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Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

Teaching Relationships & Sexuality Education across the Strands of the Junior Cycle SPHE Specification

Facilitator:





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- Page 2 – click on Wellbeing

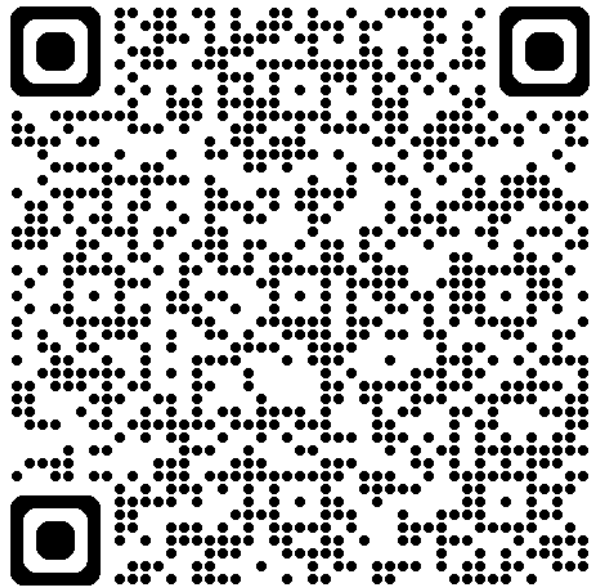


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Resources & Supports



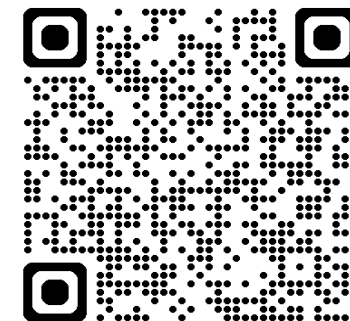


Employee Assistance Service (EAS)

The screenshot shows a sign-up form for Folláine le Chéile Wellbeing Together. The form is titled 'Sign Up' and includes the following fields:

- First Name
- Last Name
- Email Address
- Organisation Code (pre-filled with yIVIU17)
- Password
- Repeat Password
- Location (dropdown menu with 'Select a location...')
- Member Level (dropdown menu with 'Teacher')
- ☐ I agree to the privacy statements
- ☐ I agree to the terms and conditions

A red 'Sign up' button is located at the bottom right of the form.



Organisation
Code:
yIVIU17

Check-In



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Key Messages



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To empower teachers to feel more confident in discussing relationships and sexuality across the SPHE specification with their students

To explore and experience different methodologies relevant to the facilitation of Junior Cycle SPHE in the classroom.

To signpost a range of resources available to support teaching and learning across the SPHE specification

Overview



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Session 1
09:30 - 11:00

Why is SPHE important?
Key policies, circulars and inspections specific to the planning of RSE across the SPHE specification
Myself as an SPHE teacher

Tea/Coffee
11:00 - 11:15

Session 2
11:15 - 13:00

Creating a reflective and inclusive SPHE environment - considerations
Class agreement
Case studies - scenarios

Lunch
13:00 - 14:00

Session 3
14:00 - 15:30

Considerations when asked questions in SPHE
Activating the cross-cutting elements
The experiential learning cycle
Resource to Support Teaching and Learning with LO 3.8



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Key Policies and Circulars

Planning for RSE across the SPHE Specification



Relevant Policies



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RSE Policy

Anti-Bullying
Policy

SEN/AEN Policy

AUP

Substance Use

Code of
Behaviour

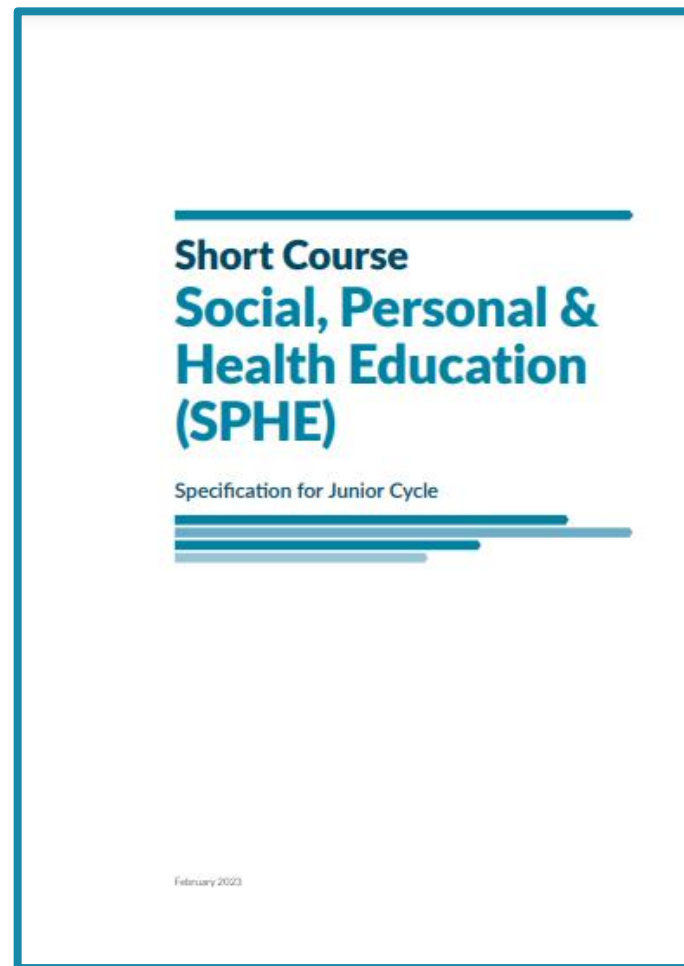
Child
Safeguarding
Statement and
Risk Assessment



Circular 0028/2023

Students entering 1st year in 2023/2024

- Schools are reminded that there is a minimum threshold of 400 hours across the three years of Junior Cycle which should be provided for Wellbeing, including PE, SPHE and CSPE
- All schools must provide 100 hours spread across first, second and third year (and must be provided in each of the three years)
- Students must follow the newly developed NCCA short course specification (2023)





Why is SPHE Important?

The teaching and learning of SPHE provides a unique space where students can develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions and values needed to support their physical, emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing, now and in the future.

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.

The SPHE specification is grounded in values of respect, equality, inclusivity, responsibility, dignity, compassion and empathy.

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.



HBSC Findings 2022



Table 14: Sexual Behaviours

Young people aged 15 to 17 years old were asked about engaging in sexual intercourse, and their use of contraception at last sexual intercourse.

Ever had sexual intercourse	Overall, 25% of 15 to 17 year olds report that they have ever had sexual intercourse (25% in 2018). There are no significant differences across gender or social class groups.
Condom use*	Of those who report having had sexual intercourse, 48% report that they or their partner used a condom at last sexual intercourse (62% in 2018). Girls are more likely to report that they or their partner used a condom at last sexual intercourse.
Use of birth control pill*	Of those who report ever having had sexual intercourse, 29% report that they or their partner used the birth control pill at last sexual intercourse (28% in 2018). Girls are more likely to report that they or their partner used the birth control pill at last sexual intercourse.
Other method(s) of contraception*	Of those who report having had sexual intercourse, 18% report that they or their partner used other method(s) of contraception at last sexual intercourse (18% in 2018). There is no significant difference by gender.
No contraception*	Of those who report having had sexual intercourse, 34% report that they or their partner used no contraception at last sexual intercourse (22% in 2018). Boys are more likely to report that they or their partner used no contraception at last sexual intercourse.

*Social class significance comparisons are not reported due to low sample size.

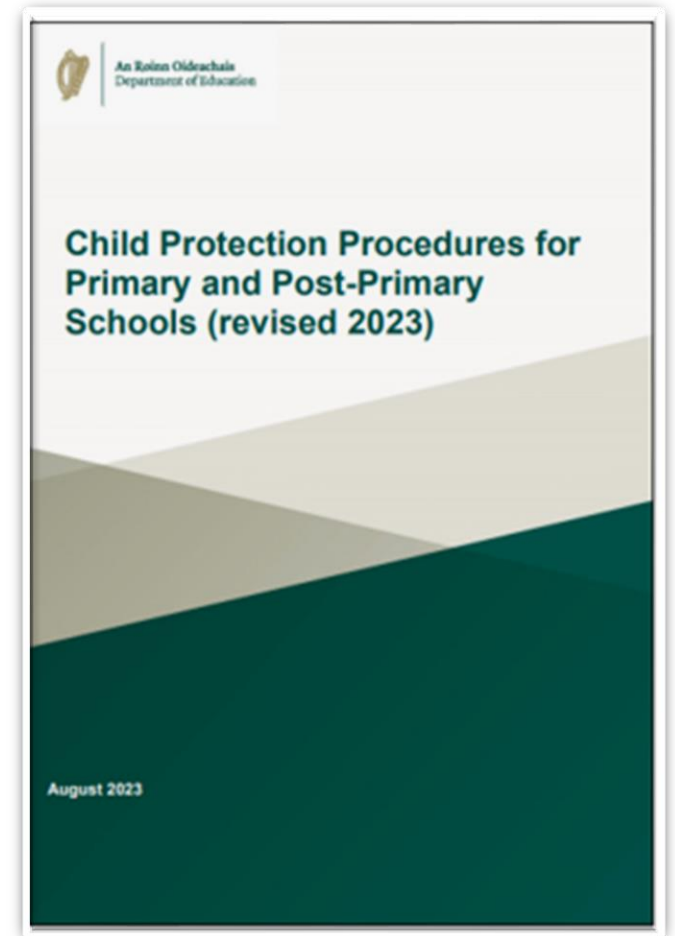
Child Protection Safeguarding Inspections



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Ensuring that children enjoy a safe and secure learning environment in schools and education settings is a key concern for everyone that supports the development of children.

The DE has an important oversight role to play in ensuring that all our children receive the highest quality of care and protection in our schools. As part of the oversight and quality assurance role of the Department, the Inspectorate is required to implement CPSI.



CPSI Check 10

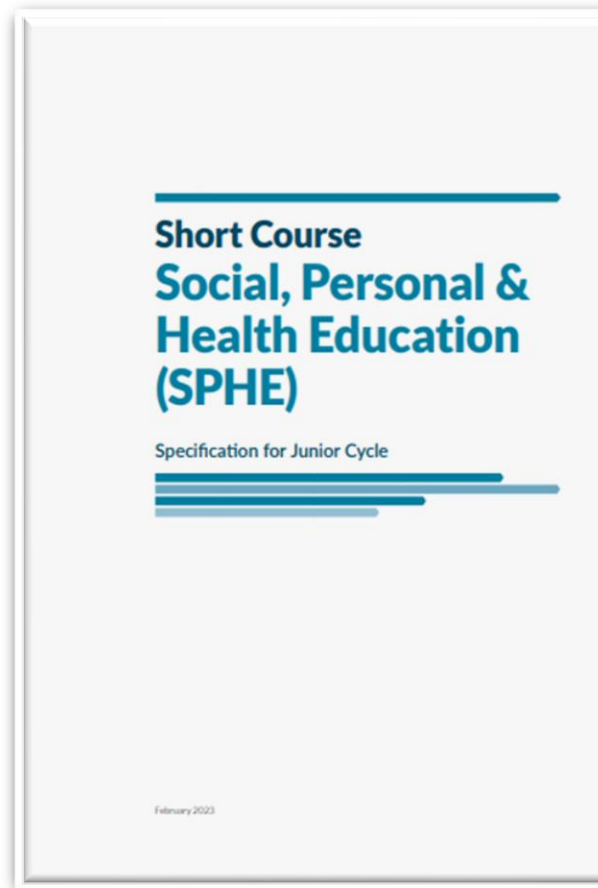
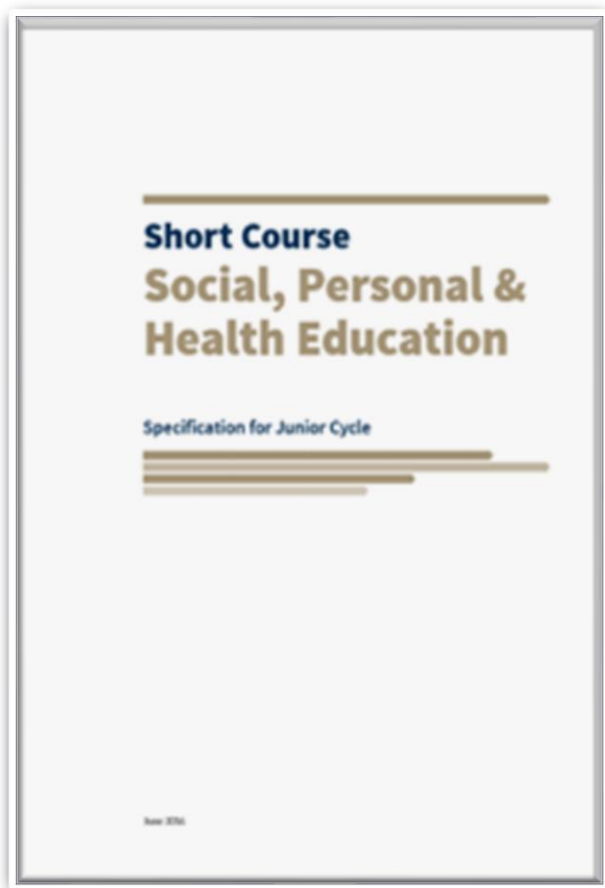


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Check 10	Sub-checks
The quality of planning for and implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the <i>Stay Safe</i> programme in primary schools and of the SPHE curriculum and the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme in post-primary schools, as evident during the inspection.	There is a Social Personal and Health Education Programme for all children in the school (Primary)
	The Stay Safe Programme is implemented within the school (Primary)
	There is a Social Personal and Health Education Programme for all children in Junior Cycle (Post-primary check)
	There is a Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme for all children in the school (Post-primary check)
	Whole-school planning documents indicate that the school has planned appropriately for the implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the Stay Safe programme (Primary) SPHE subject planning documents, RSE programme planning documents and school timetable information indicate that the school has planned appropriately for the implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE programme (post-primary check)
	The individual teacher planning documents reviewed indicate that the teachers are implementing the SPHE curriculum and <i>Stay Safe</i> programme appropriately (Primary)
	The interactions with pupils indicate that pupils have a satisfactory or better understanding of a number of the key topics of SPHE and Stay Safe (Primary) and of SPHE and RSE (Post-primary)



Junior Cycle - Curricular Options

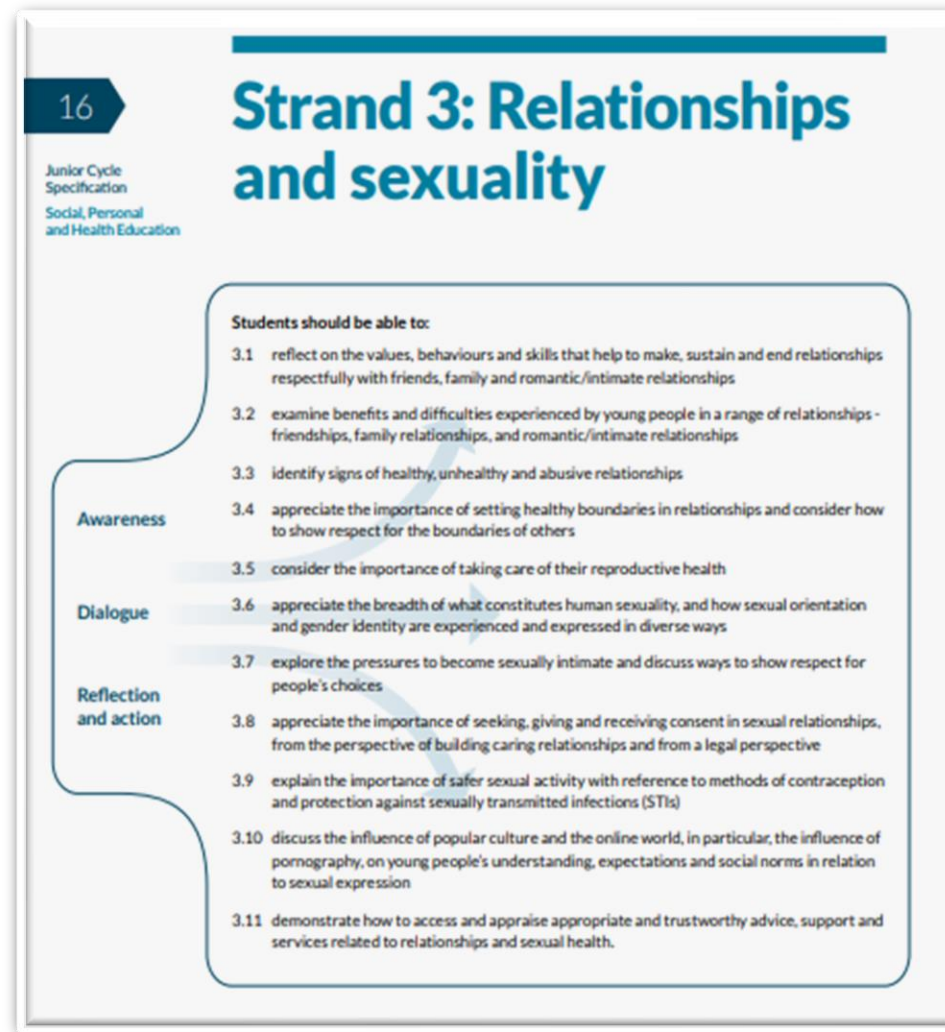
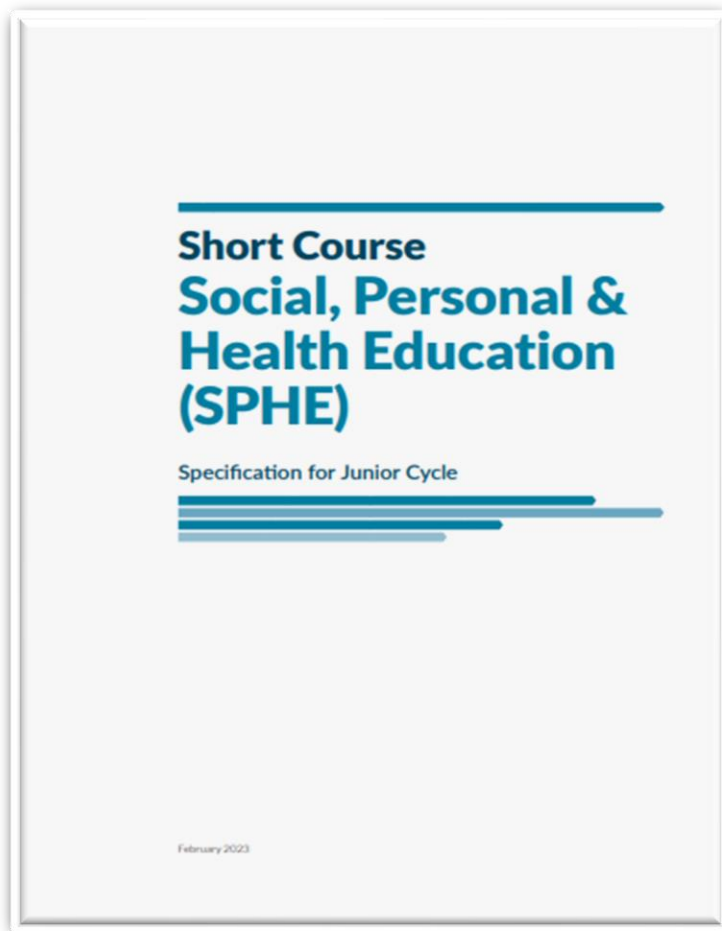


Strand 3: Relationships and Sexuality



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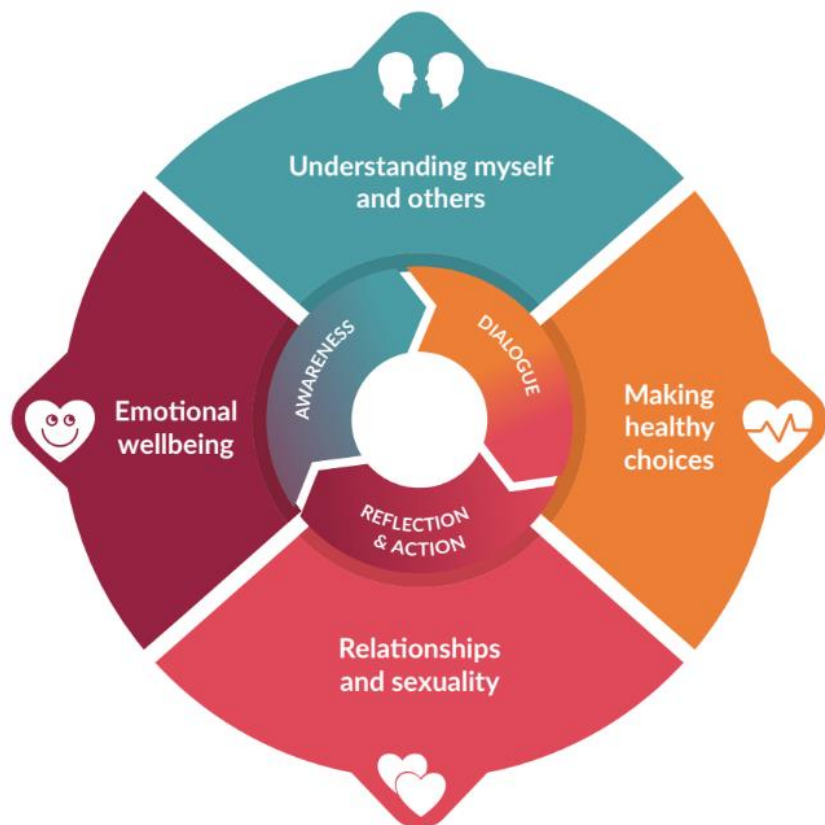
What is the key learning hoped for in Strand 3?





Learning Outcomes

Supporting Pedagogical Approaches



Linking learning outcomes across the four strands while embedding the cross-cutting elements.



Activity – Embedding RSE

Which Learning Outcomes
would best suit:

- 1st Years
- 2nd Years
- 3rd Years



15 mins

Things to Consider:

- Age and stage
- School context
- Linked learning outcomes



Further Elaboration and Guidance on Learning Outcomes (NCCA, 2023)

Learning Outcomes: 3.6, 3.8, 3.10 and 2.10, 3.11 & 4.9

NCCA

Junior Cycle SPHE

Strand 3 | Relationships and Sexuality

Learning Outcome 3.6:

Students should be able to appreciate the breadth of what constitutes human sexuality, and how sexual orientation and gender identity are experienced and expressed in diverse ways.

Pre-learning:

Before addressing Learning Outcome 3.6, students need to have engaged with related learning outcomes, such as learning about the physical, social and emotional changes that happen during adolescence (1.1), 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 (1.4) and gender equity and gender stereotypes (3.5).

What is the important learning?

It is a normal part of adolescence to question different aspects of one's identity. Figuring out the kind of person you are becoming is the major developmental task of adolescence" (Gaffney, M. 2021, *Your One Wild and Precious Life*, p53). As part of this figuring out, it is not uncommon for young people to question aspects of their identity which may include their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Experts advise that the adults in their lives need to acknowledge that this questioning is normal and allow the young person the time and space to work it through.

The purpose of Learning Outcome 3.6 is to open up conversations with young people about the breadth of ways that people can experience and express human sexuality. Human sexuality is broad and holistic and includes our gender identity, our sexual orientation, our relationship with ourselves and our relationships with others. Sexuality is part of who we are as humans, whether we are sexually active or not. Sexual activity is just one way that people can express their sexuality. (See [the Sexuality Wheel](#))

In SPHE, teachers are most supportive when they adopt a non-judgmental, sensitive and open approach that acknowledges the diversity and complexity of life and seeks to create a classroom environment in which empathy and understanding can grow.

As part of these discussions, it is important to acknowledge that sexual orientation and gender identity are two distinct aspects of our personhood (see definitions). It's inappropriate to assume, label or categorise a person, including their sexual orientation or gender identity. As per guidance, [Being LGBT in school](#), teachers and students are advised to respect the language and terms that young people use to identify themselves as this is one way of creating an inclusive environment and supporting students who identify as LGBTQ+.

The most common age for young people to identify themselves as LGBTQ+ is 12, and the most common age for young people to tell someone they are LGBTQ+ is 16. This is a crucial time for LGBTQ+ young people. Experts assert that all young people need to be given the opportunity and space to develop their unique identities in environments of support and affirmation. Teachers can play a powerful role in this regard by acknowledging the diversity and complexity of life and modelling understanding and empathy.

In the context of discussing gender identity it is important to acknowledge that while most people's gender identity matches their sex registered at birth, this is not the case for everyone. It's important to let teenagers know that there are different ways of experiencing and expressing our gender. Furthermore, it's normal and healthy to question gender norms and stereotypes and many young people may not wish to conform to the way society expects them to look or behave. For the vast majority of young people, gender non-conformity and gender questioning does not mean that the person will go on to identify as transgender. It is also important to keep in mind that, as with other aspects of identity, one's gender identity can change over time.

NCCA

Junior Cycle SPHE

Strand 3 | Relationships and Sexuality

Learning Outcome 3.8:

Students should be able to appreciate the importance of seeking, giving and receiving consent in sexual relationships, from the perspective of building caring relationships and from a legal perspective.

Pre-learning:

Before addressing Learning Outcome 3.8, students need to have engaged with related learning outcomes, such as learning about the signs of healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships (3.3), gender equity and stereotypes (1.5), communicating in a respectful and effective manner (1.7) and the importance of empathy (1.6).

What is the important learning?

The purpose of Learning Outcome 3.8 is to open up conversations with young people about consent as a core part of all healthy relationships, which involves recognising and respecting one's own boundaries and the boundaries of others, always checking whenever one is unsure, and being able to show empathy. This conversation starts with friendships before moving onto romantic/intimate relationships.

It's important that young people discuss why consent matters, beyond a legal lens. In other words, through the lens of respectful and caring relationships.

In teaching about consent, the complexity of factors that influence a young person's capacity to exercise consent need to be discussed. These include self-awareness, self-esteem, capacity to communicate assertively, the influence of alcohol/substances, peer pressure, pop culture and social norms. Discussion of sexual consent also relates to an understanding of harmful gender norms and stereotypes.

Possible questions to explore through this learning outcome:

- What does a healthy relationship look like?
- Is consent an important aspect of how we relate to people both online and in-person? Why/not?
- What is happening when a person gives consent in everyday situations? What are they saying, what are they doing (i.e., verbal and non-verbal)? What does not giving consent look like?
- How might it feel if someone else doesn't give consent to something that you want to do? How might you manage these emotions, while affirming the other person's right to say no?
- What are the key messages about consent online and in the media, for example in music videos, games? How might these messages affect attitudes?
- What might impact on/affect a person's ability to (1) ask for consent, (2) give consent, (3) withhold consent? (prompts: age, confidence, skills, use of alcohol/substances, balance of power in the relationship, peer pressure, social norms, pop culture)
- What are the implications of breaking the law around consent in sexual relationships? What are the other, non-legal, impacts?
- In the context of consent in sexual relationships, what are the available supports and services? How can people access these supports and services?

Possible follow-on learning outcomes:

The risks and consequences of sharing sexual imagery online (2.9) and/or the influence of pornography on sexual expression (3.10)

Go to the 2023 SPHE Toolkit for teaching resources linked to LO 3.8

NCCA

Junior Cycle SPHE

Strand 3 | Relationships and Sexuality

Learning Outcome 3.10:

Students should be able to 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.

Pre-learning:

Before addressing Learning Outcome 3.10, students need to have engaged with related learning outcomes, including learning about the factors that influence and shape young people's self-identity (1.4), the meaning and importance of empathy (1.6), gender equity and gender stereotypes (1.5), sharing sexual imagery online (2.9), signs of healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships (3.3) and the importance of seeking, giving and receiving consent in sexual relationships (3.8).

What is the important learning?

The purpose of Learning Outcome 3.10 is to open up conversations with young people about the prevalence and influence of sexual messages and images in popular culture and online and to help them look critically at how this might be influencing their emerging understanding of sexuality, sexual norms and expectations. Begin by helping students to reflect on their own values and expectations of sexual relationships and what they consider to be the features of a healthy adult sexual experience, such as care, consent, equality, respect, trust, mutual pleasure. Then, discuss how messages and images in popular culture and online affirm, or are at odds with, their values and expectations.

Key messages to highlight through the learning activities include that we live in an increasingly sexualised world, surrounded by sexual messages and images and these need to be critically examined. While it is normal to be curious about sex, pornography is not a good place to learn about sex because it is not reflective of sex in the real world and can be disturbing and even damaging for young people. In fact, given the violent and harmful nature of the majority of freely accessible pornography, not watching pornography is a very healthy choice for a young person. It would be important to acknowledge, without judgement, that students may/not have seen pornography.

Possible questions to explore through this learning outcome:

- What are the dominant messages and images about sex in popular culture (e.g., advertising, movies, music videos, social media)?
- Who benefits from promoting sexual messages and images (prompt: the porn industry), and who loses out (prompt: everyone in society)?
- How might the portrayal of sex in popular culture influence young people as they develop their understanding of sexuality?
- What does the [leg](#) say about the sharing of intimate or sexually explicit images?
- How do you think viewing pornography might influence people's attitudes, behaviours and expectations?
- What does the research say about the impact of viewing pornography, particularly during adolescence (e.g., adolescent brain development and susceptibility to addictive behaviour)?
- How does pornography feed into harmful gender norms and stereotypes?

When teaching about pornography, it is inappropriate to show sexually explicit content, or refer to specific websites with sexually explicit content in class.

Possible follow-on learning outcome:

The pressures to become sexually intimate and ways to show respect for people's choices (2.9)

Go to the 2023 SPHE Toolkit for classroom resources linked to LO 3.10

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Myself as an SPHE Teacher





Myself as an SPHE Teacher

What are the most important values to consider as an SPHE Teacher?

A pyramid-shaped diagram consisting of 10 empty rectangular boxes arranged in five rows. The top row has 1 box, the second row has 2 boxes, the third row has 3 boxes, the fourth row has 2 boxes, and the bottom row has 1 box. This structure is intended for a user to write down the most important values to consider as an SPHE Teacher.



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Creating a Reflective and Inclusive SPHE Environment





Myself as an SPHE Teacher

What Makes a Topic Sensitive in Nature in the SPHE Classroom?

What is a
sensitive issue?
What makes
issues sensitive?

Which values will
underpin teaching
sensitive topics?

Why should we
teach sensitive
issues?



Myself as an SPHE Teacher

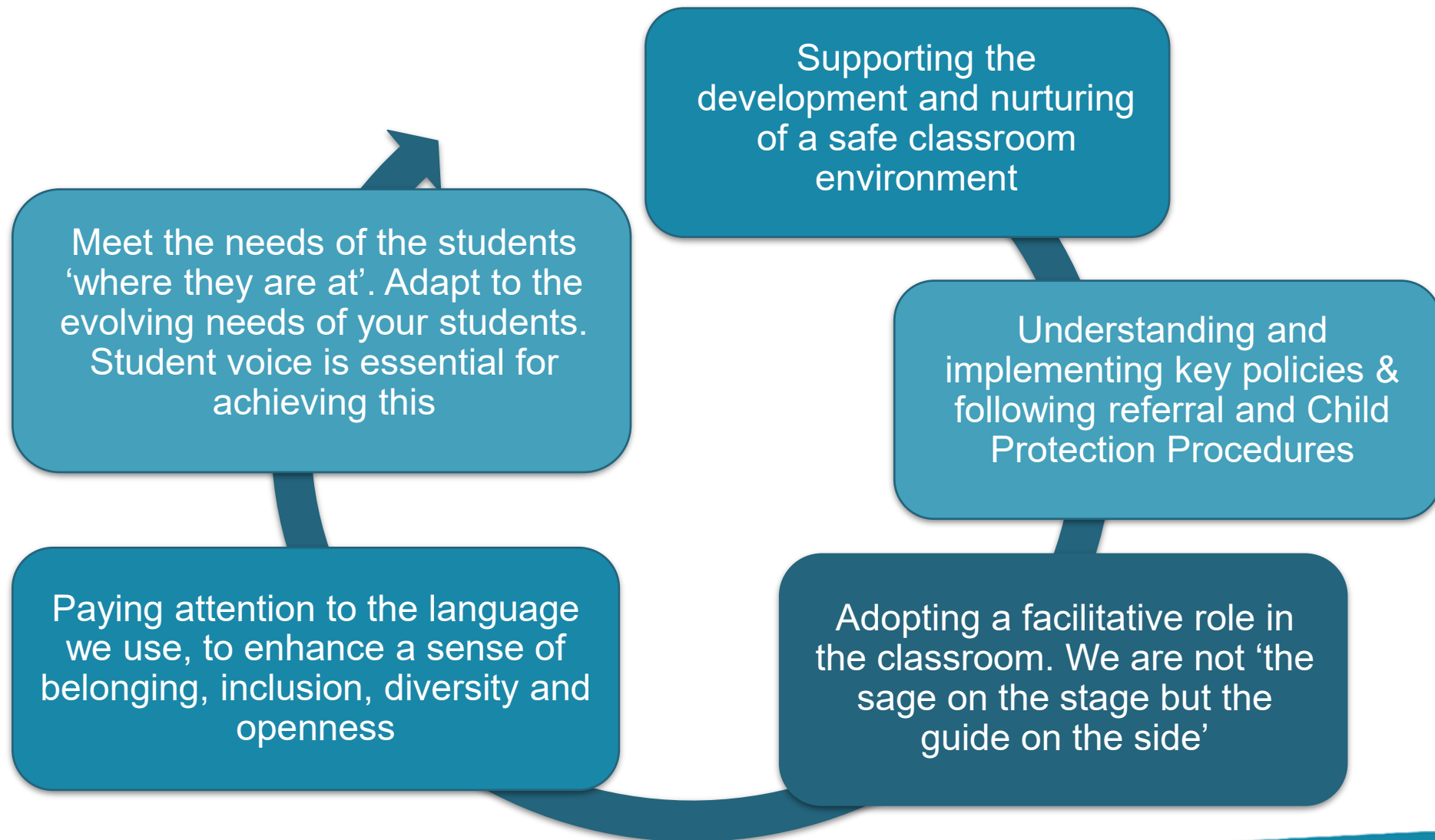


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Code:

Considerations as an SPHE Teacher



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Facilitation in the SPHE Classroom





Establishing Group Expectations

Class Agreement - Why are they so important?





Class Agreement/Expectations

Respect

No Put-downs

Respectful
Language

Confidentiality
Limits*

One Voice

Be Open

Boundaries
around Sharing

“I” Statements



Limits to Confidentiality

Students should be aware that there are limits to confidentiality

- If a teacher becomes aware that a student is at risk, they are obliged to pass on this information.

Teachers should never guarantee confidentiality

- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2023 state: If a teacher becomes aware that a student is sexually active under the age of consent (17 for boys and girls and for heterosexual and homosexual sex), the teacher must bring this information to the DLP who may be obliged to inform the parents.

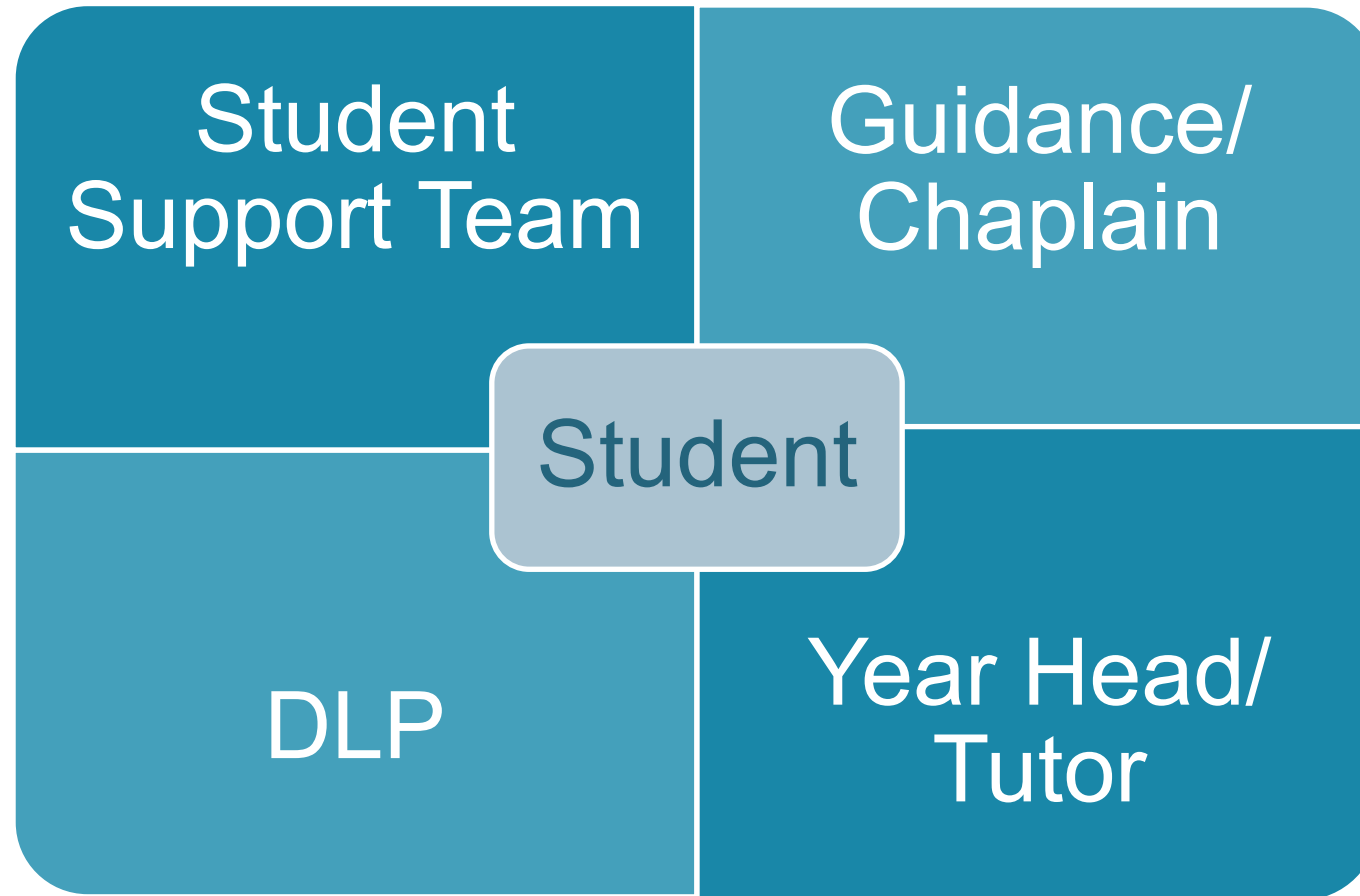


(DE, 2023)

Referral System



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Making the Most of Sensitive/Challenging Discussions Oide



Gilly



Tate



Kyle

Making the Most of Sensitive/Challenging Discussions Oide

Myself as an SPHE teacher

Documents to support your practice



PDF

Looking at
myself and
what I bring
to the
classroom



PDF

How can I
model
positive
relationships?



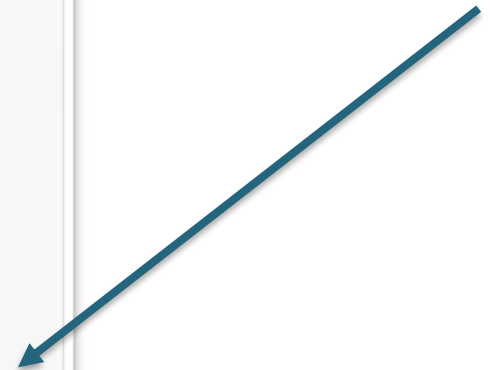
PDF

The teacher
as facilitator
of learning



PDF

Dealing with
sensitive/challenging
conversations



Lunch



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Activity: Sensitive Questions



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Is it normal to feel sad all the time?

What's the big deal in sending a nude photo to someone if it is someone you really trust?

If someone doesn't say no, does that count as consent?

How do people orgasm?

Is it ever okay to have sex under the legal age?

Have you ever been in an abusive relationship?

How do you know if you are gay?

What should you do if a friend is going out with someone that is treating them really badly?

How much masturbation is too much?

If my girlfriend is on the pill, does that mean that we are covered?

What is the best way to lose weight/ gain muscle?

Is it not just easier to say yes sometimes?

Ways to Respond to Difficult Conversations in SPHE Class



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‘I may not be able to answer all your questions’

‘Can we all remember what we agreed to in our class ground rules...
I feel that this reminder is needed at this juncture’

‘I’m not sure if I can actually answer that... can I come back to you about this during our next SPHE class?’

‘I won’t ask you any personal questions so please don’t ask me any please!’

‘It’s OK if our opinions differ, once we are respectful within our conversations, that’s most important’



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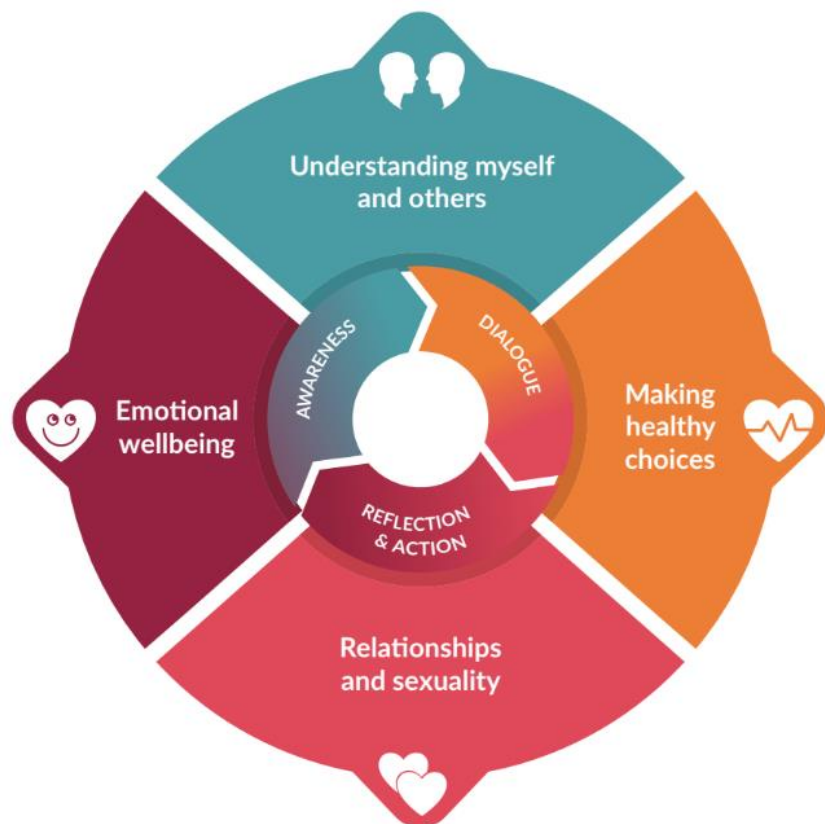
Activating the Cross-Cutting Elements





Cross-Cutting Elements in SPHE

How They Support Learning



What has supported the dialogic approach so far today?

How has this dialogue enhanced your own self-awareness and insights around teaching and learning in SPHE?

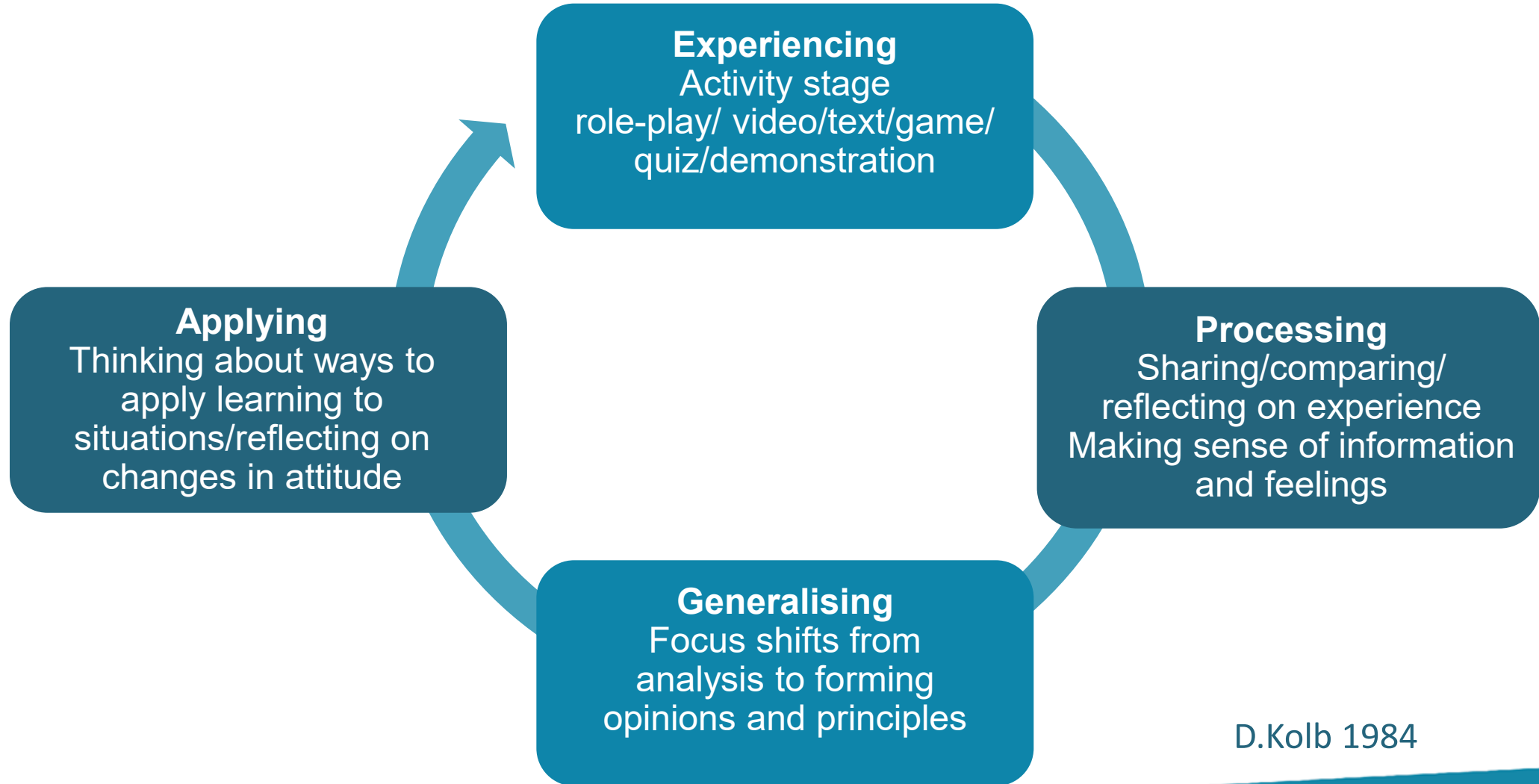
How are you going to employ some of this learning into your own life/teaching practice?

Effective Pedagogical Approaches

The Experiential Learning Cycle



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D.Kolb 1984

The Experiential Learning Cycle

Activity: Consent



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Brainstorm 'What is consent'?





LO 3.8: Consent

Activity on Consent



“When you are saying
yes to someone make
sure you are not saying
no to yourself”

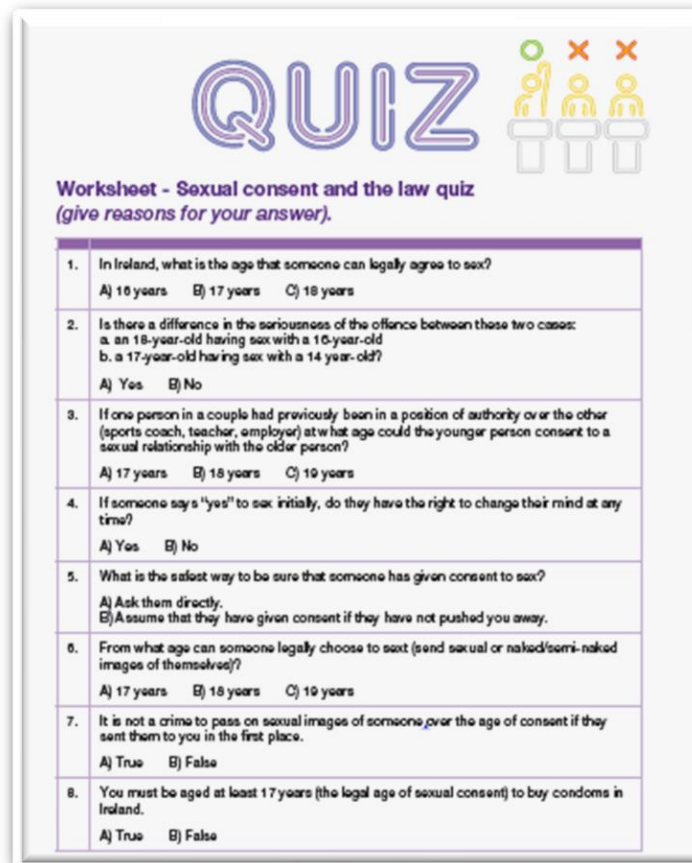
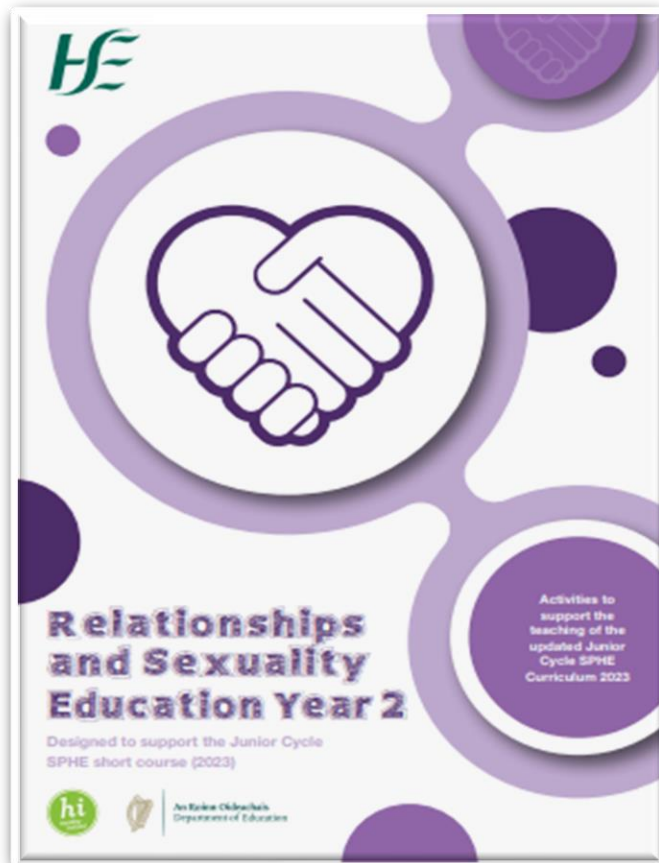
Paulo Coelho

Coco's Law Lesson



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The Harassment, Harmful Communication and Related Offences Act 2020, also known as Coco's Law.



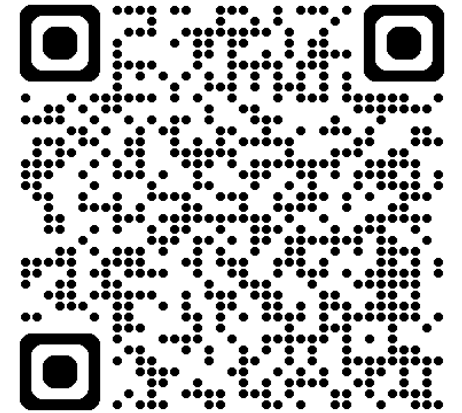
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Lesson 6:

Getting help when your digital
content seems to last forever





Reflection

What are you most pleased with?

What was the most important thing you learned?

What do you need more help with?

What did you find easy about learning to...?

What really made you think?

What can you do now that you couldn't do before?

Overview - Check In



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13:00 - 14:00

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14:00 - 15:30

Considerations when asked questions in SPHE
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The experiential learning cycle
Resource to Support Teaching and Learning with LO 3.8



Thank You





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Teaching Relationships & Sexuality Education across Strands of the Junior Cycle SPHE Specification

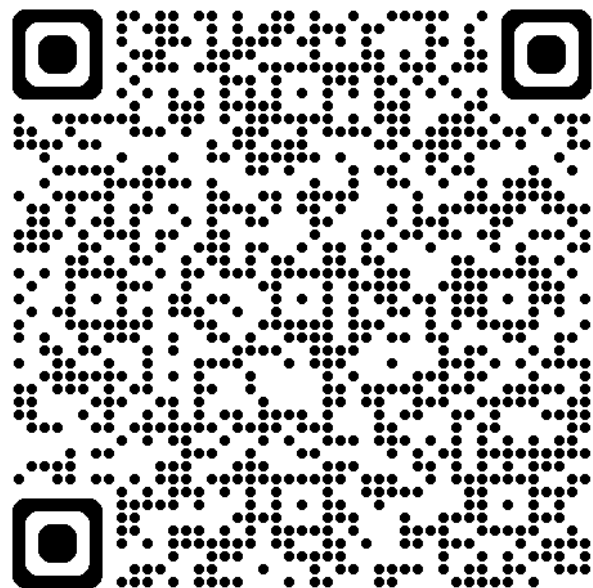
Facilitator:





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Resources & Supports

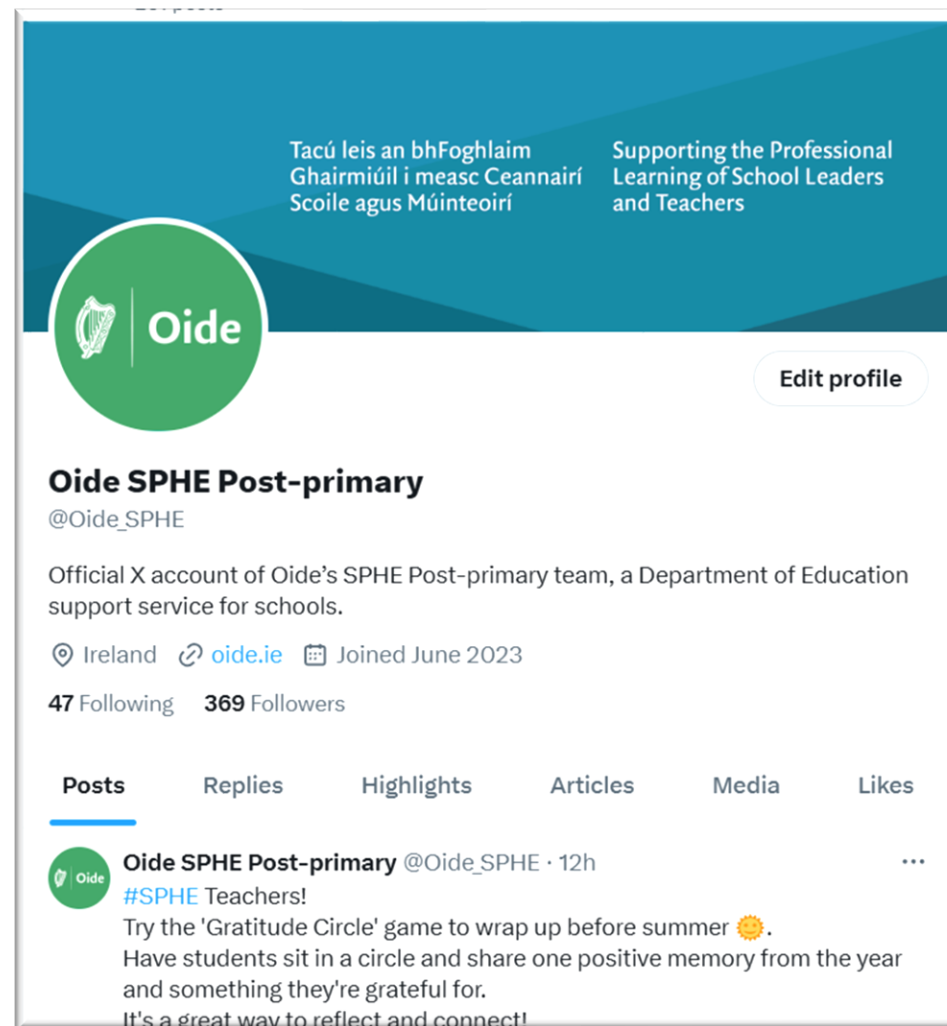


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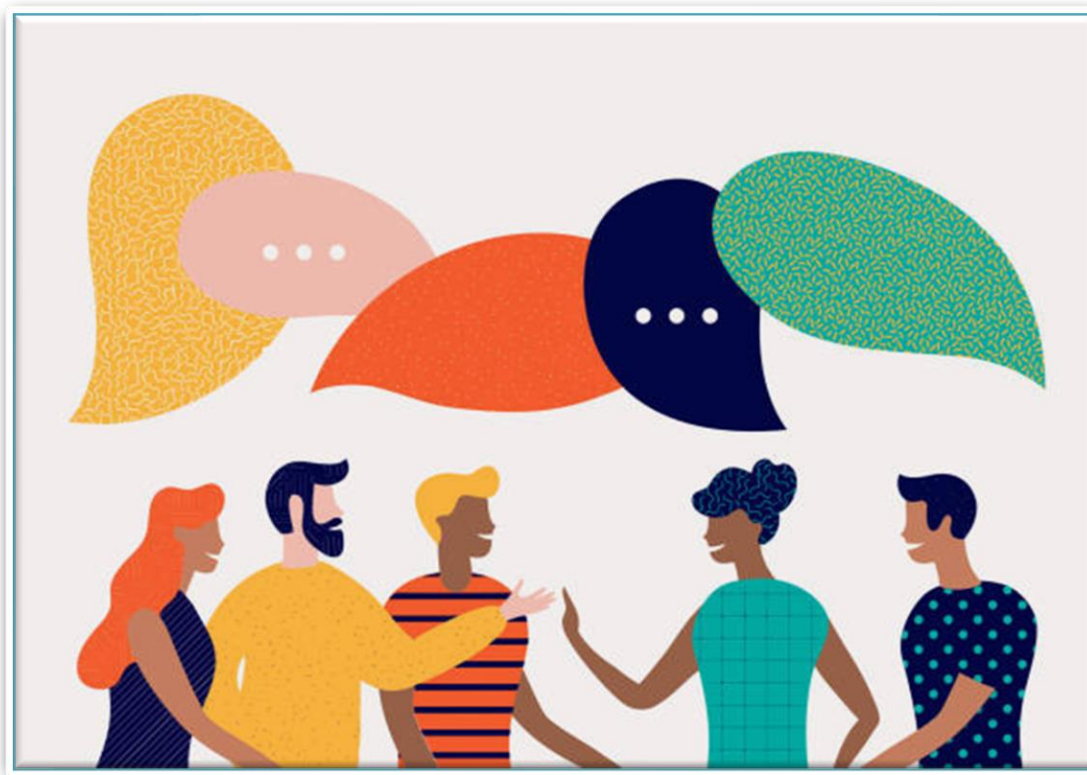
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Connect and Connections



Overview



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Session 1
09:30 - 11:00

Inclusion in the SPHE classroom
Resources and Pedagogical Approaches to support Learning
Outcomes in the Specification
Lesson Review and Demonstration

Tea/Coffee
11:00 - 11:15

Session 2
11:15 - 13:00

Lesson Review and Demonstration – Planning and Presentation

Lunch
13:00 - 14:00

Session 3
14:00 - 15:30

Lesson Review and Demonstration – Planning and Presentation
Reflection on Lesson Review and Demonstration
Resource to Support Teaching and Learning with LO 3.10



What Does Inclusion in the SPHE Classroom Mean to You?



 Mentimeter

Menti.com
Code:



What Does Inclusion in the SPHE Classroom Mean to You?

Diverse Family
Background

Diverse Cognitive
Physical and
Emotional Abilities

Different Personality
Types

Diverse Gender
Identities

Different
Socio-economic
Backgrounds

Varied Cultural,
Religious Beliefs
and World Views

Inclusion in the SPHE Classroom



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An inclusive SPHE classroom is one where students can encounter diversity in a respectful way.

It is grounded in a view of the individual and individual differences as a resource that can enrich the lives and learning of each other.



What strategies help to build and sustain an inclusive classroom environment?





Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

Resources and Pedagogical Approaches

Supporting Learning Outcomes in the Specification



Resources and Supports



Oide

NCCA SPHE Toolkit

Curriculum
Specification 2016

Curriculum
Specification 2023

Assessment
Guidelines (2016)

SPHE Toolkit



Preparing to teach



Teaching SPHE/RSE



Resources for
teaching and learning
SPHE/RSE 2023

Resources and Supports



Oide

SPHE Teaching Approaches

Student Voice in SPHE

Creative Approaches to Assessment in SPHE

Effective Pedagogical Approaches in SPHE

Student Reflection in SPHE

The Experiential Learning Cycle

Considerations when planning for a diversity of learners in SPHE



Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

Lesson Review and Demonstration



Oide

HSE RSE 1
Activity 4:
Sexual Orientation

HSE RSE 1
Activity 7:
Maintaining Healthy
Relationships

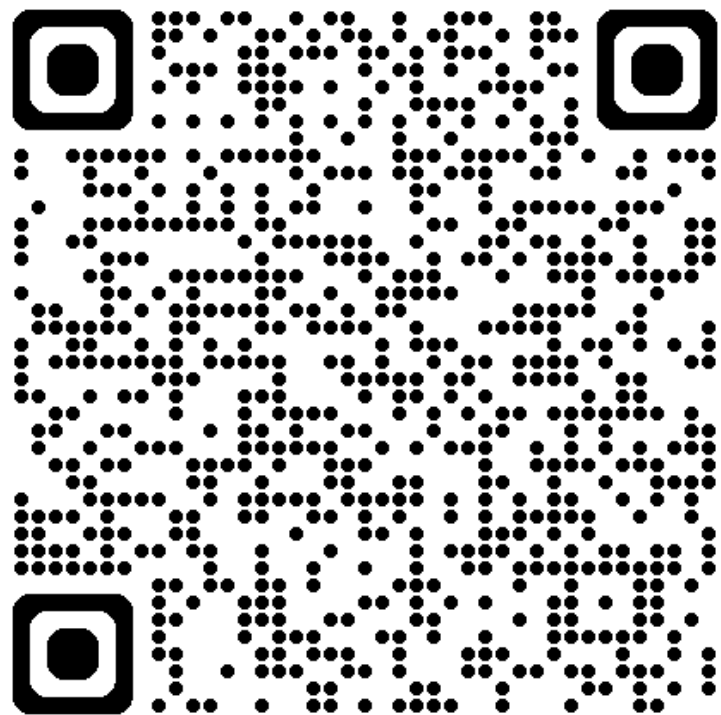
HSE RSE 1
Activity 9:
Human Reproduction
—
the journey of the egg
and sperm

HSE RSE 2
Activity 2:
Signs and Signals in
Relationships

HSE RSE 2
Activity 6:
Alcohol and Sexual
Consent



HSE RSE 2
Activity 9:
Male Reproductive
Health



Lesson Review and Demonstration



Oide

HSE RSE 1
Activity 4:
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Activity 7:
Maintaining Healthy
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HSE RSE 2
Activity 2:
Signs and Signals in
Relationships

HSE RSE 2
Activity 6:
Alcohol and Sexual
Consent



HSE RSE 2
Activity 9:
Male Reproductive
Health

30 Minutes Preparation



Oide

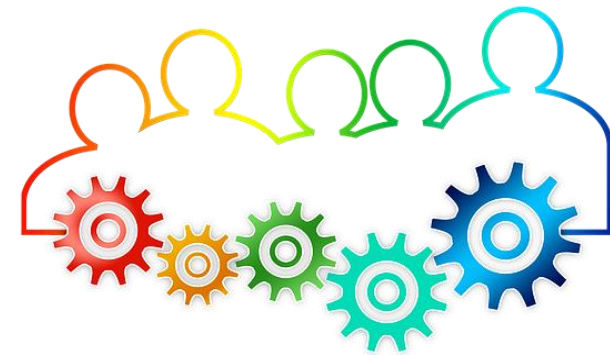
Lesson Review

1. Read and familiarise yourself with the lesson
2. Prepare a 'summary explanation of the lesson'
3. Identity 2 ways of making the lesson as inclusive as possible for all learners
4. Choose 1 activity within the lesson to model with the group in a ten-minute window
5. Identify a lead in and follow on lesson

30 minutes – preparation

10 minutes – modelling

10 minutes - provide an overview of the lesson & how to enhance inclusion



Lesson Review and Demonstration



Oide

HSE RSE 1
Activity 4:
Sexual Orientation

HSE RSE 1
Activity 7:
Maintaining Healthy
Relationships

HSE RSE 1
Activity 9:
Human Reproduction
—
the journey of the egg
and sperm

HSE RSE 2
Activity 2:
Signs and Signals in
Relationships

HSE RSE 2
Activity 6:
Alcohol and Sexual
Consent



HSE RSE 2
Activity 9:
Male Reproductive
Health

Lunch



Oide



Lesson Review and Demonstration



Oide

HSE RSE 1
Activity 4:
Sexual Orientation

HSE RSE 1
Activity 7:
Maintaining Healthy
Relationships

HSE RSE 1
Activity 9:
Human Reproduction
—
the journey of the egg
and sperm

HSE RSE 2
Activity 2:
Signs and Signals in
Relationships

HSE RSE 2
Activity 6:
Alcohol and Sexual
Consent



HSE RSE 2
Activity 9:
Male Reproductive
Health

Reflection of Lesson Review and Demonstration



Oide





If Gender Bias Begins With Us, It Can End With Us

Activity on Gender Bias

LO: 3.10



Key Messages



Oide

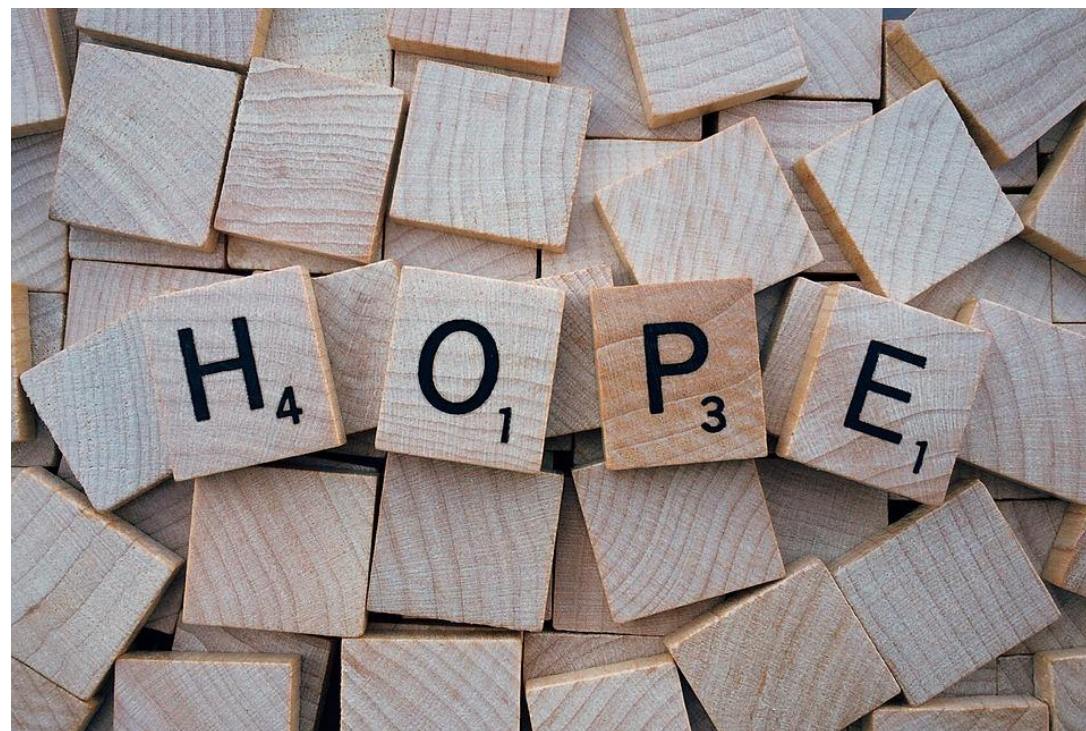
To empower teachers to feel more confident in discussing relationships and sexuality across the SPHE specification with their students

To explore and experience different methodologies relevant to the facilitation of Junior Cycle SPHE in the classroom.

To signpost a range of resources available to support teaching and learning across the SPHE specification



Revisiting our hopes...





Participant Reflection

Individual Reflection 3-2-1

3 new things you learned

2 things that you will
implement in your
SPHE/RSE class

1 thing that you will read
up on in more detail





Thank You

