

# Irish YouthWork Scene

## In This Issue

## Adolescent Issues

Peer Education and Relationships Education  
Reducing Youth Suicide

The diagram features a central white circle with a grey gradient. An arrow points from the 'In This Issue' box to this circle, and another arrow points from the circle to the 'Adolescent Issues' box. A third arrow points from the circle to the 'Peer Education and Relationships Education' article in the 'In This Issue' section.

Sexual Abstinence  
Young People & Decision Making

**a journal for youth workers**

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# Act or Inaction?

**Diarmuid Kearney, NYF Chief Executive**

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In December it was 'official'. There is no money available for the implementation of the Youth Work Act 2001. It seems that despite Minister of State for Youth, Ms Síle De Valera's best efforts it will be some time before we see the necessary funding to make the Act a reality. Even then, with an implementation schedule estimated at a minimum of 21 months, it will take three years before practical arrangement will be in place.

The frugal fiscal policies of Government will impact on youth work in a more negative and comprehensive manner however. A 1% increase in the Budget of the Youth Affairs Section of Department of Education and Science is a cut by any standards. It doesn't begin to address the demands of inflation and commitments under the Social Partnership Agreement 2003 - 2005. We are given to understand that a Youth Work Assessor will be appointed (hopefully with the seniority and independence appropriate to the post) and that there will also be additional demands on the purse as a consequence of Ireland's imminent EU Presidency. This represents an impossible task for the Minister and the Youth Affairs Section in balancing the books. We would all like to know how this dilemma might be addressed? What cut-backs in service are envisaged? Where they will take place? And how many young people will be affected? With a quarter of the year already gone this request would not seem unreasonable.

If all of this isn't bad enough, the Youth Service is simultaneously contending with drastic reductions in access to Community Employment Schemes and a vulnerability in funding from other Government Services. As ever youth work seems to constitute an irritating and not particularly well understood concern for Government. The State must take heed that the product of considerable effort over the course of recent years has a finite shelf life. There will come a time (not too far away) when the Youth Work Act 2001 and the National Youth Work Development 2002 - 2006 will have passed their 'sell by dates' and when implementation would not be advisable or particularly palatable. Similarly, implementation of the structural forms set out in the Act are meaningless, and indeed wasteful, if not accompanied by serious funding for the expansion of services nationally. We would simply have a more complicated and expensive system for administering the current inadequate funding. Perhaps it is time to bite the bullet.

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# Peer-to-Peer Approaches in Sex & Relationships Education

By Tim Bingham

## Introduction

Peer education has been popularly accepted as an important component of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) promotion programmes, because it typically combines several crucial factors in health promotion: strong identification of the young facilitators with the social and cultural environment of the target group, promotion of positive attitudes and healthy behaviours, and real involvement of young people in programmes targeted at them (Fee 1993).

Peer educators are people belonging to a group in a specific setting (school, workplace, army, prison, youth or sports club, gang, neighbourhood etc.) who are trained to educate their age cohort. They are usually, but not necessarily, young, and the approach is often related to SRH. Peer education can be especially beneficial for youngsters that are otherwise difficult to reach, and in environments where adults are generally reluctant to talk about sexuality with young people.

This paper addresses the peer-to-peer approach in the context of a SRH promotion programme for adolescents between 12 and 19 years of age. After a discussion about the sensitive issue of sexual education for young people and a description of the barriers young people face with regard to access to appropriate and accurate information, we present some of the features of the peer-to-peer approach, its advantages, challenges and limitations. This is followed by a more practical section, which presents various issues concerning the implementation of peer education programmes with 'to-do' checklists.

## Peer Education Concept

### Adults versus Peers

Adolescence is a period of life full of fundamental changes in which young people attempt to achieve autonomy from their parents/guardians. It is an

important time for them to form their identity and define their places and roles in society. In this phase adolescents are particularly susceptible to peer pressure, not least with regard to relationships, and sexuality. Perceptions about what their peers are doing and what is accepted in their peer group is usually more important in the establishment of their sexual behaviour than the opinions of parents, teachers, or other adults (Gage 1998). Moreover, most adolescents find talking about sex with adults uncomfortable.

Likewise, adults often have difficulties seeing adolescents as people who have a sexual identity and are reticent in talking about sex with them because of embarrassment and ignorance. In many cultures the whole idea of talking about sex across the generations is practically unthinkable. Therefore peers often constitute the most important reference group for information and support regarding relationships, sexuality, and SRH. Nonetheless, peer education must not take place in isolation from adults. Senior family members, teachers, health personnel, and others must complement peer-to-peer approaches.

Peer educators must be able to fulfill the different roles of educator, facilitator, counsellor, skills trainer and coach. They must be trained to fulfill these multiple roles, but should also reveal certain personal characteristics like flexibility, good interpersonal communication skills, and an openness to further learning and self-development.

Peer education can be used in small and large groups or in a one-to-one situation, both in formal as well as informal settings: wherever adolescents are found. Some young people need to be actively sought out, i.e., met in their seclusion, like drug addicts or juvenile prisoners. Theatre, cultural events, or sports competitions can function to attract and reach young people for peer-to-peer activities, or can be produced by peer groups to reinforce a message

### Sex Education and Services for Young People

Because the quantity and quality of information and support on sexual issues received from either adults or friends tends to be insufficient, it is important to

## Impact and Sustainability of Peer Education

provide adolescents with alternative sources of good information, knowledge and advice. Peer education is an excellent channel for transferring these. However, in addition, adolescents require a fundamental set of skills and competence, like risk reduction and life skills, in order to be able to plan, seek help and form positive relationships (Hughes 1998). Peers can only partially convey these skills, firstly because they would require more substantial training, and secondly, such roles could inadvertently create too great a distance between the peer educator and the target group, endangering the very concept of peer education. Mature peer educators could be given the necessary training for life skills teaching.

Increasingly peer educators are confronted with delicate issues like sexual violence and exploitation. Addressing such matters can be beyond the competence of the peer educator, but they should be able to recognise the problems, provide adequate information, and refer the peer to appropriate, youth-friendly services like social, legal, medical or reproductive health services (SEATS 2000). The service providers in turn should collaborate with the peer educators by giving some feedback on cases of referral, or directing young clients to the peer educator for confidential communication.

Distribution of condoms and other contraceptives can be done by peer educators and could eventually be extended to other (over-the-counter) health products. However, it is very important to guard against the danger of peer educators replacing qualified medical personnel, giving medical advice or prescribing drugs.

Peer educators can cover a broad range of subjects, including friendships and relationships, anatomy and physiology of the reproductive system, appropriate family planning methods, signs and symptoms of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs as well as for instance safe needle use in drug addicts. Among adolescents, rumours and half-truths tend to be rampant, and the peer educator must be well informed to effectively dispel these.

The messages should be clear, straightforward and in line with the national policies on SRH. At the same time, it is very important that the peer educator acknowledges his or her limits and should be comfortable with not being able to address, let alone solve, certain problems. SRH promotion should include a mix of well coordinated strategies, with messages and key players that complement each other.

Sustainability is a major concern in peer education programmes. The most important problem is the turnover of the participating peer educators: Adolescents can quickly lose interest, and initial enthusiasm can wane if new impulses are lacking. Often they are volunteers, working hard for few rewards and are likely to gradually seek a stable income elsewhere. Besides, as they get older, young peer educators tend to move away from their (target) group because they get married, seek further education or simply show their age. Furthermore, the programmes initiated by foreign donors are often dependent on erratic funding, which makes continuity a precarious issue. Therefore, it is important to diversify resources and advocacy.

The high turnover amongst peer educators and participants makes measuring the impact of peer programmes over time almost impossible. The diffusion of information, awareness and change of behaviour take time to materialise; in the meantime, however, members of the initial target group also change in other regards: they get married, finish their studies or take up a job. No sufficient process indicators have been developed to show the impact and effectiveness of peer education. While an increase of knowledge concerning SRH matters has been demonstrated through peer education, changes in sexual behaviour, and thereby programme cost-effectiveness, are difficult to establish. However, it has been proven that a peer education programme is cheaper per established contraceptive user than a programme based in a fixed youth-centre (Townsend, 1987).

Besides, peer education not only has an impact on the age cohort, but also on society at large. Firstly, the professional peer educators with acquired skills and knowledge regarding SRH are likely to continue to propagate safe sexual behaviour in their social environment. Secondly, the participants who actually change their sexual behaviour because of the peer approach, will also influence others. It has been proven that young people participating in a peer educator programme share their newly acquired information and skills with others in their immediate environment.

### Peer Education Programme

#### Conceptualisation

The first step is to define the peer educator programme, for which essential considerations are:

What are the constraints on adolescents for getting information about sexual issues?

What cohort of young people, and geographical area, is going to be targeted?

What will the general objective of the programme be?

Which subjects of SRH or related issues will be addressed?

Which methods are necessary to offer information and support?

What kind of training for the peer educators will be needed?

Who will supervise the peer educators?

Which existing structures will be used in the programme?

What other complementary channels to reach the adolescents will be used?

Where will funding come from?

These issues must be discussed by all of the stakeholders, i.e. donors, organisations/individuals involved in the implementation and supervision of the training and practice of peer educators, the educators themselves, and the targeted adolescents.

The programme should not be over ambitious, and concentrate on quality rather than quantity. A modest start with a growth of the programme is the best approach. Especially in the beginning, peer educators will require considerable supervision and support from the programme staff; only later will they be able to strengthen each others' roles disseminating information to, as well as exchanging experiences with, participants with the aim of helping to change attitudes and behaviour. Once the programme has been defined, official recognition should be sought and links with youth-friendly (SRH) services officially established.

### Concept development

1. Decide what approach will be used: informal, in groups, individual, etc.
2. Decide where the activities will take place: schools, meeting points, sport events etc.
3. Decide what kind of activities will take place: informal communication, meetings, role-plays, practical demonstrations, production of Information, Education, Communication (IEC) material (like magazine, radio/television spot, brochure) etc.

4. Define the exact terms of reference for the peer educators
5. Prepare official documents (internal organisation, letter of understanding with collaborating organisations, registration of the organisation, request for permission of the ministries involved etc.)
6. Establish a kind of supervisory body (board of directors, monitoring committee or advisory committee etc.), with involvement of the community

## Management

Given the problems of sustainability it is necessary to give ample attention to financial planning. The available budget should be carefully allocated according to pre-set criteria. To tackle the usually high turnover of the peer educators the programme needs to set aside resources for a long-term replacement plan. A peer education programme should involve the targeted adolescents in all stages of the programme.

While primarily ensuring the participation of young people, it is also important to engage adults in the programme in order to reduce existing anxieties, to lobby for acceptance of the activities, and to facilitate better communication between generations. The role of all of the partners in the network of complementary programmes and services should be clear and formalised in official documents like contracts or letters of understanding.

### Financial planning

1. Establish a budget per activity
2. Set priorities
3. Diversify sources of income
4. Estimate the number of peer educators to be replaced per year, and develop a replacement scheme for peer educators
5. Establish binding agreements with other organisations, especially donors.

## Selection of Peer Educators

Young people play an essential role in the identification of their leaders. Most often they will

select the most dominant individuals of their cohort, but the selection process should ensure that the identified peer educators sufficiently reflect the interests of the group in question. (Likewise young people should be involved in identifying and defining the health messages, and choosing the setting(s) where the activities will take place.) The selection of peer educators has to be transparent and comply with pre-established criteria. Most obviously they have to be members of the target group, and they should also show:

- Willingness to work hard and with irregular hours
- Self confidence and potential for leadership
- Good interpersonal communication competence, including listening skills
- Commitment to SRH issues
- Discrete and confidential manner in dealing with their peers
- Respect for other opinions and behaviour without judging others
- Ability to motivate and persuade others
- Openness to further learning and self-development
- Willingness to 'practise what they preach' behaviour and attitudes they will advocate
- Shared characteristics with the target group

Good reputation with their peers, good social skills and ability to establish good relations within a group.

Academic talents and achievements are usually not very important, but they must possess basic intellectual skills. Gender concerns should be considered.

### **Motivation**

To secure the ongoing motivation of the peer educators, several strategies of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation should be developed. Intrinsic drives for youth to engage in peer education include altruism, to feel good when helping others, or social acceptance.

Much of the non-financial motivation depends on the environment; if the atmosphere is stimulating, the activities innovative and a sense of friendly competition reigns, it will be easier to motivate young peer educators. Giving responsibility to adolescents is often contentious, yet possibly one of the best forms of motivation.

Such intrinsic reasons facilitate sustainability better than extrinsic ones.

Intrinsic motivation for peer educators can be generated or heightened by:

- Providing ongoing training
- Awarding training certificates
- Delegating responsibility for data collection and analysis
- Highlighting the positive social implications the role carries
- Reiterating the benefits the work brings for their own personal development and professional career
- Offering internships in projects or similar activities
- Offering gifts and prizes such as T-shirts, baseball-caps, shoulder bags with logo
- Offering regional and international exchange programme for young people.

Extrinsic motivations include future career opportunities, compensation in kind and material or financial incentives. The latter is often the most appreciated, especially where peer educators are un(der)employed. At the same time, remuneration is difficult to ensure, and salaries will hardly be feasible except in donor-driven programmes, especially given that adolescent SRH is not a high priority for most governments.

The most appropriate kind of financial remuneration is performance-related pay, whereby a small fee is paid per activity and there is some mechanism for gauging the effectiveness of such activities. Through such compensation, the peer educators' skills are acknowledged and they could also seek contracts with (other) SRH measures or programmes. Potential peer educators themselves are usually not willing or able to spend much money on their training. Hence, generally attention should focus on alternative ways to motivate the peer educators.

#### **Financial motivation for peer educators:**

- 1 Compensation of costs or expenditures
- 2 Allowance as sign of appreciation
- 3 Fixed salaries
- 4 Payment per activity
- 5 Encouraging peer educators to raise their own funds, by social marketing of health products (contraceptives, condoms, vitamins).

### Peer remuneration

- 1 Calculate how much money is available for the payment of peer educators
- 2 Discuss the options with the peer educators
- 3 Make written contracts with peer educators
- 4 Establish a transparent system of incentives or payment for the peer educator.

## Training

In a peer education programme, the adolescents need to be trained, but also their supervisors, and project staff, including administrators, need to be sensitised to health issues. However, the key lies in the training of the educators. The amount of training depends greatly on the tasks and types of programmes in which they will be involved. For instance, if they are expected to counsel or convey prevention strategies in addition to simple health messages, considerably more input is required. Continuous training at routine meetings of peer educators as well as special refresher courses are essential.

A comprehensive initial training course tends to reduce the number of dropouts and also reduces the amount of supervision and re-training needed. In addition, the peer educators should receive some reference materials on technical issues and on educational techniques. Peer training should cover basic information on adolescence, relationships, SRH, communication and life skills, mobilisation or motivation strategies, use of IEC material, how and where to seek further assistance, and more. The training should be undertaken by an experienced organisation.

Peer educators require close supervision and continuous training, as well as extra support to cope with the emotional pressure encountered through this work. Regular meetings with a knowledgeable and experienced resource person are essential, and will improve the performance of the peer educators.

They need such a forum to ask questions, exchange experiences and discuss difficulties and solutions. Preferably the programme should be attached to an institution (youth home, school, sports club), association, or informal group (street children, sweatshops), in order to facilitate supervision and assure proper follow-up. To minimise turnover of peer educators, older educators can function as coaches.

### Training components

- 1 Select a module for the training of peer educators
- 2 Identify appropriate trainers
- 3 Organise/develop training of trainers and supervisors
- 4 Organise the training of peer educators
- 5 Distribute reference, background and IEC materials
- 6 Organise regular meetings with peer educators
- 7 Encourage peer educators to exchange experiences
- 8 Ensure regular updating of reference materials

The form of presentation of a health message is as important as its content, especially when working with adolescents. The peer educator should always employ interactive methods, and allow sufficient time for all peers to engage or ask questions. To support these aims, they should utilise IEC material for information and inspiration, which is clear, accurate, interesting, relevant and attractive. Videos and comic books, but also radio or TV broadcasts and theatre plays, can help start discussions between peer educators and their clients. Peer educators must be trained to use teaching aids effectively. They can also contribute to the development of youth-friendly material

### IEC Material

- 1 Identify appropriate existing educational materials
- 2 Procure and produce educational materials
- 3 Train peer educators in the effective use of educational materials
- 4 Use feedback of the target group to adapt educational materials.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Although assessing the impact of peer education is not yet well developed, it is necessary to monitor and evaluate the progress and outcomes of the programme to some extent. An evaluation plan and monitoring mechanisms should be built in from the start.

## Epilogue

Peer educators should be part of the conceptualisation and execution of such system, with sound supervision. They represent an important source of information on the running of the programme, feedback from the target group, the daily problems they encounter and possible solutions.

Some possible indicators to monitor the activities of a peer education programme:

Number of young people reached

Changes in youth's knowledge

(Positive) changes in attitudes to key messages (attitudes, intentions)

Number of referrals made by the peer educator to family planning or STD services

Number of contraceptives distributed (e.g. condoms sold or distributed free)

Changes in behaviour/practices of the target group  
Cost of the programme per person targeted or per contraceptive user.

Positive evaluation findings provide a concrete way to demonstrate the effectiveness of a project and enable the project to raise funding. A successful programme will also strengthen the (future) position of its peer educators on the job market.

### Impact Assessment:

- 1 Assign responsible persons for monitoring and evaluation
- 2 Study local health information management systems
- 3 Define specific objectives, and indicators
- 4 Formalise an evaluation and monitoring system (who, when, how often, where)
- 5 Prepare all the forms for this system
- 6 Train the people who will execute the system
- 7 Collect the data
- 8 Analyse the data
- 9 Report and share the data
- 10 Market the results of the monitoring and evaluation.

Young people have a right to reliable information about SRH issues, and they require opportunities to talk about their concerns and questions. In some situations, they are faced with a multitude of sometimes confusing messages; in other situations there is a lack of youth-friendly information and/or services altogether. Therefore it is necessary to create an environment in which adolescents are given the opportunity to interact and explore their feelings and queries amongst themselves. Peer educators are well placed to create such environment, because of their proximity to and identification with the target group.

However, embarking on a peer education programme requires the firm commitment of all involved, including the project co-ordinators. Peer educators need substantial input in their training and supervision, particularly against a backdrop of high turnover amongst the young educators, who need to be kept motivated to ensure a sustainable programme.

Other programmes and services that address the needs and potentials of young people need to complement peer education programmes in order to achieve positive changes in attitudes and behaviour. Once the constraints of such programmes are taken into account, peer education plays an important role in the healthy development of young people.

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# Suicide Prevention in Youth Work- Co-ordinating Services

By Fran Bissett

## Introduction

Recently published research by OECD shows that Ireland had the second highest rate of suicides for people under 25 years. This continuing increase can only be tackled by cross sector intervention and a partnership of government and voluntary agencies argued Diarmuid Kearney, Chief Executive Officer of the National Youth Federation.

Mr. Kearney was speaking at the launch by the Minister of State for Children, Brian Lenihan T.D. of two Suicide Prevention Resource Publications - An Information Booklet and a Resource Handbook for Youth Organisations and Youth Workers, launched on 26 February 2003, in Kilkenny. These new resources will be central supports to suicide awareness and prevention training currently being delivered to youth workers as part of a pilot project in the South East, in partnership with the South Eastern Health Board.

## Launch of Materials

The launch was told of the need to counteract a terrible fear that some young people experienced during their transition from childhood to adulthood, plus the anxiety that peer pressure, education expectations, first time employment and their personal relationships may bring upon them can all be contributory factor in youth suicide and attempted suicide.

Mr Kearney stated that Youth Services were ideally placed and trusted by the young people to assist in this work but that youth workers and volunteers required specific suicide awareness training, much of which could now be delivered as a result of this joint initiative between the South Eastern Health Board, the National Suicide Review Group and the National Youth Federation. He called for the implementation of such training on a nationwide basis.

## Prevention Resources

The **Suicide Prevention Resource Handbook** contains the following materials and is geared to youth organisations and full-time workers wishing to develop their expertise in this area and/or develop organisational strategies and planned responses:

### SECTION 1: TRENDS IN YOUTH SUICIDE

- International Trends
- Irish Trends
- Age and Gender Breakdown
- Regional Variations
- Occupational Variations
- Media Impact
- Methods of Suicide

### SECTION 2: PARASUICIDE IN ADOLESCENCE

- Incidence
- Family Background
- Immediate Antecedents
- Physical and Mental Health
- Social Relationships
- Repeated Suicidal Behaviour
- Risk Assessment and Future Care
- Limits to Role of the Youth Worker

### SECTION 3: CAUSES OF SUICIDE: SOCIOLOGICAL, PERSONALITY, PSYCHOLOGICAL, PSYCHOSOCIAL AND MEDICAL /NEUROCHEMICAL FACTORS

- Changing family structures
- Marital breakdown
- Changing cultural values/ religious practices
- Unemployment / employment
- Alcohol and substance misuse
- Increased availability of methods of suicide
- Mental well-being
- Depression

- Cognitive Styles
- Hopelessness
- Self-Esteem
- Personality Characteristics
- Personality Disorders
- Stress
- Coping
- Support
- Genetic Factors
- Psychiatric Illness
- Physical Illness

#### **SECTION 4: PREVENTING SUICIDE - THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH WORKER**

- Principles
- Mental Health Promotion
- Training for Staff and Volunteers
- Befriending
- Becoming an Effective Listener
- Peer Led Responses
- Recognising Danger & Warning Signs
- Risk Identification
- Limits to Role of the Youth Worker
- Risk Situations
- Responding
- Crisis Intervention
- Referral
- Accident/Emergency Service Developments
- Postvention Measures
- Crisis Action Plan
- Using a Consultant
- Dealing With the Media
- General Preventative Measures
- Dealing With Suicide Risk
- Post Suicide Intervention

#### **SECTION 5: SERVICES, RESOURCES & APPENDICES**

- Suicide Services
- Bereavement Support Groups
- Mental Health Services
- Specialist Services
- List of Useful Helplines
- List of Useful Websites
- Irish Based Resources
- Irish Based Articles and Papers
- International Resources
- Appendix A: Terminology
- Appendix B: Legalities
- Appendix C: Burial Rights

#### **SUICIDE INFORMATION BOOKLET**

The **Suicide Prevention Information Booklet** is geared primarily to youth workers and volunteers wishing to develop their basic knowledge and their individual coping and response strategies to youth suicide. It contains eight sections each with concise information relating to the title of the section as follows:

- Introduction
- Risk Factors, Crisis Situations and Warning Signs
- What to Say/What Not to Say
- Managing a Crisis: in the Event of a Threat of Suicide
- Managing a Crisis: in the Event of a Suicide or Attempted Suicide
- Postvention Measures: Managing Events in the Aftermath of a Suicide
- Suggested Reading & Resources
- Support Services

#### **Conclusion**

The overall project, in particular the training component, will undergo a formal evaluation after its completion this summer. It is then planned to make recommendations and/or look at ways of mainstreaming and making the training, that was piloted in the South East, available nationwide.

The Handbook and Booklet are available at a combined cost of €10 plus postage from:

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**Website: www.iywc.com**

# No Apologies - The Truth about Life, Love & Sex a Character Based Sex Education Programme

By Tim Bingham

## Introduction

Research published in the American Journal of Sociology shows adolescents who make a commitment to abstinence delay sexual involvement by an average 18 months to 3 years (USA Today Jan 4th 2001).

The NO Apologies programme is an abstinence-based curriculum that has been translated into eleven languages and adapted for use in 49 countries outside the US including Australia, China, Mexico, Brazil, Greece, Russia, India, Hungary and South Africa.

## Curriculum Rationale

Delaying sexual involvement is important and achievable standard for young people, and this video curriculum is intended to help young people:

- 1 Identify clearly the consequences associated with premarital sexual activity
2. Understand the value of healthy behaviours
3. Practice the skills necessary to achieve the goal of premarital sexual abstinence.

Strong Character is an essential element to avoiding risky behaviour and fulfilling commitments. Character is the foundation to effectively teach children to deal appropriately with decisions about all high-risk behaviours.

Destructive behaviours (violence, dishonesty, drug abuse and being sexually active) have a common core, an absence of good character.

We must make intentional, collaborative and focused efforts to foster character development in our children/ youth. Values we promote include respect, responsibility, honesty, fairness, integrity, kindness, self-discipline and courage.

Sexual behaviour is determined by values rather than by mere knowledge. The activities in No Apologies teach and reinforce these values.

## Curriculum Principles

The curriculum lessons are:

Directive and emphasise risk elimination and wise decision making rather than risk reduction and contraception

Relationship and family centred, involving parents. Notes for parents are included in each session

Age appropriate

Teaching abstinence as an achievable standard of conduct. Self-control in sexual areas will result in self-control in other areas as well. Students learn the power of saying "No"!

The curriculum is also:

**Character based.** Uncommitted sex corrupts character by corrupting integrity. Un-checked sexual desires can easily run amok and lead to habits of exploiting others for ones personal pleasure.

**Designed for commitment.** The curriculum ends with providing an opportunity for the student to make a decision for abstinence (pledge). Research shows a delay in sexual onset from 1.5 years to 3 years from students

who sign.

**Reviewed by medical team and endorsed.** A team of over 14 medical doctors have reviewed the curriculum.

## Curriculum Outline

The logic of the Curriculum lessons is that each lesson builds on the previous one. New information is introduced after decisions have been made or evaluated from the previous lesson/unit as follows:

1) **The Video:** After viewing the video, the facilitator facilitates discussion with the young people about the key messages from the video. Students begin to explore why teenagers engage in sexual activity.

2) **Healthy Relationships:** The key message of unit two is that we are not just physical being We are multi deminsional (emotional, physical, social, ethical, intellectual)

Students begin to see themselves, and others, as multi-dimensional. Students set dreams about their future and also set goals to accomplish their dream.

The facilitator facilitates discussion on the obstacles to reaching goals. The young people learn about the role character plays in fulfilling dreams. Each young person evaluates his or her character. The power of friendship is emphasised

3) **Media Literacy:** Examines the influence of the media on teens. The young people practice critical thinking and evaluate the influence of media in advertising, music, literature, movies, TV and the Internet.

4) **Premarital Sex and Consequences:** The critical message of premarital sex and consequences is discussed. It is introduced in the video, but laid aside until the ground has been prepared by the messages of character, future, dreams, goals, obstacles to fulfilling goals and influences like friends and the media.

The unit activities and discussion centre on STD's (including HIV/AIDS), sexual progression and drawing boundaries, decision making and consequences of pre marital sexual and dispelling the myth of 'Safe sex'

5) **Abstinence works every time:** This unit defines abstinence and underscores the benefits of self-control and abstinence. Young people practice refusal skills against negative peer pressure and learn to create safe boundaries on 'dates'.

Also highlighted in this unit is the relationship alcohol and drugs plays in peer pressure and in keeping the commitments to dreams/goals/future. Students who have been sexually active and encouraged to make a commitment to abstinence.

This programme is available at a cost of €57.60 (+ Postage & Packing).

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# Policy Funding & Round Up

## EQUALITY AUTHORITY LAUNCHES NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

On 27 January the Equality Authority launched its new Strategic Plan to cover the years 2003 - 2005 and to form the basis for prioritising themes to direct the work of the Authority over the next 3 years. The first Strategic Plan of the Equality Authority covered the initial years of its existence, a period which saw a significant demand on its services.

Demand has continued to grow for the Agency's services and over the last year alone, casework has included all nine grounds covered by the Employment Equality Act 1998 and the Equal Status Act 2000. In this context, the publication of a second Strategic Plan is very welcome. It will build on the work done over the previous years while continuing to plan and carry forward the mandate of the Equality Authority in a constantly changing environment.

Over the next years, as outlined in the plan, the Equality Authority will build on and further develop the work done over the past three years. One particular focus to the work will be service provision in the fields of health and of education.

Initiatives will also be taken to assist service providers in these areas to fulfill their obligations under the Equal Status Act 2000 and to proactively pursue equality outcomes across all nine grounds of the equality agenda, making the workplace and beyond more accessible to all.

### For further information contact:

Department of Justice,  
Equality and Law Reform  
72-76, St. Stephens Green  
Dublin 2.

Tel: 01 6028202 Fax: 01 6615461  
Email: [info@justice.ie](mailto:info@justice.ie)

## 2003 EUROPEAN YEAR OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (EYPD)

The EYPD's objective is to drive progress towards achieving equal rights for people with disabilities. Across Europe attention will be focused on the many areas of European society where barriers and discrimination still exist for the one in ten people in the European Union who have a disability (37 million people).

A recent European survey shows there is a serious lack of understanding of what disability means and how many people it affects. On the website devoted to the EYPD, the Commission states "disabled people should be treated as equal citizens who have the power to speak for themselves, not as objects of pity or charity. Disabled people are often excluded from society through poor education and unemployment, leading to poverty".

Many activities and events (festivals, debates, partnerships, conferences, protests, parties, lobbying, etc.) should happen in 2003 at national and local level. They will be linked through a People's March. Starting in January 2003 a specially designed European Year bus will travel through cities, towns and villages in the 15 EU Member States.

Further details: <http://www.eypd2003.org>

## NEW BARNARDO'S CHILD AND FAMILY DIRECTORY

Barnardo's' National Children's Resource Centre has published its fourth edition of the Child and Family Directory, which provides a comprehensive listing of services and organisations working with children and families. The first edition of the Child

and Family Directory was published in 1996, and each edition has seen the increase in organisations and subjects included in the directory.

The subjects range from Access, Acne, and Adoption through to Young Offenders, Youth and Youth Information. New subject entries in the directory include Ethnic Minorities, Organ Retention, Shared Parenting and Voluntary Work.

The directory is available at a cost of €8 (+ p&p) from:

**Barnardos**  
**National Children's Resource Centre**  
**Christchurch Square**  
**Dublin 8.**  
**Tel: 01 4549699.**  
**Email: [ncrc@barnardo's.ie](mailto:ncrc@barnardo's.ie).**  
**(Opening hours for the public:**  
**Mon to Fri 9.30 a.m. - 1 p.m.)**

**CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ALLIANCE WEBSITE**

The Children's Rights Alliance website, [www.childrensrights.ie](http://www.childrensrights.ie) is now online, though some sections remain under construction. When completed, the site will be the online source of information on the rights of children in Ireland, providing current, comprehensive and age-appropriate information on children's rights, entitlements and services in Ireland. It is anticipated that the website will be launched in the late spring.

**HEARING VOICES RESOURCE MATERIALS NOW AVAILABLE**

The Alliance received a grant from Comhairle to research, develop and implement those sections of the website specifically for use by children, young people and their parents or guardians. Those sections are being developed in a manner designed to ensure that the information on children's rights is accessible and understandable to all those who may need it.

The Alliance welcomes any feedback from member organisations about the site or suggestions about documents or other material which could be included

to improve or add to the site.

Last September, the Children's Rights Alliance in conjunction with the National Youth Council of Ireland launched an important research study on consulting children and young people experiencing poverty or other forms of social exclusion. The study, "Hearing Young Voices", identified good practice in obtaining the views of young people in relation to public policy that affects them.

The research, which was undertaken on behalf of the Open Your Eyes to Child Poverty Initiative, involved gathering information on opportunities that exist in and beyond Ireland for children and young people to be consulted; a survey of 124 policy-makers and practitioners; interviews with 10 policy-makers and focus group consultations with over 60 young people.

An accompanying resource materials pack has now been published. The resource materials are designed to provide information and guidance to public policy-makers and policy influencers, funders, practitioners and children/young people, with particular reference to those who will have a direct role to play in consultative processes that enable children and young people to contribute to relevant public policy developments in Ireland.

The materials are arranged in an "information pack" format and include a full colour A3 poster for children and young people that raises awareness of their right to be consulted and affords them an understanding of what they should expect from a consultation that is consistent with good practice. In addition, there are thirteen separate A4 inserts. These inserts are:

A synopsis for public policy-makers, policy influencers and others whose work impacts on children/young people that summarises their roles and responsibilities in relation to consultative work with children and young people and identifies issues meriting particular consideration by them.

A synopsis specifically for practitioners

A synopsis for funders

A context-specific outline of the arguments for and against consulting with children and young people

A summary of what 'consultation' means/ought to mean as it pertains to children and young people

Checklists comprising considerations and

suggestions on two key follow-up actions relating to consultation with children and young people - feedback and evaluation

Checklists regarding additional core planning issues that arise in relation to consultation with children and young people: direct and indirect consultation, legal and protection issues, making contact with children and young people

Checklists regarding key resource issues that arise in relation to consultation with children and young people, namely: finance and funding, time, personnel, supporting children and young people

Checklists regarding key ethical issues that arise in relation to consultation with children and young people

Checklists regarding key implementation issues: what to consult children/young people about, where to conduct consultations, when to conduct them, who should facilitate them, and how to elicit responses from children and young people

Case studies

A list of contact details for organisations that can provide additional information and/or assistance

A bibliography of key relevant publications and useful resource materials.

The Alliance believes these materials will help statutory agencies and NGOs with projects designed to help children be heard. It also hoped that these findings will help relevant Government Departments, Statutory Agencies and NGOs to meet their responsibilities under Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Goal One of the National Children's Strategy.

A copy of the Hearing Young Voices Guidelines will be posted to all members very soon.

Additional copies can be obtained from:

**Children's Rights Alliance**  
Tel: 01 4054823  
Website: [www.childrensrights.ie](http://www.childrensrights.ie)

## **BARNARDO'S LAUNCHES UNDERAGE DRINKING CAMPAIGN**

Barnardo's has begun a new public awareness campaign designed to draw attention to the impact of problem drinking on children and young people in Ireland. In its literature for the campaign, Barnardo's stresses the connection between adult problem drinking and increased underage drinking.

More than 50% of a sample of nearly 8,500 children ranging from ages 9-17 reported having a drink prior to ages 9-11. 29% of these children reported having been "really drunk" at least once.

Through this campaign, Barnardo's hopes to achieve:

A commitment from political parties that they will always favour the interests of young people over the drinks industry.

An effective and enforced ban on alcohol advertising aimed at youth audiences.

A replacement of the current alcohol sponsorship of sports.

Funding for recreational resources for young people that would provide an alternative to drinking.

Further details:

**Barnardos'**  
**National Children's Resource Centre**  
**Christchurch Square**  
**Dublin 8**  
**Tel: 01 4549699.**  
**Email: [ncrc@barnardo's.ie](mailto:ncrc@barnardo's.ie).**  
**(Opening hours for the public:**  
**Mon to Fri 9.30 a.m. - 1 p.m.)**

# Resources

## SUICIDE PREVENTION

### **Suicide Prevention: Resource Handbook for Youth Organisations**

*By National Youth Federation, South Eastern Health Board & National Suicide Review Group*

Comprehensive handbook, which contains the following five sections and is geared to youth organisations and full-time workers wishing to develop an expertise in this area and/or develop organisational strategies and planned responses:

- SECTION 1:** Trends of Suicide
- SECTION 2:** Parasuicide in Adolescence
- SECTION 3:** Causes of Suicide: Sociological, Personality, Psychological, Psychosocial, Medical and Neurochemical Factors
- SECTION 4:** Preventing Suicide - The Role of the Youth Worker
- SECTION 5:** Services Resources and Appendices

**Cost: €10.00 (handbook and booklet together)**

### **Suicide Prevention: Information Booklet for Youth Workers**

*By National Youth Federation, South Eastern Health Board & National Suicide Review Group*

Geared primarily to youth workers & volunteers wishing to develop their basic knowledge and their individual coping and response strategies to youth suicide. It contains eight sections each with concise information relating to the title of the section as follows: Introduction; Risk Factors, Crisis Situations and Warning Signs; What to Say/What Not to Say; Managing a Crisis: in the Event of a Threat of Suicide; Managing a Crisis: in the Event of a Suicide or Attempted Suicide; Postvention Measures: Managing Events in the Aftermath of a Suicide; Suggested Reading & Resources and Support Services.

**Cost: €10.00 (handbook and booklet together)**

### **The Mental Health Initiative: A Resource Manual for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention in Third Level Education** *By Trinity College Dublin and Northern Area Health Board*

The Government's Report of the National Task Force on Suicide highlighted the potential for the third level education sector to address the problem of suicide. While much has been written about suicide prevention in secondary schools, little has been published about good practices in third level education. Staff members and academics alike have been searching for a resource that addresses the issues of mental health promotion and suicide prevention. In response, the Mental Health Initiative commenced at Trinity College Dublin in October 2001 to research these issues in higher education. One of the results of the project is this resource manual. The handouts, workshop module and training exercises contained in the manual are also available to download, adapt and use in other third level institutions.

## USING VIDEO WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

### **Another View: Introduction to Using Video in Working with Young People**

*By National Youth Arts Programme & Youthnet, N.I.*

Practical manual developed from a 5-year training programme for youth workers in video-making run by the NYCI, Open Channel (a community television company) and Youthnet. Designed to provide youth workers with the necessary skills in developing video as a tool for quality youth work practice, it provides the basic knowledge required to produce a video and technical information on video making, taking the learning, knowledge and expertise developed from the training and transferring it into a format that is accessible, practical and relevant as an aid for other youth workers to use video in their work.

**Cost: €10.00**

## WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

### **Time to Grow: A Comprehensive Programme for People Working with Young Offenders and Young People at Risk (2000)**

*By Tim Chapman*

Training programme that offers practitioners guidance on how to provide three core opportunities for growth, a nurturing community, the processes of learning, and committed, purposeful relationships and to do so with integrity. It focuses on the growth of young people and is designed to be organic and self-developing. The first part of the programme explores principles, research and theories that might be useful when thinking through how to work with young people and the second part contains outlines of modules on processes, which address a range of needs, risks and protective factors. The programme also provides guidelines on how to plan and deliver programmes tailored to the individual. It aims to achieve sustainable learning and change; be appropriate to the level of maturity or development of the participants; be culturally sensitive and to value diversity; adopt a holistic approach.

**Cost: €45.00**

### **The RHP Companion to Working With Young People (2002)**

*By Fiona Factor, Vipin Chauhan & John Pitts*

Unique handbook that brings together in a one comprehensive volume the diversity, challenges and accomplishments of the youth work profession. It looks at three core areas: the context of practice; the practice of youth work and working with young people, breaking each down into thematic areas, by bringing together contributions from youth and community workers (statutory & voluntary), youth justice projects, teachers, health & drug educators, community development workers and academics among others.

**Cost: €22.00**

### **Who's Got the Remote Control?: Real World Guide to the Power of the Media**

*By Johnny Sheehan and Grainne O'Byrne for DEFY Project, NYCI*

Resource pack developed to strengthen young people's skills in critically interpreting media. It aims to enable young people to reflect on their use of media; increase understanding of media processes; to explore issues of media representation, particularly of those from the developing world; to

explore issues of access to media at a local and global level, and consumption of the media by young people; to develop young people's media analysis skills; to engage young people in educational action to tackle media injustice.

**Cost: €5.00**

## YOUTH & COMMUNITY WORK COURSES

### **Directory of Youth & Community Work Courses 2003-2004**

*By Fran Bissett*

9th edition of this annual directory by the Irish YouthWork Centre containing over 50 part-time, full-time and distance learning courses on youth and community work and related subjects from extra-mural level through to post-graduate and management level. Each entry contains information on course duration/fees; academic requirements; content/curriculum; placements/fieldwork; exam schedules & project/thesis requirements.

**Cost: €7.00**

## YOUTH LEADERSHIP

### **Leadership With Young People (2002)**

*By Peter Barnes*

Aimed at both professionals and volunteers who work with young people and need to understand the effective use of personal leadership. It introduces some of the more relevant leadership theories in a readable manner, provides ideas on putting them in to practice, how to recognise and support different leadership styles, encourage the development of leaders through experience, reflection, learning from others and from mistakes. It also includes the voices of young people to illustrate how leadership can be received and contributions from workers working in specialist areas such as with young women, special needs and disability, ethnic communities, spirituality and leadership.

**Cost: €18.00**

The IYWC is an official sales agent in the Republic of Ireland for CPA, DEFY, Directory of Social Change, NYCI, Nightshift Publications and Russell House Publishing.

Further Information from:

Fran Bissett

Irish YouthWork Centre, NYF

20 Lower Dominick Street, Dublin 1

Tel: (01) 8729933 Fax: (01) 8724183

E-mail: fbissett@nyf.ie Website: www.iywc.com

# Noticeboard

## **Confident Teens: *Helping to build self-esteem and social skills with young people***

### **Dates & Venues:**

**1- 2 May, 2003. 10:00 - 5:00. (Sligo)**

**14 - 15 May, 2003. 10:00 - 5:00. (Galway)**

**4 - 5 June, 2003. 10.00 - 5.00. (New Ross)**

Two-day course aimed at establishing the nature of adolescents and identifying the importance of self-esteem and social skills as a foundation for healthier lifestyles among young people.

The course aims to assist those who wish to develop appropriate ways of supporting young people and helping them to build confidence and coping skills.

**Cost: €100.00 (20 participants max.)**

## **It's Your Choice: Creative ways of working with young people on the Alcohol Issue**

**Date & Venue: 11 -12 June, 2003. 10.00- 5.00.  
(Galway)**

Two-day training course aimed at those who plan to work on alcohol related issues with young people in out-of-school settings. The course will provide an opportunity to explore ways of addressing young peoples' relationship with alcohol using a range of creative methodologies.

**Cost: €100.00 (20 participants max.)**

## **Dealing With the Bully**

**Date: 9 June, 2003. 10.00 - 5.00. (Cavan)**

One-day training course aimed at addressing the issue of bullying in it widest sense to enabled participants to explore an organisational response to the issue of bullying.

**Cost: €50.00 (20 participants max.)**

## **Exploring Boundaries**

**Date & Venue: 19 June, 2003. 10.00 - 5.00.  
(Dublin)**

One-day exploratory course aimed at those working with young people on sensitive issues in out-of-school settings. The course is designed to enable participants discuss the rang of issues relating to their day-to-day work in terms of disclosure, referral, confidentiality, reporting roles & responsibilities and support in this work.

The course will also provide participants with the opportunity to identify and share best practice and explore the supports that are required to undertake this work effectively.

**Cost: €50.00 (20 participants max.)**

**For further on all of the above please contact:**

**National Youth Health Programme  
NYCI, 3 Montague Street  
Dublin 2  
Tel: (01) 478 4122  
Fax: (01) 478 3974  
E-mail: nyhp@nyci.ie**

## **Drug Education & Training for Community Workers**

**Date: Saturday 17 May, 2003  
Venue: Purcell House Conference Centre  
All Hallows College, Dublin 9**

Community Awareness of Drugs will host a one-day drug education and training event, suitable for a broad range of community workers, this spring. The event is designed specifically for community and public sector workers who have an interest in or work in the area of drugs, drug dependency and prevention.

For those who have some prior experience, this is an opportunity to refresh their knowledge of the issues surrounding drug misuse and meet others who also work in this most complex field.

Focusing primarily on drugs awareness and education, the education day will include presentations on the pharmacological aspects of all "substances of misuse", as well as the impact of drug dependency from an individual and family viewpoint.

**For further details contact :**

**Community Awareness of Drugs  
31 Central Hotel Chambers,  
Dame Court, Dublin 2**

**Tel: (01) 679 2681  
Fax: (01) 679 7828  
E-mail: [community\\_awareness@eircom.net](mailto:community_awareness@eircom.net)**

**National Suicide Bereavement  
Support Network Conference**

**Date: 24 Saturday May. 9.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.  
Venue: Seven Oaks Hotel, Carlow**

Fifth annual conference of the National Suicide Bereavement Support Network with this year's theme "Supporting the Involuntary Survivor". Involuntary survivors are persons otherwise unconnected to the deceased who find themselves involved in the death.

These persons can be firemen, coastguards, train drivers or just someone out walking their dog who finds the body. Speakers include Dr Justin Brophy, Consultant Psychiatrist Newcastle, Hospital Greystones, Wicklow and Mr Gerard Bluett, Iarnrod Éireann.

**Cost: €35 includes lunch.**

**Booking forms can be obtained by  
contacting:**

**[nsbsn@eircom.net](mailto:nsbsn@eircom.net)**

**Anger Management Interventions  
With Young People**

**Date: Friday 23 May, 2003. 9.30 - 4.45.  
Venue: Chief O'Neill's Hotel, Dublin 7**

One-day seminar, which will examine methods, challenges and opportunities, presented through groupwork with young people with anger problems. The seminar will disseminate innovative new work developed from the UK Youth Young Male Mind Track Programme. It is aimed at anyone wishing to work with young people in developing appropriate responses to anger.

This includes youth workers, disadvantaged project youth workers, Neighbourhood Youth Project workers, Garda Diversion project workers, education welfare officers, learning mentors, teachers, social workers, probation & welfare officers, young people in-care workers and child and adolescent primary mental health professionals.

Following a keynote address on the Development of Understanding Anger Programme delegates will attend each of the three workshops: Practicalities of Running Anger Programmes; Demonstration of Theatre Techniques and Masculinity Issues.

The seminar will conclude with a closing exercise from the Geese Theatre Company\*, a team of actors and group workers who present interactive drama and conduct workshops, staff training and consultation for probation services, prisons, young offender institutions, youth offending teams and related agencies, with a strong reputation for their innovative work with offenders and youth at risk.

**Cost: €95.00**

**Brochure, booking forms and further  
details from:**

**Mr Fran Bissett  
Irish YouthWork Centre  
National Youth Federation  
20 Lower Dominick Street  
Dublin 1**

**Tel: (01) 872 9933  
Fax: (01) 8724183**

**E-mail: [fbissett@nyf.ie](mailto:fbissett@nyf.ie)  
Website: [www.iywc.com](http://www.iywc.com)**

## CENTRE FOR APPLIED SOCIAL STUDIES, NUI MAYNOOTH COURSES 2003

**DIPLOMA IN COMMUNITY AND YOUTH WORK:** (DCYW, Full and Part time). A two-year full-time or three-year part-time (in-service) course for people over 21 with significant relevant experience. Students must qualify ("matriculate") for entry to NUI, either on the basis of their academic qualifications or, if aged 23 or more as of Jan 2003, as a "*mature student*", regardless of qualifications. Applicants for the in-service option must have employers' written agreement. On completion, eligible students may progress to the BA in Applied Social Studies. DCYW 3 part time option may also be offered in Kilkenny if there are sufficient numbers

**B.A. APPLIED SOCIAL STUDIES:** A one year full - time progression course for those who have already achieved the required standard in either the NUI Diploma in Youth and Community Work (DCYW) or another qualification of at least equivalent level and duration and with equivalent social science and practice content. On completion eligible students may progress to the MA in Applied Social Studies.

**HIGHER DIPLOMA IN COMMUNITY WORK:** (HDCW, Full time and new Part time option). One-year full-time postgraduate programme of integrated training and education in community and youth work. This programme is suitable for holders of a primary degree in social science or related disciplines who wish to become community or youth workers. Some relevant experience required. On completion eligible students may progress to the MA in Applied Social Studies.

**NEW PART- TIME HDCW:** the HDCW will also be available on a two-year part time basis in 2003-05. This option is particularly suitable for graduates in related disciplines working as youth or community workers who wish to gain a professional youth and community work qualification.

**M.A. in APPLIED SOCIAL STUDIES:** This is a taught post-graduate programme (coursework and minor dissertation, over one or two years) for those who already hold a) a primary degree; and b) a professional qualification in community and youth work (DCYW, HDCW) or equivalent. The MLitt. in Applied Social Studies may be taken by research alone. Closing date for all the above courses is Friday 28th March 2003. Interviews will be held in April and May.

**M.A. IN EUROPEAN SOCIAL POLICY ANALYSIS (MESPA).** One year full-time course in comparative and EU social policy studies and research for graduates with at least a 2:2 primary degree. Register at NUIM, study abroad in a multinational class for two semesters. Closing date for MESPA course is Thursday 31st July 2003.

**Application forms and further information on all these courses (please indicate clearly which course/s) are available from:**

The Secretary,  
CAPPSS,  
NUIM,  
Maynooth, Co. Kildare.  
**Tel:** 01 7083743 **Fax:** 01 7084708  
**Email:** cappss@may.ie **Website:** www.may.ie/cappss