



Apause and peer education

Added Power And Understanding in Sex Education

What is **Apause** ?

Apause is a comprehensive Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) service. It integrates peer education with contributions from local health services and is run in educational settings. Rigorously evaluated with proven effectiveness, it is the most widely commissioned SRE programme in England and Wales.

Why use peer education?

Evidence from around the world has convinced the **Apause** research team that for a school-based SRE programme to change beliefs and behaviours it needs to have a peer-led component.

Even our adult-led resources are designed to stimulate peer-to-peer learning. The whole programme is underpinned with the philosophy we call 'Peer Assisted Learning Solutions' or PALS.

What are the **Apause** peer education packs?

The Apause 'Classic', is school-based and uses peers at least two years older than the learners who are usually in Key Stage 3. The focus is on the risks and pressures of early sexual involvement and enables learners to develop assertiveness skills.



"All three sessions were entertaining and informed me well on peer pressure and other things to do with sex."

Yr 9 Student Passmores School , Harlow

"The Apause programme was highly valued for the involvement of peer educators..."

Key findings NFER report 2004

"It was good to have older students instead of just the teacher, because they know what to do, they went through it all as well..."

Mixed school, Wexford & Kilkenny, Eire



The WISE Project for Key Stage 4 promotes the idea of good sexual health as being a series of successful negotiations. It introduces generic skills to reach agreement on degrees of intimacy, use of contraception and accessing sexual health services.

The RAP Project is designed for 'hard-to-reach' and 'at-risk' young people who typically attend Pupil Referral Units, Young Offenders Institutions and Young Mother's Units. It comprises a series of between 4 to 12 visits. Whilst exploring all the major sexual health issues it also engenders positive relationships. Improved academic and life aspirations are frequently reported.



The **Apause** peer programmes help learners to:

- understand the pressures, and consequences of early sexual involvement;
- understand that most teenagers have not had sex by sixteen;
- feel good enough about themselves to be able to choose when they start to have sex;
- have the confidence and skills to say "No" to unwanted pressure;
- be able to negotiate the level of sexual intimacy that's 'right' for them;
- to access sexual health services when appropriate.

Outcomes

Comparing non-**Apause** schools to the **Apause** schools with the peer programme, students were significantly:

- less likely to have had sex by sixteen;
- more likely to have safe sex on the first occasion;
- more likely to have safe sex on the last occasion;
- less likely to believe that other teenagers are having sex at 16;
- more likely to find their SRE satisfactory;
- more likely to report learning about relationships;
- more likely to report discussing contraception;
- more likely to report having learned how to manage intimacy;

Students were also significantly more knowledgeable about STIs and contraception.

Training

For mainstream schools (**Apause** Classic and WISE) it takes one day to train a set of peer educators. All training is ICT supported using video clips of other peer educators in action.

Peers learn to deliver Scripted Performance Workshops which they do not have to memorise.

'Refresher' CDs enable staff and peers to revise their training experiences before delivery.

Each peer is encouraged to find their own individual style of delivery and feel comfortable enough to use their own words and develop spontaneous interactions with their classes.

All peer sessions are fully resourced with pre-packed class envelopes and digital overhead slides.

Benefits to Peers

Peer educators and teachers report a wide range of personal and institutional benefits including:

- greater knowledge and understanding about relationships and sexual health,
- greatly improved communication and relationship skills,
- enhanced self-esteem and self-efficacy,
- increased sense of self worth and social responsibility,
- improved chances in job applications, interviews and higher education entry,
- major contribution to the institutional ethos and sense of community.

Questionnaires for evaluation of peer education and the end of Key Stage 3 PSHE are available in paper or online formats.