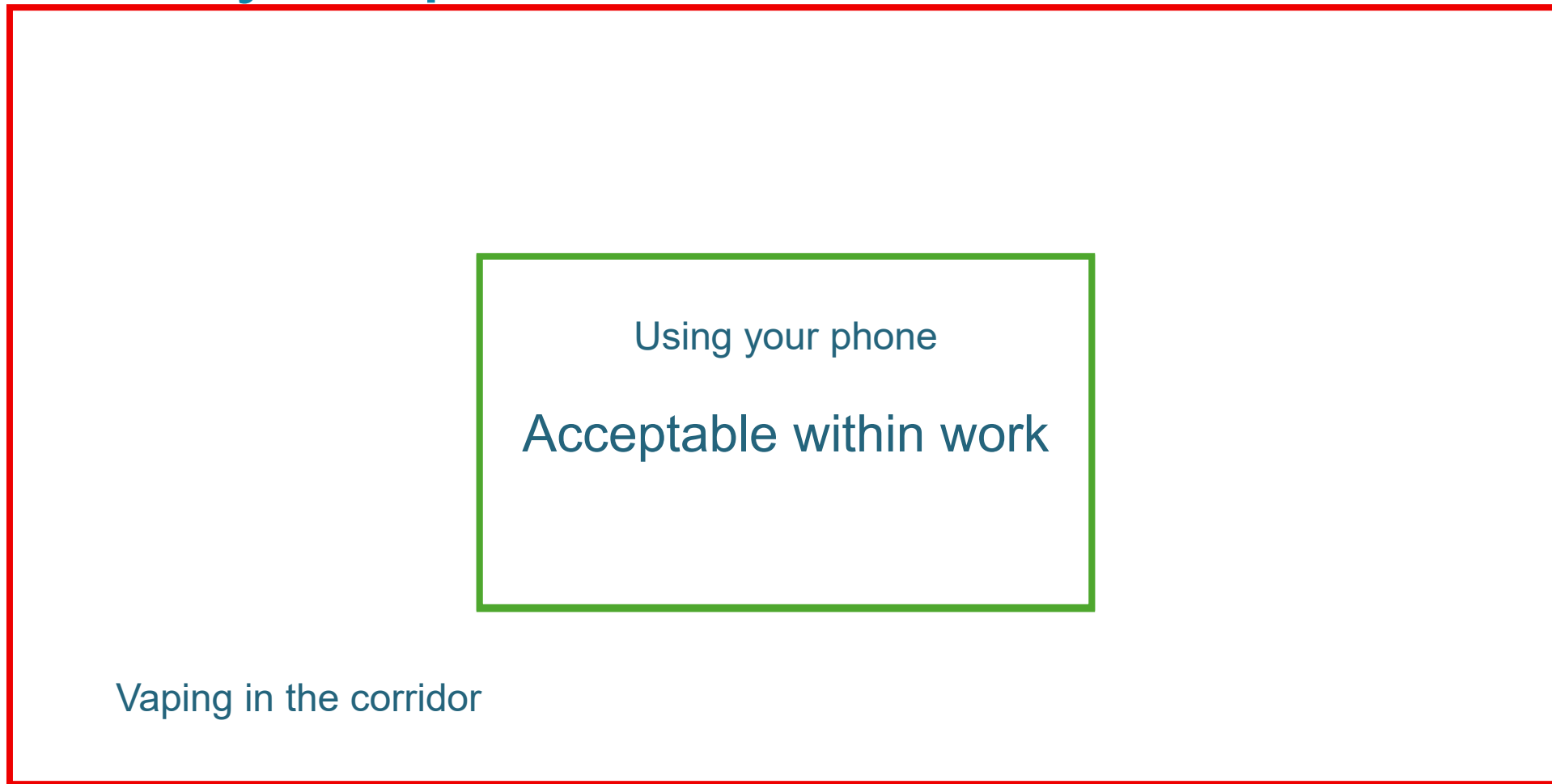
Introduce the
learning Intentions

Revisit the safe
space agreement

Access prior
knowledge



Boundary map



10 minutes





Supporting classroom boundaries

Myself as an SPHE teacher

What makes a safe SPHE classroom?

In SPHE/RSE, children and young people are learning important, and sometimes challenging things about themselves and others. It is a subject that can arouse strong emotions, reactions and feelings of anxiety, embarrassment and vulnerability, among others. Therefore, it is important for all children and young people to have a safe environment to share their questions, and learn and participate without feeling singled out. (UNESCO International technical guidance on sexuality education, 2018, p.96)

This sense of safety can be achieved in a number of ways.

From the outset, it is important to be clear about

1. My boundaries as a teacher of SPHE/RSE
2. Ground rules for how the class will work together
3. Child protection.

1. My boundaries as a teacher of SPHE/RSE

Maintaining professional boundaries is an essential part of your work as a teacher. Boundaries shape our relationships with students, their parents/care givers and our colleagues. Maintaining boundaries doesn't mean that your relationships are cold or detached. You can and should develop friendly and trusting relationships with your students – remembering you are not their 'friend'.

It is important for teachers to show their humanity and humour. Sometimes sharing a life experience can be helpful too but this needs to be done judiciously, so that you are not left

feeling exposed, and the students don't think your way of responding to a situation is the only way. We are all human and may have things going on in our lives (past or present) that need to be kept separate from our work in the classroom. Maintaining professional boundaries means staying 'in role' as teacher at all times and protecting your students from unhelpful or inappropriate exposure to your personal/professional challenges or emotional difficulties.

Another key aspect of maintaining professional boundaries is an awareness of the limits of your role as a teacher, a willingness to admit you are not an expert on all topics and knowing when to call upon the expertise of others (including in the case of child protection concerns).

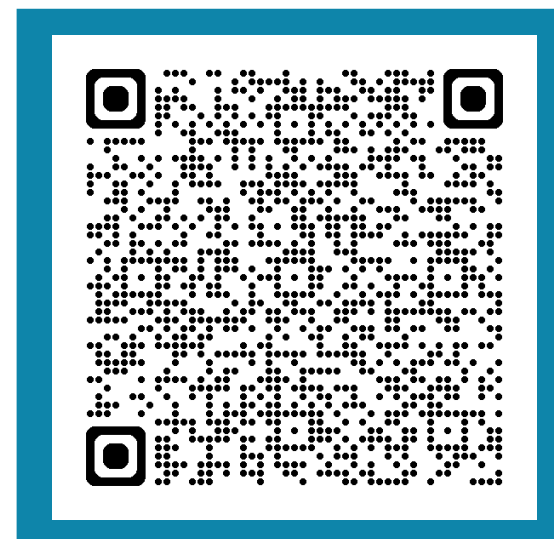
Don't aim to bring students to a set destination:
They are all on a journey and you can only guide them on theirs.

2. Ground rules for how the class will work together

Remember that some topics may be difficult or challenging for some students, depending on their life experience. Establishing ground rules (also called a class contract/agreement) may make it easier for these students to safely participate. Ground rules make explicit the roles, rights and responsibilities of all involved in the learning relationship. They also ensure respect for people's privacy and establish appropriate boundaries for what should and should not be raised in classroom discussion.

www.curriculumonline.ie

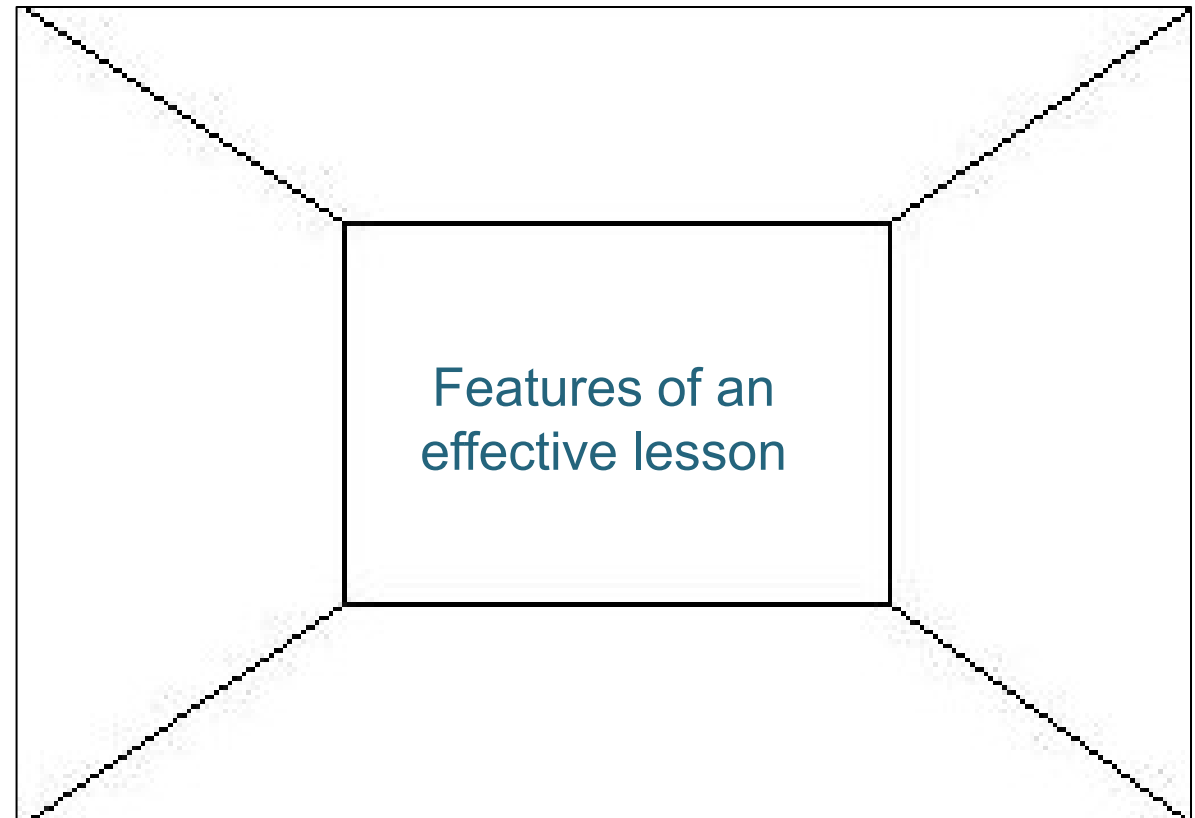
NCCA





Example structure of an effective lesson

1. Introduction
2. Development of learning
 - Experiential and multi-modal in design
3. Reflection
4. Demonstration of learning
 - Assessment





RSE introduction: Sex talk

SC LO 2.1,
2.3, 2.4, 2.9

This activity introduces the theme of sexual health to students.

In groups write down every slang word you know for your given term.



15 minutes





RSE introduction: Sexual functioning

SC LO 2.9

NCCA Senior Cycle SPHE

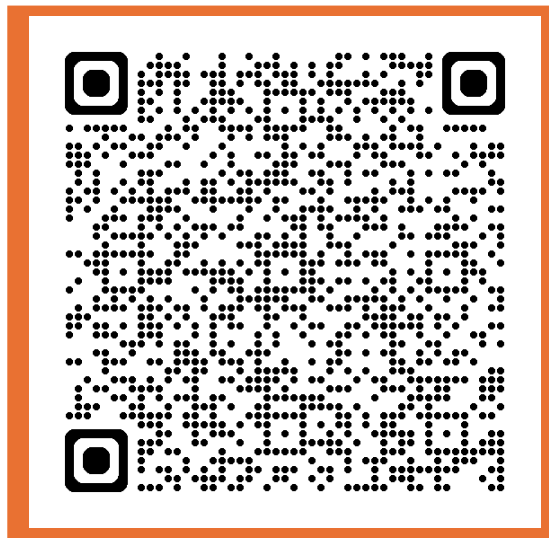
Strand 2 | Relationships and Sexuality

Learning Outcome 2.9:	Students should be able to understand the components of sexual health, including fertility across the life-cycle, reproductive choices, sexual functioning, safer sexual practices, possible responses to an unplanned pregnancy, and how to access sexual health information and services.
Pre-learning:	This learning outcome builds upon learning in Junior Cycle SPHE and therefore some of the components of sexual health will already be familiar to students. Checking in on students' prior learning will help avoid any unnecessary repetition.

What is the important learning?

Good sexual health means making sure you have the knowledge, skills and ability to make informed sexual choices and to act responsibly to protect your health and the health of others throughout your life. Learning outcome 2.9 includes a range of topics and the expectations for learning are:

- **Fertility across the life-cycle** — in Junior Cycle SPHE students will have learned about the physical changes associated with puberty as well as menstrual and testicular health. In senior cycle, the intention is to extend this learning so that students understand some of the issues related to human fertility and how it peaks and ebbs during the life-span. This includes a basic understanding of menopause and male, age-related fertility decline.
- **Reproductive choices** — in Junior Cycle SPHE students will have learned about the different categories of contraception (See [RSE 2](#) activity 10 and RSE 3 activity 6). Some revision of the knowledge component is needed in senior cycle, with more emphasis put on the factors that impact on consistent and correct use.
- **Sexual functioning** — sexual function refers to how the body reacts at different stages of the sexual response cycle - sexual desire, arousal, plateau and orgasm. In senior cycle, the aim is to promote understanding of the differences in male/female physiology and sexual response as well as an understanding that there is both a physical and psychological/emotional dimension to sexual functioning. Mention of self-pleasure and masturbation as a normal and healthy aspect of sexual development is important too for a number of reasons, including that, an understanding of one's own body and desires is a precursor to being able to share pleasurable sexual experiences in the future.
- **Safer sexual practices** — safer sexual activity is generally understood as consensual sexual contact that does not put a person at increased risk of STIs and unplanned pregnancy (See RSE 3 activities 6, 7, 8). In the context of Senior Cycle SPHE, it is important to review prior learning and extend the discussion to consider other factors that contribute to emotional as well as physical safety (such as being in a trusting relationship, feeling cared for and the ability to give full consent).
- **Possible responses to an unplanned pregnancy** — the options and supports available for dealing with an unplanned pregnancy should be shared with students in a factual and non-judgmental manner. Debating the options is not appropriate as this topic is highly sensitive and students may hold strong personal beliefs and values on this topic. (See [Unplanned pregnancy - My Options HSE.ie](#))
- **Knowing how to access sexual health information and support** — while most young people are not sexually active before leaving school, it is important that they are aware of where they can find appropriate and trust-worthy sexual health information before becoming sexually active. If there is a local sexual health centre, students should be made aware of this and a sexual health professional from the centre might be invited to talk to the class about the services they offer.



10 minutes





RSE introduction: Sexual functioning

SC LO 2.9

- Most people are happy to talk about masturbation
- You can't catch STIs if you masturbate on your own
- Women don't masturbate
- People should be free to make their own decisions about masturbation
- Masturbation can help you learn about your body



10 minutes





Now it's your turn

Theme:

Learning outcomes:

To do

1. Identify theme
2. Identify learning outcomes
3. Choose an effective introduction
4. Consider L1LP/L2LP learners



15 minutes





What I will
remember from
this session is...





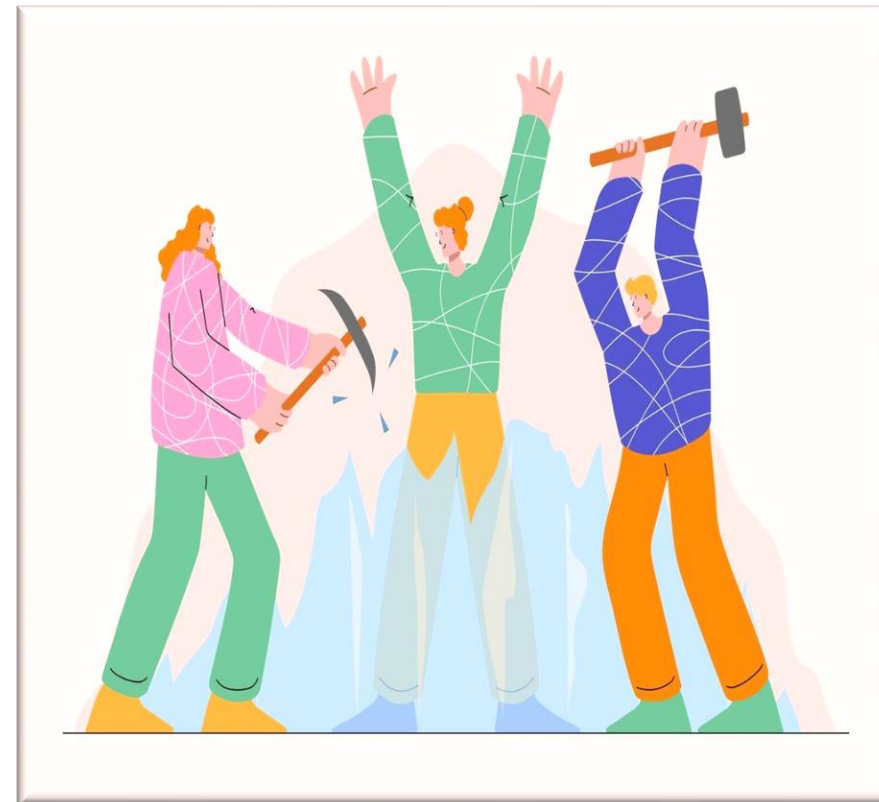
20 minutes





Icebreaker

1. Find 2 things you have in common with the person sitting beside you. (It can't be that you are both teachers)
2. Come back as a table and share what commonalities you found.
3. As a table find one thing you all have in common.



10 minutes





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Session 5

Actively engage in the
introduction and
development of a lesson



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During day two of this PLE participants will:

explore and plan for lesson introductions

actively engage in the introduction and development of a lesson

experience reflection and demonstration of learning



Our focus for this session

Actively engage in the introduction and development of a lesson

Model lesson
introduction and
development

Analyse the
modelled lesson

Planning for the
development of
learning in an RSE
lesson.



Signposts for lesson modelling

Modelling the lesson



Facilitating the lesson

Case study school



Oide

This 5th year lesson is designed for a large urban, co-educational post-primary school. The class group is of mixed ability, and all students have completed Transition Year. The school's population is diverse, reflecting a wide range of social, cultural, and academic backgrounds.

Previous lessons with this 5th year group focused on key aspects of RSE, including gender roles, consent, and the role of the bystander. The current lesson is designed as a follow-on lesson, building on prior knowledge and understanding developed in junior cycle.

The lesson encourages students to make connections between earlier learning and their own experiences, promoting critical thinking and empathy.

Emphasis is placed on creating a safe and respectful classroom environment where students feel comfortable expressing views and challenging stereotypes.

Overall, the lesson supports students' social and emotional development while reinforcing the learning outcomes within the SPHE curriculum.





Overview of the lesson

1. Introduction
2. Development of learning
 - Experiential and multi-modal in design
3. Reflection
4. Demonstration of learning
 - Assessment





Lesson modelling: An overview

Lesson title: Gender and the role of power.

Context: Mixed ability 5th year class.

Learning outcomes:

2.2 Reflect on how their attitudes, beliefs, values and identity, and those of others, can influence the dynamics of families, friendships and romantic relationships

2.4 Examine how both positive and harmful attitudes around gender are perpetuated in the media, online, and in society and discuss strategies for challenging and changing harmful attitudes and values

L2LP Personal care

R: recognise examples/situations where people are treated unfairly or experience exclusion and identify helpful responses



Further elaboration document

 **Senior Cycle SPHE**

Strand 2 | Relationships and Sexuality

Learning Outcome 2.4: Students should be able to examine how both positive and harmful attitudes around gender are perpetuated in the media, online, and in society and discuss strategies for challenging and changing harmful attitudes and narratives

Pre-learning: Before discussing this topic, it may be helpful to review Junior Cycle SPHE learning outcomes **1.4, 1.5, 3.6**. Students also need to have engaged with related Senior Cycle SPHE learning outcomes, in particular learning about healthy relationships (**2.1, 2.2 and 2.3**)

What is the important learning?

Learning Outcome **2.4** is asking students to examine how social attitudes are formed in relation to gender and consider which attitudes are harmful and need to be changed. Gender means the socially constructed roles, responsibilities, characteristics, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men. Gender is socially and culturally constructed, so understandings of gender differ across contexts and over time.

In History or Politics and Society class, students might be examining some of the structures and institutions that have created and maintained gender inequalities in the past, such as in education, the workplace, courts. Despite advancements in gender equality in Ireland over recent times, many experiences of gender inequality remain. In this learning outcome the focus of learning is on examining gender norms, expectations and attitudes that prevail today, and asking what aspects are helpful, what aspects are limiting or harmful and what needs to change.

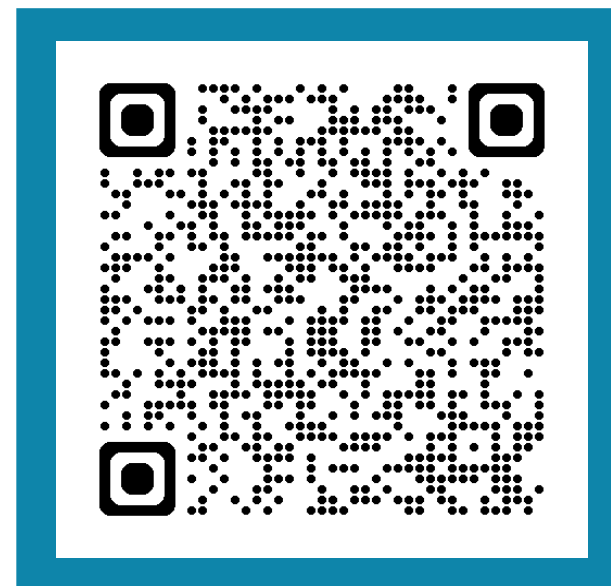
While women all over the world disproportionately experience the negative consequences of restrictive and harmful gender norms, discussion should also focus on examining how some gender norms are harmful for men too. For instance, expectations that men should not show emotion have been shown to damage men's mental health. In addition to addressing the gendered challenges that women and men face, the unique issues experienced by gender minorities, such as transgender and non-binary individuals should be included in this discussion.

The goal of this learning outcome is to enable young people to recognise how limiting expressions of masculinity and femininity can inhibit the lives of all young people and perpetuate gender inequalities.

Approaches to consider when teaching about gender:

- It may be useful to begin by reflecting on the progress that has been made in relation to gender equality and examples of positive and expansive gender attitudes today before discussing what still needs to be achieved.
- It is important to engage young people with the evidence of and research on gender roles, expectations and attitudes, and their impact, so as to convey the importance of the issue, before exploring solutions. (See SPHE resources section of NCCA toolkit for links to research)
- Explain the concept of intersectionality and encourage young people to adopt an intersectional lens by asking themselves how people's experiences may differ with different overlapping identities e.g., different ethnicities, abilities, economic backgrounds, sexual orientations.

1





Lesson modelling: An overview

Links to Junior Cycle Learning Outcomes:

3.3 Identify signs of healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships

1.5 Reflect on gender equity and how gender stereotypes impact on expectations, behaviour and relationships

L2LP Personal care

3.34 Recognise the difference between appropriate and inappropriate ways of expressing feeling





Introduction: Learning intentions

Recognise how attitudes, beliefs and values around gender and power can influence our relationships

Identify how harmful attitudes in society can lead to victim blaming and how to challenge these attitudes



Introduction: Have a word



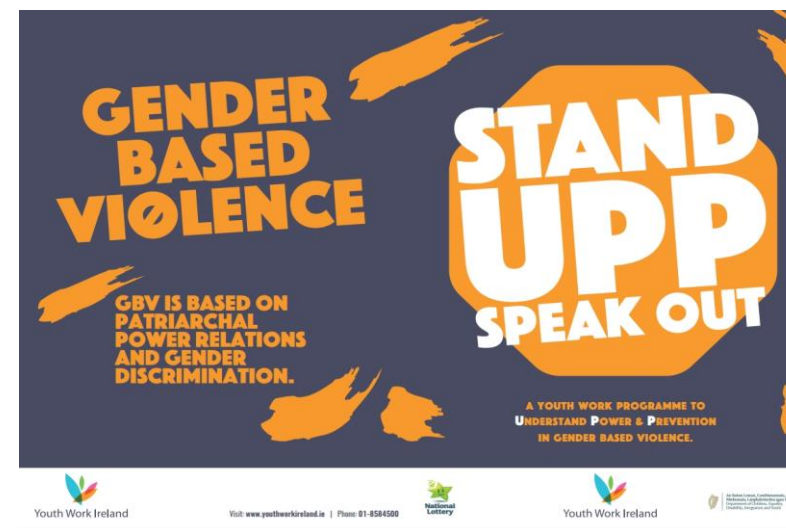
2 minutes

(The Office of the Mayor of London, 2023)





Development of learning: Walking in privilege and power



Youth Work Ireland, Stand UPP, Speak Out, 2022.



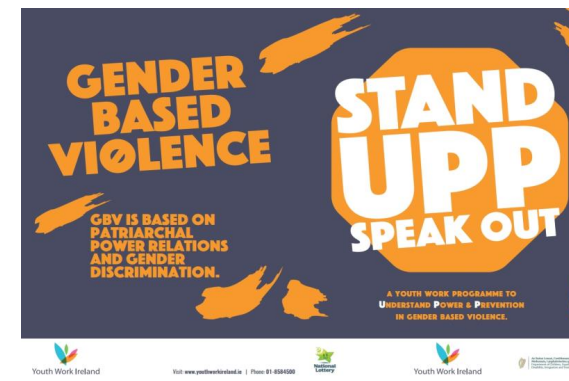
20 minutes





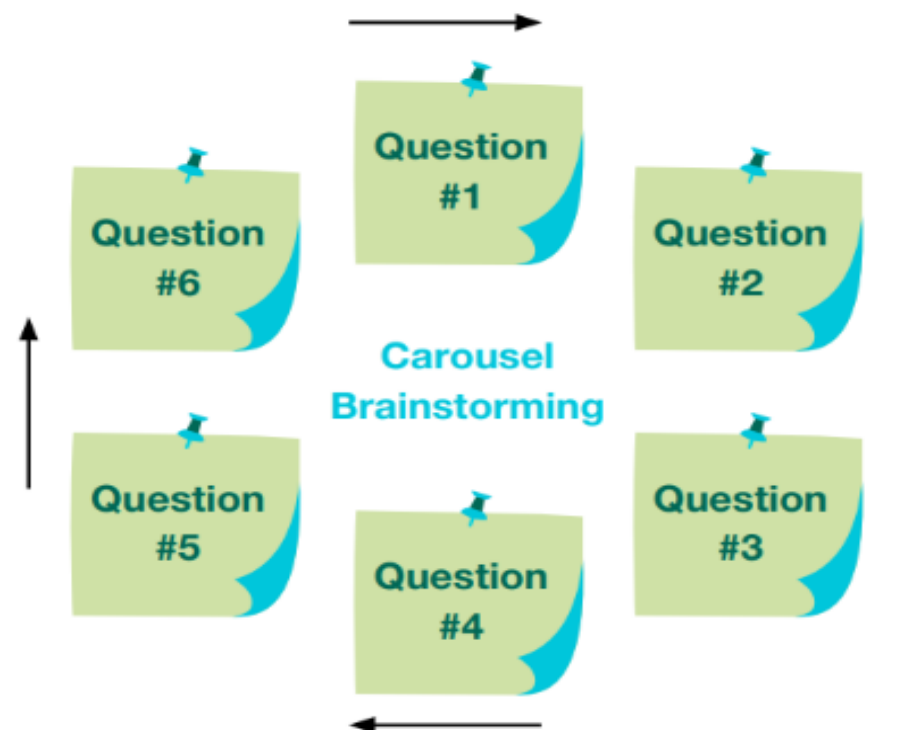
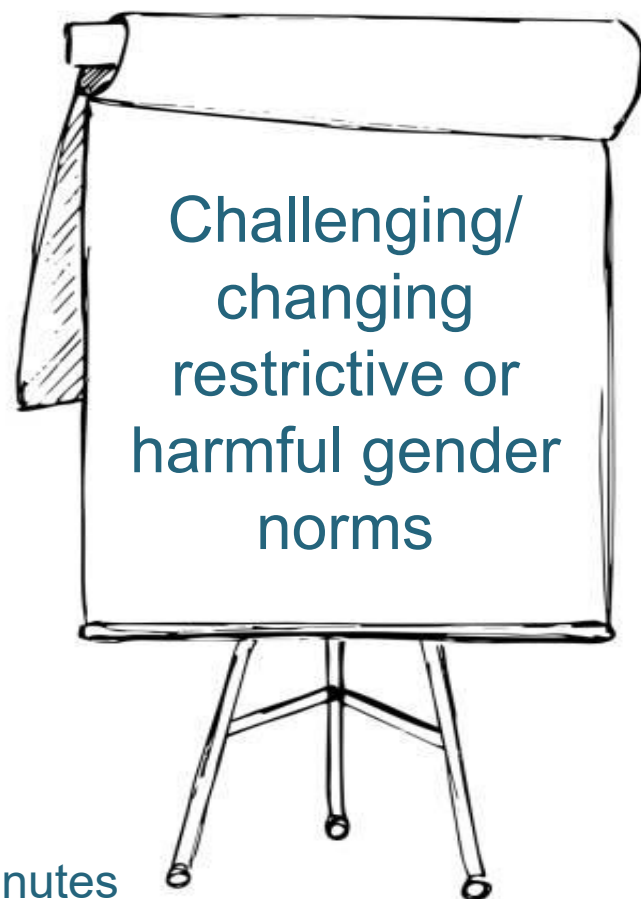
Development of learning: Walking in privilege and power

- Do people listen to you?
- Are you respected in your local community?
- Are you always able to pay your bills on time?
- Would you find it easy to get a job?
- Do you feel safe where you live?
- Can you go to the Gardaí and not be worried about being threatened with arrest or violence?
- Can you leave your partner if he or she threatens your safety?
- Can you walk down a street at night and not worry about being raped?





Development of learning: Creating more inclusive places to be ourselves



25 minutes





Development of learning: Identify and respond to victim blaming

blue seat studios

As you watch the video, list on page 13 some of the reasons James is blamed for being murdered.



2 minutes 30 seconds

(Blue Seat Studios, 2016)





Development of learning: How to respond to victim blaming

Reasons James was murdered	Contradictory statements
He was wearing a v-necked sweater	What you wear is not important



7 minutes



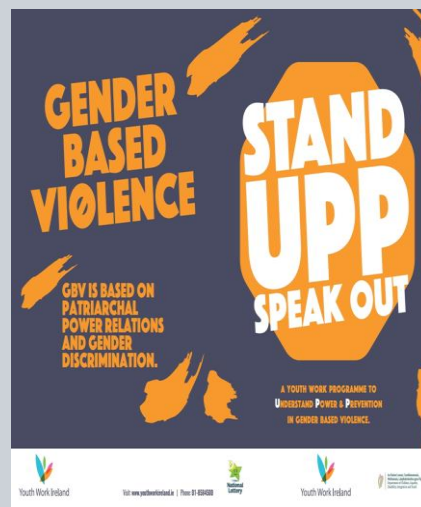


Lesson analysis

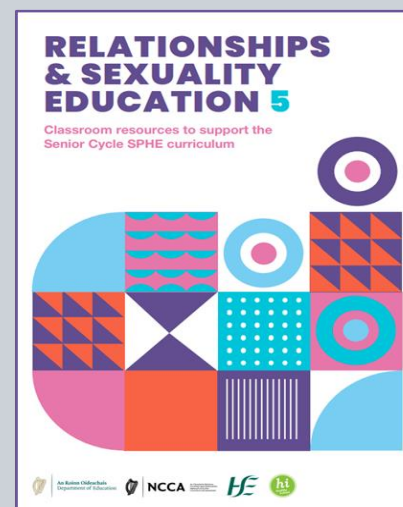
Introduction: Have a Word



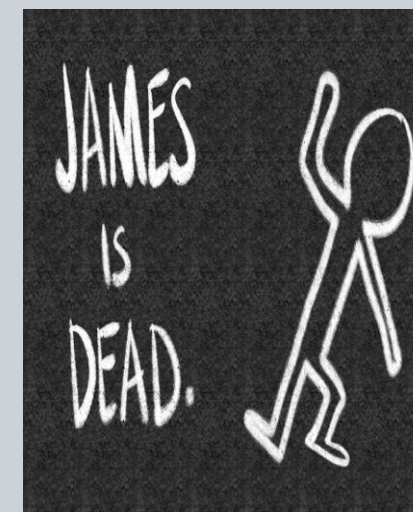
Development of learning: Walking in privilege and power



Development of learning: Creating more inclusive places to be ourselves



Development of learning: James is dead



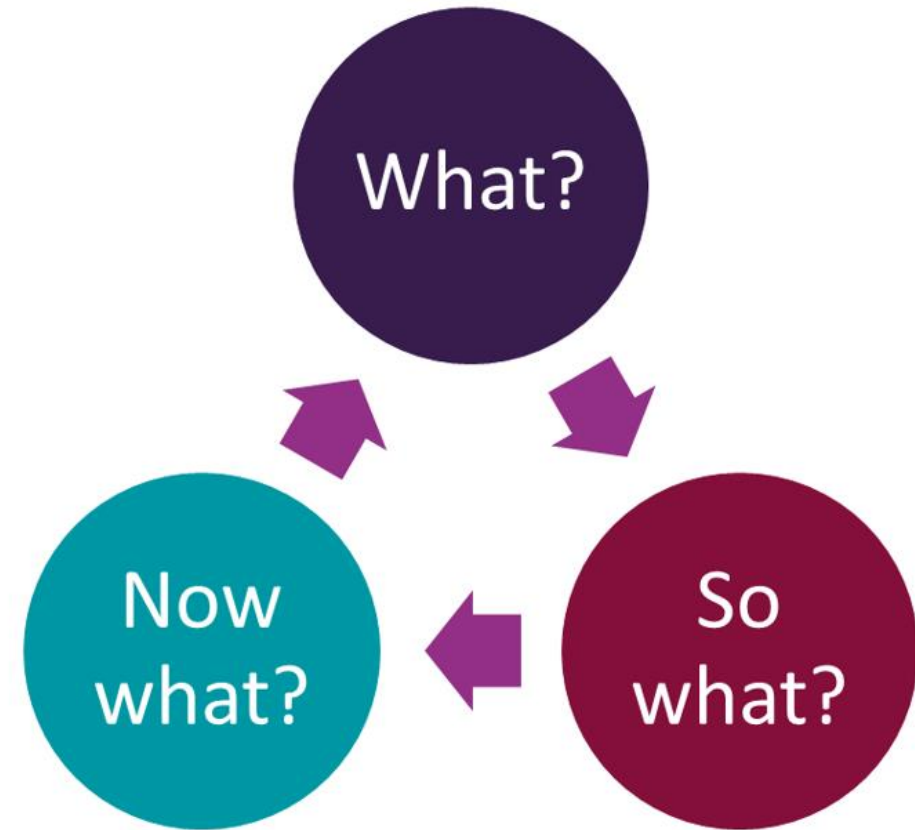
15 minutes





Reflection

- **What** have you learned?
- **So what**, why is it important?
- **Now what**, changes will you implement as a result?





Enjoy your lunch!

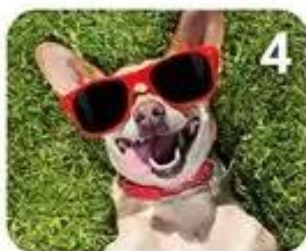


60 minutes



Energiser

Which one are you today?





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Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers



Oide

Session 6

Approaches to reflection and demonstration of learning



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Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí
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Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers



During day two of this PLE participants will:

explore and plan for lesson introductions

actively engage in the introduction and development of a lesson

experience reflection and demonstration of learning



Our focus for this session

Experience reflection and demonstration of learning

Reflection in
SPHE/RSE

Planning for
assessment

Sharing your
lesson plan



Signposts for lesson modelling

Modelling the lesson



Facilitating the lesson



Planning: lesson development

Fill in the development of learning section on your lesson plan.

Keeping the following in mind:

Does it suit a variety of learners?

Is it relevant to the lived experiences of young people?

What questions will you ask to engage students in critical and empathetic thinking?

Is it age and stage appropriate?

Features of an effective lesson



15 minutes

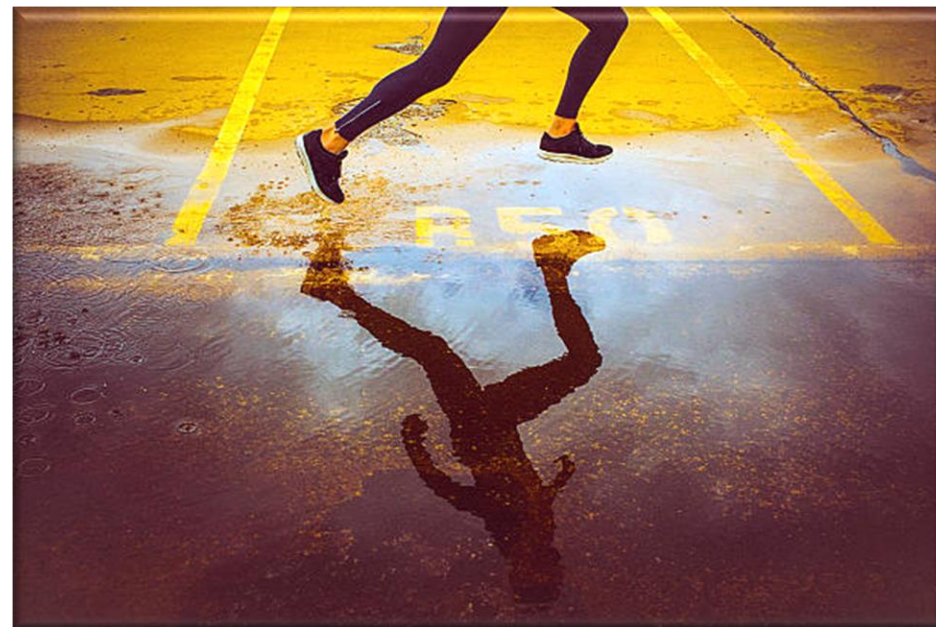




Reflection

'This 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.' *JC Specification p 12*

How are you currently incorporating reflection opportunities in your SPHE lesson?

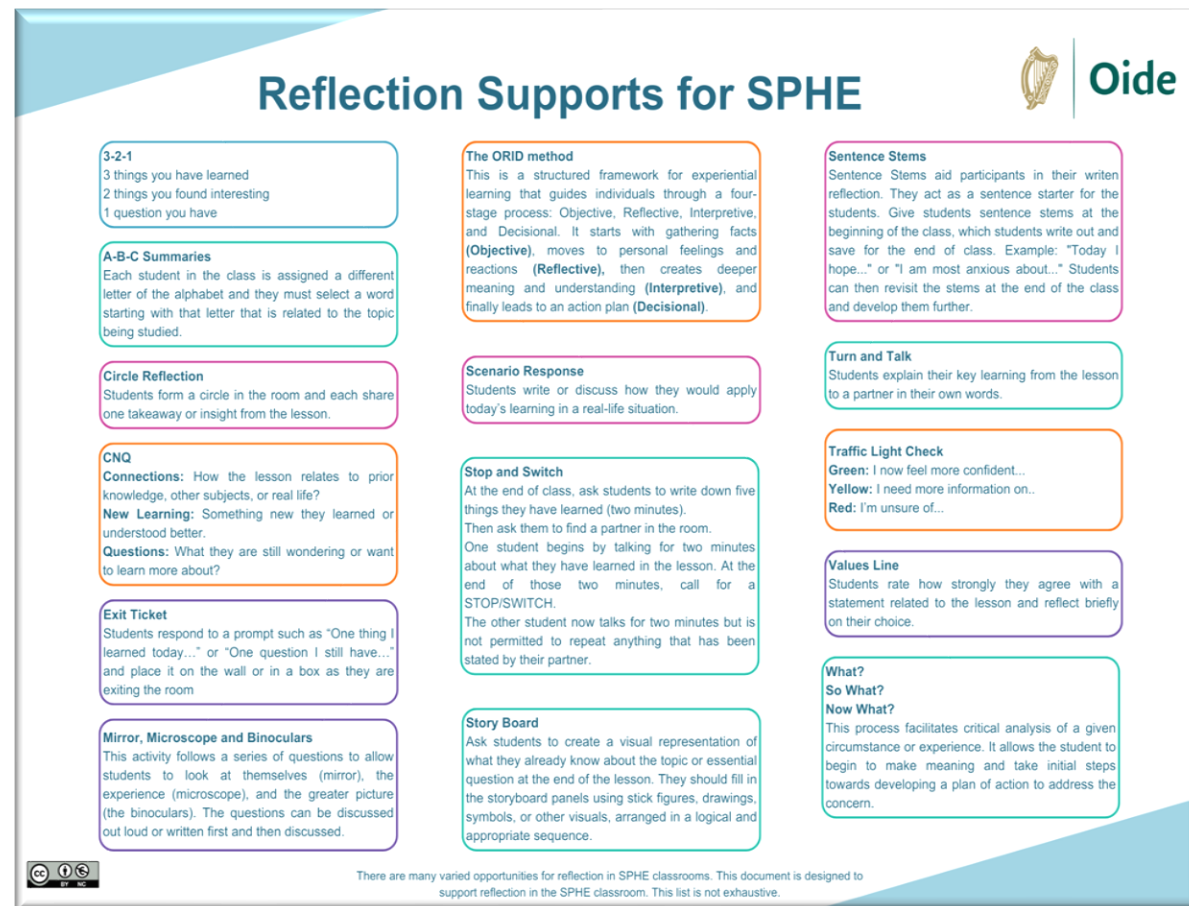




Reflection supports for SPHE



NCCA, Students Reflecting on Their Learning, 2015





ORID: method of experiential learning

1. What are the key topics we discussed in this lesson?
2. What are the key facts?

3. What has surprised you?
4. What challenged your thinking?

5. What does this mean?
6. What are the key messages/takeaways?

7. What is the next step?
8. What will you start working on?





Demonstration of learning Assessment: key assignment

I created a short presentation showing how positive and harmful attitudes around gender are visible in the media.

Strand 2 - Key assignment guidelines





Demonstration of learning Assessment: victim blaming language

#FixedIt Ireland

Fixing newspaper headlines and
challenging the media.



#FixedIt Ireland examples

Named: Man charged with rape, ~~striking drunk
nightclubber in face~~ and assault of a woman

Man arrested on 21 charges after ~~date goes
horribly wrong~~ he allegedly raped,
bashed, choked, and robbed a woman





Demonstration of learning Assessment: #FixedIt campaign

#FixedIt	
Re write the headline to eliminate any victim-blaming language	
"WOMAN WHO 'GRABBED GARDAS CROTCH' AFTER SHE WAS ARRESTED FOR DRINK DRIVING FINE"	
WHO IS BEING BLAMED?	RE WRITE THE HEADLINE:
WHAT WORDS/PHRASES INDICATE BLAME?	
"BRILLIANT ACADEMIC' JAILED FOR MORE THAN FIVE YEARS FOR RAPE"	
WHO IS BEING BLAMED?	RE WRITE THE HEADLINE:
WHAT WORDS/PHRASES INDICATE BLAME?	

In groups, work together to fix the headlines on page 18 by rewriting them to eliminate any victim-blaming language.



5 minutes





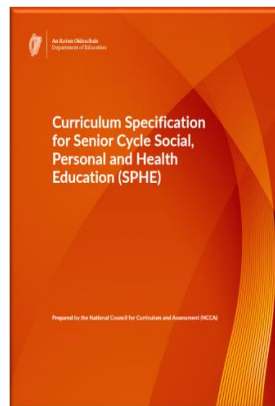
Assessment in SPHE

JC Specification

"Ensuring that the assessment method or methods chosen are fit for purpose, timely and relevant to the students."

"Assessment in Junior Cycle SPHE will optimise the opportunity for students to become reflective and active participants in their learning and for teachers to support this."

Junior Cycle SPHE Specification 2023 p.18



SC Specification

"Assessment supports and improves learning by helping students and teachers to identify next steps in the teaching and learning process."

"Assessment will support learning and promote progression, support the development of student key competencies and summarise achievement."

Senior Cycle SPHE Specification 2024 p.17



Lesson analysis

Reflection: ORID Method	Demonstration of learning: Key assignment	Demonstration of learning: #FixedIt
ORID: method of experiential learning O is for the objective questions which analyse the facts. R stands for reflective questions. I are the interpretive questions. D is for the decision questions, questions to prompt actions.	 NCCA Senior Cycle Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Guidelines to support the completion of Key Assignments November 2024	#FixedIt Re write the headline to eliminate any victim-blaming language "WOMAN WHO 'GRABBED GARDAS CROTCH' AFTER SHE WAS ARRESTED FOR DRINK DRIVING FINE" WHO IS BEING BLAMED? WHAT WORDS/PHRASES INDICATE BLAME? RE WRITE THE HEADLINE: "BRILLIANT ACADEMIC' JAILED FOR MORE THAN FIVE YEARS FOR RAPE" WHO IS BEING BLAMED? WHAT WORDS/PHRASES INDICATE BLAME? RE WRITE THE HEADLINE:



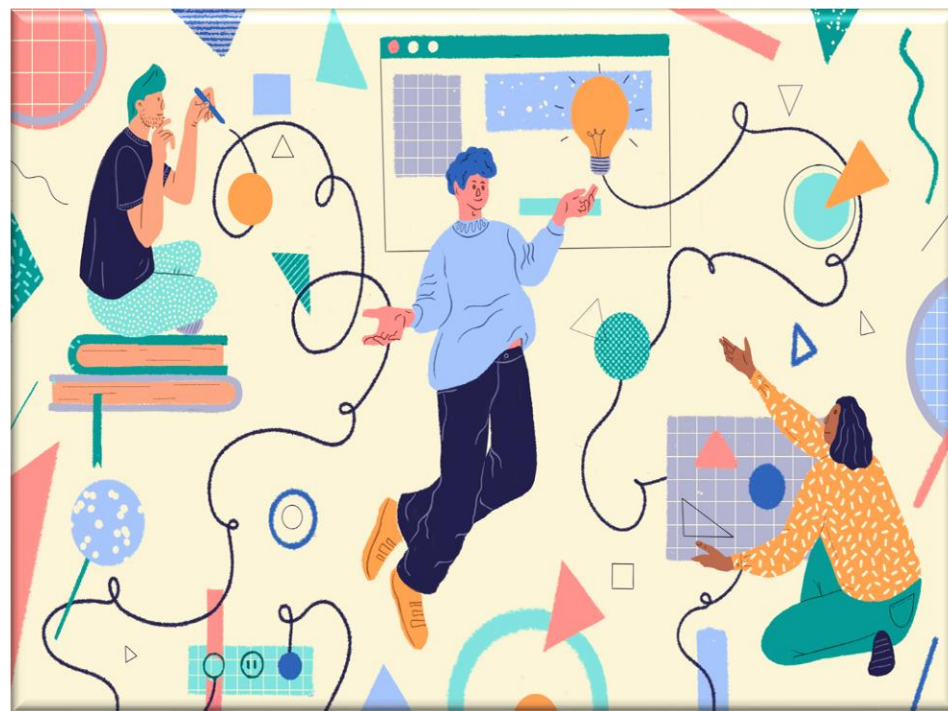
10 minutes





Planning: building on your lesson plan

Return to your lesson plan and add in a reflection activity and a demonstration of learning strategy that will support student learning.



10 minutes





Sharing your lesson



Nominate one participant from your group to share the lesson.

1. Introduction
2. Development of learning
 - Experiential and multi-modal in design
3. Reflection
4. Demonstration of learning
 - Assessment

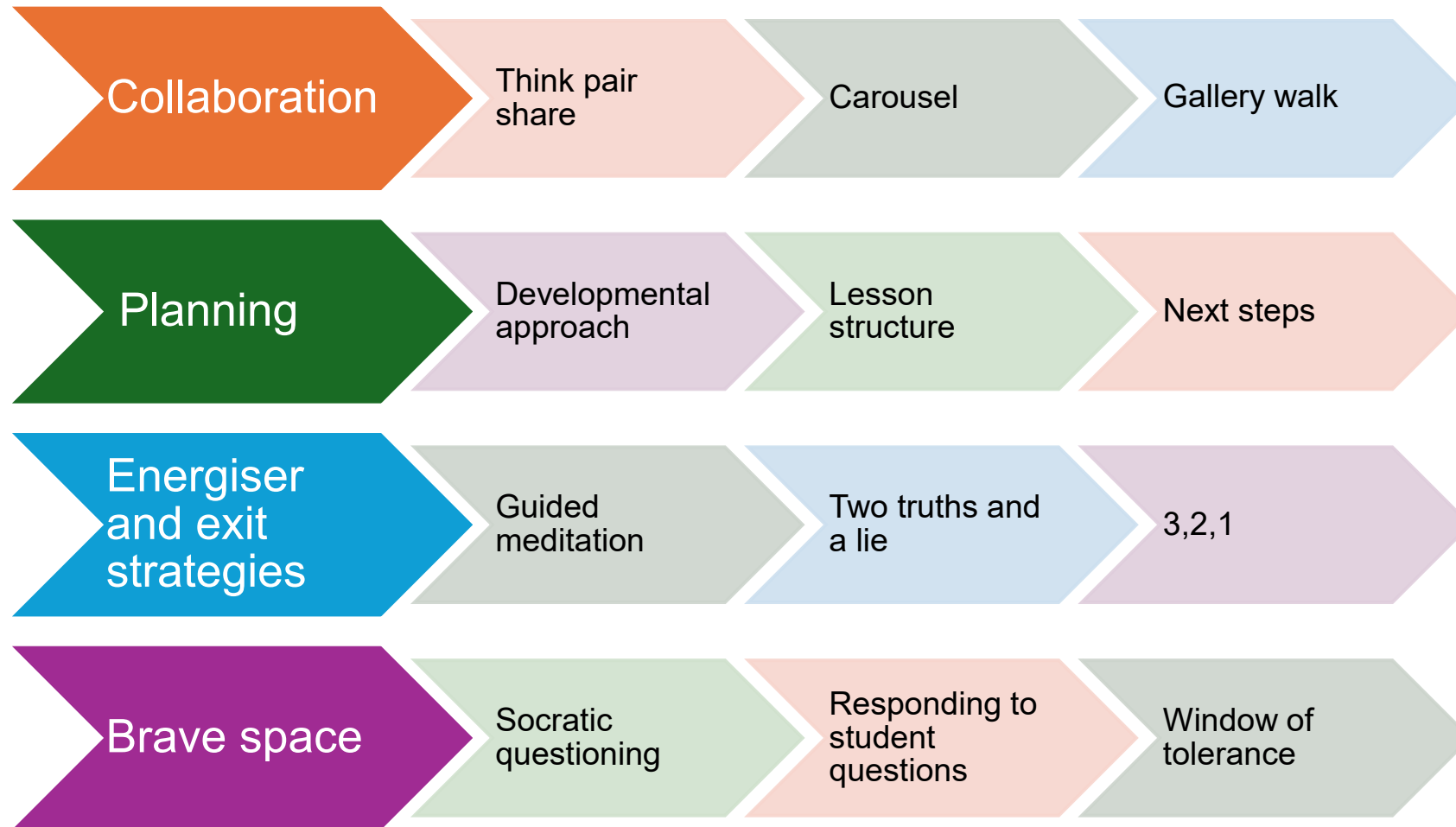


20 minutes





Methodologies and strategies





During day two we have:

explored and planned for lesson introductions

actively engage in the introduction and development of a lesson

experience reflection and demonstration of learning



Next steps

How will you apply what you have learned to:

- inform your individual teacher practice?
- inform your SPHE department practice?
- inform your whole school SPHE/RSE practice?





References

- DRCC resource: Window of Tolerance (2021) | Dublin Rape Crisis Centre
- Mayor of London, (2023), Have a Word <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qbk3iJqmjNU>
- Standing up speak out [Stand-UPP-Speak-Out-Final-Programme.pdf](#)
- NCCA JC SPHE specification/LC SPHE specification [JC-SPHE-Short-Course-2023-EV-FINAL.pdf](#) / [SC-SPHE-Spec-JULY-24-p9.pdf](#)
- Stay safe programme [SPHE/RSE Toolkit | Curriculum Online](#)
- James is dead [James is dead](#)
- #FixedIt [FixedIt – Jane Gilmore](#)
- SPHE Toolkit [SPHE toolkit | Curriculum Online](#) / [Resources for learning and teaching SPHE | Curriculum Online](#)
- Socratic questioning
- UNESCO (2018). International technical guidance on sexuality education An evidence-informed approach. [online] Available at: https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/reproductive-health/sexual-health/international-technical-guidance-on-sexuality-education.pdf?sfvrsn=10113efc_29&download=true.
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