



Picture the Peace – Reject the Violence Initiative

Background

The Gold Coast Sexual Assault Support Service is a community based, non-profit organisation delivering specialist Sexual Violence intervention and prevention programs to the Gold Coast community.

The Picture the Peace - Reject the Violence initiative to educate 12-19 year olds about healthy, violence-free relationships is an innovative approach to violence prevention. The focus is broadly on relationships, rather than specifically on violence. This decision was made because many young people consulted in the development of the initiative did not relate to the concepts of “dating violence” “sexual assault” and “domestic violence” but strongly related to the concept of “relationship”.

Special credit is given to Aileen Kanazawa, aged 17 years whose inspiring artwork has been reproduced in the resource material.

The initiative promotes safe and healthy relationships by assisting young people to make choices in forming relationships based on respect, trustworthiness, responsibility, and equality rather than on fear, intimidation, and abuse.

The rationale for this initiative is that although violence is estimated to occur in 1 in 3 dating relationships, it is often confusing and difficult for young people to identify and deal with the issues. The role models that they see in the media, and for many in their families, show a patriarchal model where men are responsible for being in control of the relationship while women are expected to work on and maintain the relationship. Young people are also concerned about their autonomy, so confiding in an adult is usually a last resort for a young person experiencing violence. Young people are more likely to confide in their peers, who may not have the information and support skills needed to assist.

If a young person wants to end a relationship, they are often unaware of services in the community that deal with issues of dating violence. Informed young people will be more likely to challenge and reject abusive behaviour and use the appropriate resources when they need support. As young people are just beginning to form relationship behaviours, it is the perfect opportunity to begin building healthy relationship skills for today and the future.

The initiative primarily involves: Sexual Assault Workers, Young People, Teachers, and Youth Workers but can also include Parents and Police and other people in the community.

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Target Group

Young People

Philosophy

The philosophy is based on certain principles:

- ♥ Violence is unacceptable in all its forms
- ♥ Violence is preventable not inevitable
- ♥ The seeds for adult interpersonal violence are planted while young
- ♥ Teenage relationships must be taken seriously
- ♥ Young people are capable of taking responsibility for creating violence-free relationships and environments

Goal

To promote peaceful, safe and healthy relationships and eliminate all forms of dating violence

Objectives

- ♥ To increase healthy relationship skills
- ♥ To increase awareness of the nature of dating violence
- ♥ To increase capacity to identify indicators of abuse
- ♥ To challenge attitudes, values and behaviour in relation to Dating Violence
- ♥ To increase awareness of support services available

When implemented in full, young people will be able to:

- ♥ Recognise the elements of healthy relationships
- ♥ Recognise the elements of an abusive relationship
- ♥ Differentiate between love and abuse
- ♥ Be aware of community resources to assist

Strategies

Major components of the initiative include:

- ♥ Production and dissemination of information resources
- ♥ Classroom-based education for high school students
- ♥ Community-based workshops for other young people
- ♥ Public awareness campaign

Information Resources

Resource materials have been developed for young people, which promote healthy relationships, dating violence prevention and intervention, these include:

- ♥ 3 Fold Information Brochure
- ♥ A3 Poster using artwork by teens
- ♥ Heart Shaped Sticker
- ♥ Education modules

Benefits / Outcomes

- ♥ More young people choose healthy relationships and reject violence
- ♥ Increased awareness of the nature of dating violence
- ♥ Increased awareness of support services available
- ♥ Appropriate resource material is widely available in the community