

Tool 4.a Setting up peer mentoring and coaching

Staff Notes

This tool provides some information and suggestions on how mentoring and coaching may contribute to the relationships and sexuality professional learning in your school. At the end of this document you will find some useful links for further reading and information.

A relationships and sexuality education (RSE) mentor works and acts in a purposeful way to support colleagues to develop and improve their teaching of RSE. They achieve this by providing encouragement, support and advice in a one to one relationship with the colleague being mentored. Assistance can be in many areas of teaching practice. Some of these are listed below:

- classroom management
- development of classroom proficiency
- problem solving
- improved confidence and knowledge

A successful mentor:

- has relevant experience
- is a good communicator
- is supportive, empathetic and understanding
- has good pedagogical and subject knowledge and experience teaching RSE
- is trustworthy, approachable and accessible
- is able to use leading questions to coach mentoree to use more effective pedagogy

Establishing a healthy mentoring environment

The school leadership can support the mentoring process to improve the effectiveness and confidence of teachers by providing adequate time for:

- the mentor and mentoree to meet
- the mentoree to observe the mentor or other staff teaching RSE
- the mentor to observe the mentoree teaching RSE

Meetings between the mentor and mentoree need to be focused in order to ensure their effectiveness. These following guidelines may assist you.

- The purpose of each meeting needs to be clear and agreed upon by both the mentor and the mentoree.
- Each session is a professional meeting where notes, reflections and action plans should be recorded.

Classroom observations

The purpose and focus of the classroom observations must be clear and not be part of the performance review process.

Elements that need to be taken into consideration are:

- What is the purpose of the observation?
- What is the focus of the observation?
- Will there be time for reflection and debriefing afterwards?
- Where to from here?

Topics of focus for coaching in RSE

Creating a safe space for students and the teacher

- class rules about confidentiality and respect
- teaching students how to ask questions in a non-personal way
- responding appropriately to personal questions
- identifying diverse values and beliefs
- identifying personal values and beliefs

Mandatory reporting

- dealing with student disclosure
- keeping students safe after a disclosure

Knowledge and skill development

- dealing with difficult questions
- using language that is specific to sexuality
- understanding diversity
- using activities effectively to promote key messages
- student assessment

Links to helpful websites and articles

Victoria. Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2014, *A reflective guide to mentoring and being a teacher-mentor*, DEECD, East Melbourne, Vic.,
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/profdev/ReflectiveGuideToMentoring.docx>

Boyd, J 2008, *Coaching in context: a paper written for the Teaching & Learning and Ultranet Coaches Initiative*, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Melbourne, Vic.,
<https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/teachlearn/student/coachingincontext.pdf>

