

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HEALTH PROJECT

Focusing on healthy relationships, sexual health and sexual consent

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

- The Healthy University initiative and steering group
- Feedback from Student Health about higher incidents of unplanned pregnancy and STIs in international students
- Finding corroborated by research in other UK universities particularly for Chinese students
- Case work with international students after relationship breakdown which point to issues with interpreting relationships in our cultural context and issues with understanding sexual consent

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT BACKGROUND

- Where are our students coming from?
- Issues impacting on their experience
- Cultural background and context

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Different...

- ideas about how to behave, sense of self-worth
- thoughts about what's right and what's wrong
- aspirations and interests
- values - the importance of things in life (i.e. family/money/freedom)
- understanding of our individual places in society
- ideas about birth, life and death.
- interpretations of personal relationships



Different ideas about the meaning of

- love, family and relationships, and
- different methods of dealing with conflict

Amongst many other...

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

- To improve international students awareness of health services in the UK
- Increase international students knowledge of sexual health and related issues
- To equip international students with the skills and confidence to navigate relationships in a different cultural context
- To increase international students confidence in discussing sexual consent and contraception

PROJECT OUTPUTS

- Information leaflets for orientation and medical registration
- Information sessions about access to healthcare and contraception in the UK delivered by Student Health Facilitators
- Face-to-face 2 hour sessions delivered by Student Health Facilitators
- A toolkit for other universities and colleges to use when delivering similar projects

Survey questionnaire results

90 respondents (44 Chinese)

63 female

60 between 18-24

Focus on managing cross-cultural relationships, not just sexual consent and contraception

Content developed by students for students

emphasis on small group delivery to enable discussions

Project implementation

- Recruitment and training of the International Student Health Facilitators - training session covering the basics of:
 - Group facilitation - Creating Trust, Ice breakers and generating discussions, Facilitating discussions, Listening skills, Dealing with problems
 - Assertiveness and communication skills
 - Sexual consent
 - Reproductive system
- Designing the session - in close collaboration with Sexual Health Sheffield
- Testing the delivery model and session
- Student feedback so far

3 Sections:

- 1) What is a healthy relationship?
- 2) Sexual consent
- 3) Sexual health

Content devised from/by:

- researching materials/online e.g. for schools/universities
- NHS leaflets/publications and training pack for sexual health educators
- Input from wider student services
- Emphasis on generating discussion, variety of activities, start with gentle activities

What's included

Session overview - 1.5 - 2 hours

Welcome + ground rules

Ice Breaker (snow ball fight)

What is a healthy relationship? Come up with 5 words

How easy is it to ask certain questions in a relationship? Continuum line game

Sexual consent : definition + consent is cup of tea video

Verbal/Body language signs of consent

Case Studies

Sexual Health Quiz

What we've learned so far...

What worked well:

- Very positive feedback from students - they all say they learnt something new from sessions.
- 2 hour session covers basics, small sessions work well
- Our leaflet has been praised by staff and students

Challenges

- Training and using student health facilitators + our expectations
- Overcoming any misgivings from staff

What surprised us so far...

- Fear and anxiety of delivering this session completely unfounded
- Understanding of Implicit v. Explicit sexual consent
- Preference for sessions delivered by staff and students rather than just students
- Interest in mixed sessions rather than single sex groups. Only applicable to some nationalities e.g. European, Malaysian
- Differences in knowledge and access to contraception from country to country even in Europe

The future of the project

- Embed as part of our offer to international students
- Recruit more health facilitators
- Deliver to summer pre-session students and summer school students
- Redesign of leaflet
- Ongoing evaluation of face to face session
- Gather feedback from medical centre



<https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/healthyrelationshipsproject>