



Safety Promotion: Engaging Young People



Andrea Krelle
Learning, Innovation & Community Practice
Centre for Adolescent Health
Andrea.krelle@mcri.edu.au
9345 6676

Adolescent Health Issues

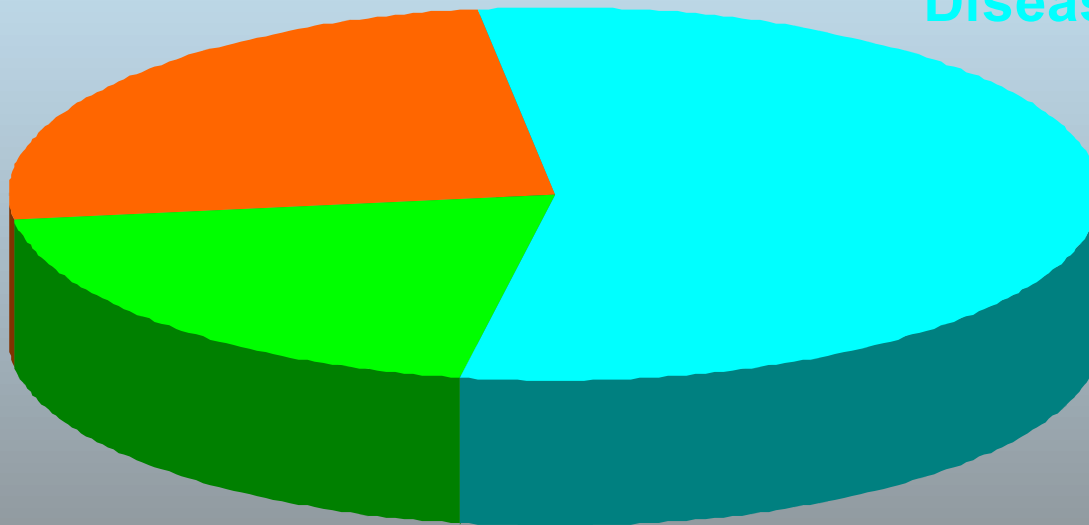
Manifest Youth Health Problems

Mental health problems, Substance abuse

Accidental injury, Antisocial behaviour

Risks for Later Disease

Tobacco
Obesity
Inactivity
Poor diet
Substance use
Sexual behaviour
Mental health



Persisting Health Problems From Childhood

Chronic illness, Survivors of prematurity & childhood cancer, Behavioural disorders

Why engage young people?

- Lessen the likelihood they will become agents of unsafe behaviours
- Strengthen young peoples' resilience in the face of challenges to their safety
- Enable young people to become active participants in the creation of a safe environments and communities – to build partnerships in the creation of shared futures

What the research tells us...

‘Youth who are involved, safe, valued and connected are less likely to engage in risky behaviours’ (McCreary, 2000)

‘Social skills competencies learnt through active participation make relationships, school, family life and work all easier to negotiate’ (McCrath, 2001)

What the research tells us...

“Of the constellation of forces that influence adolescent health-risk behavior, the most fundamental are the social contexts in which adolescents are embedded; the family and school contexts are the most critical”

(Resnick et al (1998))

Same as it ever was?

- Consumption (globalisation)
- Production (young people as workers)
- Education and Training (Life-long learning, credentialism)
- Lifestyle - 'Choice'



A changign socio-economic context

- Rapidly changing environment - technology, education, work, globalisation etc.
- New transitions (ways of living) developing;
- Previous 'indicators' of developmental 'success' are now (becoming) redundant;
- Decline of opportunity for the uncredentialed

And the context ...

- Impact and involvement in war
- Exposure to violence
- New technologies
- Exposure to new drugs
- Poverty

Safety matters ...

- Gatehouse Project
 - Security
 - Communication
 - Positive regard
- *beyondblue* schools research initiative
 - Participation
 - Relationships

beyondblue Classroom Program

Resilient adolescents have each of the six 'senses':

- Sense of self-worth
- Sense of belonging
- Sense of control
- Sense of purpose
- Sense of future
- Sense of humour

Participation

- meaningful, authentic & fun
- adequate resources, skills and support
- decision-making about teaching learning and curriculum on the agenda
- students as active researchers of issues
- collaborative & inclusive learning communities
- creative risk-taking & innovation
- processes for reflection, feedback & review
- share understandings of attitudes, barriers and enabling factors
- support & endorsement of school leadership
- acknowledge & celebrate contributions

Relationships

- ethos of care & support
- safe & secure environments
- environments which promote interaction & collaboration
- autonomy & empowerment
- opportunities for learning & practising social skills
- respectful communication processes & practices
- connectedness, belonging & inclusivity
- clear & consistent definitions of roles & expectations
- processes for negotiating & resolving conflict
- celebrate & share milestones and achievements

Concluding reflections...

- What might models of 'interdependance', or systems of social support look like?
- Young people have fragmented, contingent and multidimensional identities
- Young people are more aware of a variety of behaviors, roles, values and life styles
- Context and culture is more important than ever before
- How do we create a community where risks are taken safely?