

Appendix 2

Post-primary student consultation workshop

Suggested process (1 hr 20 mins)

1. Introducing the session

Explain to the students that the purpose of the session is to hear their ideas and suggestions for ways of improving RSE within schools. Tell them that feedback will be used to inform ideas and recommendations that will be sent to the Minister for Education. It is important that students appreciate the democratic nature of this engagement and that their voices matter. It is also important that they know that their ideas will be shared with the NCCA confidentially, without naming any person. However, the limits of confidentiality will be made clear and should any student say something that is a cause for concern for their health or welfare then there is a responsibility to report it. That said, it is equally important to establish that the workshop is not a place for talking about their own experiences/behaviour or telling stories about the experiences/behaviour of other individuals. The purpose is to talk about ideas related to young people's experience of RSE in school.

2. Group contract/ground rules

Explain that in order to be able to speak, be heard and feel safe we need ground rules. Brainstorm with the group possible rules.

To prompt this, ask the question '*What would help to make you feel comfortable participating in this group?*' And '*What would make this group uncomfortable for you and prevent you from participating?*'

3. Opening activity:

Once the purpose of the session is explained and ground rules agreed pose this question....
When you hear the word Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) what immediately comes to mind?

Invite students to complete the question, alone on a post-it.

Students share their response with a partner, if they wish. Ask those who feel comfortable sharing their responses to do so within the whole group. Others might simply place their post-it on the white board or in a central space.

Note the most common ideas and images that emerge.

From this, move into a short explanation of what RSE involves. Also explain how RSE can be taught as a stand-alone piece or woven into SPHE or other subjects.

4. Questions

Step 1 *Now that we're all clear on what RSE involves think back on your experience of RSE in school and give it a number 1 -10, 1 being really poor and 10 being really excellent.*

Follow up with some probing questions such as -

Why did you give it a x? What wasn't good about it? Or what was good about it that made you give it a 7? What would make it a 10?

In drilling down it will be important to draw out suggestions that go beyond the curriculum (e.g. does the way the teacher relates to the class matter?)

Step 2 *Having unpacked what was good and not so good and why, then move on to enquire about what students think they need to be learning in RSE lessons.*

Using the board or a flip chart write the question – ***What are the important things that young people need to learn about in RSE?*** Open this up initially through a brainstorm.

Take students suggestions from the brainstorm.

Then circulate copies of the 'What are your needs?' poster (adapted from Youth Work Ireland) and ask them to work in pairs or small groups and agree what they consider to be ***the 3 most important things that young people need to learn about.*** (They can include things already mentioned in the brainstorm or other topics that are on the poster that they may not have thought about)

Invite them to write their agreed answers on the posters and then discuss with the whole group.

Step 3 *What else is needed to make RSE a more positive learning experience for young people in schools?*

Post-its might be used again for this or an open discussion – depending on the group

5. What happens now to your feedback?

Thank the students for participating and remind them that their ideas will help inform the work of the NCCA in developing a new curriculum for RSE. Their voice is very important in this process. They can keep up to date on the review via www.ncca.ie/en/updates-and-events/consultations