

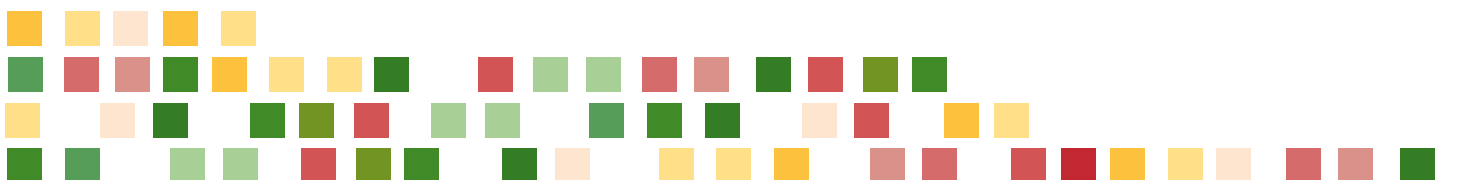
Girls Talk Guys Talk

Program delivery at Manor Lakes:
Final report 2018



**“We need to do this to
keep students safe”**

- Teacher at Manor Lakes College



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Women's Health West acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work, the people of the Kulin Nation, and we pay our respect to Elders and community members past and present. We express solidarity with the ongoing struggle for land rights, self-determination, sovereignty and the recognition of past injustices. We express our hope for reconciliation and justice. Women's Health West acknowledge the support of the state government.

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Executive summary

Girls Talk Guys Talk (GTGT) is a whole-school approach to respectful relationships and sexuality education (hereafter referred to as RR), developed by Women's Health West (WHW) in 2006. GTGT builds the capacity of secondary schools to promote supportive and sustainable school environments for RR education through a range of actions addressing the school curriculum, community and culture (referred to as the 'three Cs').

With support of a Helen Macpherson Smith Trust Social Impact Grant, WHW partnered with a number of agencies during 2015-2017 to deliver GTGT in a special education setting. WHW partnered with Wyndham Youth Services (hereafter referred to as youth services), cohealth and Manor Lakes Prep - 12 College (Manor Lakes) to deliver the program at Manor Lakes; an inclusive school located in western metropolitan Melbourne that provides specific programs and opportunities for learners with a range of educational needs within purpose-built facilities. The wider specialist school delivery rollout included three schools: Warringa Park, Manor Lakes and Jackson School. Cohealth led the delivery of GTGT at Warringa Park and Jackson School with support from partner agencies including WHW, Brimbank City Council, Wyndham Youth Services and The Department of Education and Training. This report will focus on the findings from the Manor Lakes rollout.

The evaluation examined the adaptation and delivery of GTGT in a specialist setting, the extent to which expected outcomes and impacts were achieved, the effectiveness of partnerships, sustainability of the program, and future recommendations.

Evaluation findings demonstrated that GTGT assisted in increasing the capacity of teaching staff to deliver RR teaching and learning materials, and to embed inclusive policies that support respectful and equitable relationships within and across the school community. The program highlighted a need for RR, and support for this from parents and school staff. Importantly, GTGT demonstrated how critical this content was for young people, and most specifically the young people with a disability involved in the program. These students had received the Victorian Government's [Respectful Relationship Education in Schools pilot](#) with their peers in 2014-2015, but the GTGT needs assessment reflected the need for further exploration of core topics such as consent. The delivery of GTGT at Manor Lakes contributed to: strengthened connections with Manor Lakes and local services; increased knowledge of RR in parents and carers and students; and increased confidence in teachers to deliver RR curriculum.

There were a number of challenges in delivering GTGT at Manor Lakes. Challenges experienced during the delivery of GTGT in a mainstream school setting not only remained, but were compounded within a specialist setting. At Manor Lakes, a number of planned activities weren't able to be implemented, and subsequently not all expected outcomes were fully achieved. Four factors critical for success were identified in the evaluation: a shared understanding and vision of the program and a whole school approach; buy in and commitment to the program across all levels of the school; time to effectively implement the program; and project leads within both WHW and Manor Lakes.

Further to the conclusion of the implementation of evaluation of GTGT with Manor Lakes, WHW is also reviewing its work in schools in response to the rollout of the [Department of Education and Training's Respectful Relationships mandate](#), and the development of [Resilience, Rights](#)

[and Respectful Relationships](#) curriculum materials (both as a result of the 2016 Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence – [recommendation 189](#)).

Recommendations for future work

The need for continued prioritisation of RR education in specialist settings such as Manor Lakes is apparent. Prioritising RR through recognition within a school's Strategic and/or Implementation plans will support a whole of school approach for RR, and allows for critical assessment of the schools current resources to make this possible. This is also best supported by reviewing and updating existing school policies to ensure that the work is recognised by the whole school community. Supportive relationships with local services such as youth services are critical in supporting both students and staff in the rollout of such programs and future referral pathways for young people.

As the state government RR rollout continues, ensuring that schools are linked in with relevant contacts, or through application to be a partner school is an important consideration. Finally, ensuring strong links are created with other specialist schools through the RR Community of Practice (including Warringa Park) will provide peer support and a supportive, well informed learning environment.

Agencies such as WHW have an important role to play in supporting the state government RR rollout, through the provision of knowledge and recommendations to the Department of Education and Training and others. Advocating for greater inclusion of integration of sexuality and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) education, especially in specialist schools, is a key consideration for Women's Health West and the Action for Equity SRH regional partnership.

Recently developed by WHW, the SRH/RR online [Resource Hub](#) is a useful resource that will continue to be promoted to relevant agencies including the Department of Education and Training, project partners and schools. This hub is a mechanism for WHW to share resources with those wanting to implement similar frameworks with young people. The hub also includes program resources for working with newly arrived migrant and refugee young people and other young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Background

Action for Equity: A Sexual and Reproductive Health strategy for Melbourne's west, incorporates primary prevention initiatives that work to redress the social determinants of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) in order to achieve health equity. Action for Equity identifies people living with a disability as a priority population group for SRH promotion initiatives. People living with a disability are at [high risk of experiencing poor SRH outcomes](#), and gender-based violence compared to the general population. The exclusion from SRH education and information is [recognised as a key contributing factor to this](#). Appropriate education and information is key to enabling people with a disability to exercise choice, autonomy and control in a supportive, safe and respectful environment¹.

WHW, cohealth and Wyndham Youth Services (youth services) partnered in 2015 to deliver GTGT in a special education setting: Manor Lakes College in Wyndham Vale. WHW had successfully

¹ Family Planning Victoria (2017) Relationships and Sexuality: Education for Students with Disability (<http://rse.fpv.org.au/resources>)

implemented the GTGT program in partnership with mainstream secondary schools across western metropolitan Melbourne since 2007. However, this was the first time it had been delivered in a special education school setting. This arm of the specialist school program was supported by the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust (Social Impact Grant).

GTGT is a primary prevention, RR program that uses a [Health Promoting Schools Framework](#) to build the capacity of secondary schools to support students to make safe and healthy sexual choices and to create and maintain respectful relationships. It is a six term program that adopts an integrated, holistic and strategic whole school approach that extends beyond the formal school curriculum to incorporate the following activities across the 'three Cs' of the school's curriculum, community and culture:

Curriculum

- Students views sought on WHAT and HOW they'd like to learn
- Year 9 sexual health curriculum: response to and informed by student input
- Year 9 sexual health curriculum: where possible accommodates preferred ways of learning for young women and young men
- Evidence-based materials utilised
- Sexual health curriculum delivered to year 9 students as part of Health and PE (and other Victorian Essential Learning Standards domain)
- Teaching staff resourced during delivery of curriculum
- Creative, non-classroom activities reflect content and messages of curriculum

Community

- Partnerships located in school structures or processes e.g. staff and local service providers steering committee, agreed action plan
- Program coordinator (lead community partner) has visibility across the school
- GTGT program is communicated and promoted throughout the school
- Local youth worker facilitates the GTGT student working group
- Parents are part of the school event where they see their children present their ideas about healthy relationships and sexual decision making, hear speakers from local services, and receive information to support their children to make choices that are right for them

Culture

- Staff and local service providers steering committee reflects the programs partnerships and 'makes things happen'
- GTGT student working group functions as the program's centerpiece by setting its direction
- Key contact person in the host school has visibility across the school and coordinates the program (with the program coordinator)
- Secondary school nurse, welfare coordinator, year level coordinator, sexual health coordinator all actively participate in the program
- Student's views inform update/development of policies
- Inclusive policy development process gives everyone an opportunity to provide input (staff, students, parents)
- Policies are consistent with sexual health curriculum
- Policies are introduced to teachers, parents and students
- School leadership supports teachers in attending skills professional development for curriculum delivery and relevant to the program
- School leadership supports mentoring program for GTGT student working group
- GTGT student working group members become peer mentors and leaders
- School leadership supports the evaluation of the program
- GTGT student working group is supported by the school and a local youth worker should students wish to continue to participate

GTGT is designed to be delivered in schools through partnerships between host schools and local community and health organisations. The program is coordinated by a lead community partner (WHW) in conjunction with the host school, with the support of other partners that contribute expertise, resources and personnel to the program. GTGT at Manor Lakes was developed and delivered through a partnership with WHW, cohealth, youth services and Manor Lakes, with WHW and Manor Lakes sharing leadership of the program. A WHW Health Promoting Schools Coordinator was responsible for the coordination of the program, with cohealth and youth services supporting its implementation and coordination. A key aim of GTGT is to establish the groundwork for the program to be sustainable once the external support from program partners at the conclusion of the sixth term.

Evaluation methodology

Purpose and scope

An evaluation plan was developed by WHW through consultations with Manor Lakes. The purpose of the evaluation was:

- To identify, learn from and share the successes and challenges of the GTGT program with program partners in order to inform the future development and delivery of RR at Manor Lakes, and in specialist and inclusive schools in western metropolitan Melbourne more broadly.

The key evaluation (KE) questions included:

KEQ1	How well was GTGT developed and implemented in Manor Lakes?
KEQ2	What were the barriers and enablers to the successful implementation of GTGT in Manor Lakes?
KEQ3	To what extent were expected impacts and outcomes achieved?
KEQ4	To what extent did GTGT increase students understanding of respectful relationships, sexuality and sexual health?
KEQ5	What unanticipated positive or negative impacts/outcomes have resulted from GTGT?
KEQ6	How effective were the partnerships between WHW, Manor Lakes and youth services, and WHW and cohealth?
KEQ7	To what extent is the GTGT program, or its impacts, likely to be sustained? Under what circumstances?
KEQ8	What are the recommendations for the future development and delivery of a whole school approach to RR in special education schools?

The evaluation covers the full period of program planning and implementation at Manor Lakes from 2015 to 2017. Final data collection took place in mid-2017.

Research and analysis methods

The following evaluation methods were utilised to collect data:

Subject	Activity	Number of participants
Manor Lakes key contact	Interview	1
WHW key contact	Interview	1
Youth services key contact	Interview	1
cohealth key contact	Interview	1
School leadership team and teachers	Baseline needs assessment completed as a group	1
Students	Baseline needs assessment	18
Parents/carers	Baseline needs assessment	4
Students	Single-sex focus group	14
Students	Pre-program test	11
Students	Post-program test	6
Student Working Group	Post-program focus group	3

Subject	Activity	Number of participants
'Safe Landing' whole school audit (secondary level) undertaken by school leadership team	Baseline Audit	1 audit
Meeting minutes; MoU; mapping and scoping reports	Audit	All program documents
Parents/carers	Parent and carer evening feedback forms	3
Teachers	Professional Development feedback survey	4

Findings and analysis

Program development and implementation

Manor Lakes successfully implemented a number of GTGT activities in the areas of curriculum, community engagement and school culture. The following activities were implemented:



1 needs assessment undertaken to identify the RR priority issues of students,
4 parents and 18 students surveyed



1 parent/carer information session
1 teacher professional development session



RR curriculum developed and delivered to year 9 students with additional learning needs



1 Student Working Group active for 18 months
1 Leadership Group active for 18 months



1 baseline review of school policies

Curriculum

Needs assessment

WHW and Manor Lakes undertook a needs assessment to identify the RR needs of students. The following priority topics were identified.

Table 1: Responses from needs assessment surveys

Identified by students (n=18)	Identified by parents (n=4)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyber safety • Bullying • Relationships • Puberty and body changes • Body image • Alcohol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying • RR (including conflict resolution) • Gender equity • Mental health (including self-harm) • Body image • Safe sex practices (including contraception) • Social skills • Alcohol and drugs • Personal hygiene • Public and private behaviours
Students had received very little formal education relating to:	Parents also nominated topics outside the list given in the survey:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexually transmissible infections (STIs) • Contraception • Sexual consent • Pornography <p>To understand the level of informal education students were receiving, students were asked whether they had learnt about particular topics at home. Bullying and drugs and alcohol were the most common topics discussed at home whereas topics around safe sexual practices, such as contraception, STIs and sexual consent, were not discussed at home.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transgender • Harassment
	Parents were asked to pinpoint topics they discussed with their child at home:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal hygiene • Puberty and body changes • Drugs • Public and private behaviours • Bullying • Relationships
	Topics not being discussed at home were:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe sex (including contraception, STIs and consent) • Reproductive health (including pregnancies and having babies) • Gender equality • Pornography • Sexual diversity • Sexual assault

Comparison of student and parent responses regarding topics discussed at home showed clear similarities. This highlights a need for support and resourcing of parents to enable discussions around more specific sexual health topics such as pornography, sexual diversity and safe sexual practices with their children.

Student single-sex focus groups gave the opportunity for students to expand on the areas of concern they wanted to learn about or felt were important for other students to be taught.

Table 2: Responses from student focus groups

Female students noted that they would like to learn more about:	Male students noted that they would like to learn more about:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drugs and alcohol • Family violence • Sexual diversity and homophobia • Sexual abuse and harassment <i>'I was gonna say what concerns me is that boys like to take videos of a certain person. Inappropriate things like for example when you're running they like to take a photo of you when you're running' (gestures to show that breasts jump up and down when running) (year 9 girl)</i> • Starting to have sex too young • Mental health (suicidal thoughts, anxiety) • Pressure to have a girlfriend or boyfriend • Sexting • Good communication (standing up for yourself, conflict resolution, coping with unwanted attention) <i>'I want to learn everything and how to talk to people' (year 9 girl)</i> • Masturbation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family violence <i>'How to stop it from happening or how to help them talk about it in a civilised way' (year 9 boy)</i> • Sexual abuse and harassment • Transgender • Mental health (depression, suicidal thoughts) <i>'Yeah we definitely need to learn about that.'</i> (- year 9 boy) • Drugs • Put down language • Sex and pleasure <i>'Sex and sex toys' (year 9 boy)</i> <i>'How to have fun and kinky sex I guess' (year 9 boy)</i> <i>'How to get sex' (year 9 boy)</i> • The impact of sex and relationships on their development and future <i>'What would happen in the future, or asking about what's going to happen in their life and they can explain what's going to happen to them so they know' (year 9 boy)</i> <i>'So students know how they are going through while they are growing up' (year 9 boy)</i>

Focus group responses showed similarities. Common topics were: family violence, drugs, pleasure, sexual abuse and harassment, sexual diversity and mental health.

Curriculum development and delivery

WHW and Manor Lakes collaborated to develop a curriculum plan, informed by the priority areas identified in the needs assessment. Curriculum was delivered to a group of year 9 students with additional learning needs in 2016.

The curriculum included units exploring hygiene, life cycles, body awareness, physical development, cyber safety, puberty and reproduction, public and private (behaviours and actions), risk-taking behaviours, personal safety, sexuality, sex and the law, and discrimination, racism and equality. Consent was a core consideration across all learning materials, as identified as critical by both teaching staff and students. Mental health was also included because students highlighted its importance.

Teacher professional development

Teacher training was delivered to increase knowledge of RR and confidence to teach the curriculum. This was delivered in 2016. Evaluation response was low. Three respondents agreed the training increased their understanding of RR; two agreed the training increased their confidence; one strongly agreed and two agreed that the training was useful/relevant to their work. This data reflects the need to establish a shared understanding of the GTGT program framework from the outset, in order to ensure commitment across the school. It highlights the importance of time in a whole school program.

Student working group

Co-design is a fundamental tenet of the GTGT framework, with student voice captured through a student working group (SWG). The SWG consisted of seven members in 2016. In 2017, this number had dropped due to students leaving the school. In 2017, a final focus group was held to evaluate the SWG. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and focused on themes of fun, personal growth and opportunity. Some students did report, however, that the SWG would have benefitted from having more students involved to broaden the student voice.

Participant: 'I actually can't ever remember being like that before. It was actually fun.'

Participant: 'It really helped me grow a lot as a person. It made me think. It made me see things from someone else's perspective. Someone else's point of view. There was just so much that we learnt!'

The Youth Worker involved in the coordination of the SWG reflected on the successes and challenges of a SWG in a specialist school setting. Commitment was a recurring challenge, and was overcome by incentivising attendance. The SWG was seen as critical in clearing up misconceptions, increasing awareness of support channels and creating spaces for honesty and openness. Manor Lakes was the only school of the three schools in the program to embed a SWG.

Youth Worker: 'There were good examples of their misconceptions of the curriculum being cleared up in the SWG, like direct conversations I've had with students from the SWG about their personal lives and how they seek support.'

Community

Community organisations

GTGT promotes community engagement through the establishment of relationships with community organisations. With the support of WHW, Manor Lakes worked in close partnership with youth services. Youth services was critical in supporting students in the SWG, and also establishing counselling referrals.

Youth Worker: '...It presented a lot of referral opportunities. Just by being more visible within the school and the relationship that comes out of being at a place all the time. You get to know faces and people can put faces to names.'

The success of the partnership between youth services and Manor Lakes highlights the importance of community organisations as key stakeholders in GTGT. There is now the opportunity for Manor Lakes to extend their partnerships with other community organisations in the Wyndham municipality.

Parent and carer engagement

Parents and carers were engaged through their participation in the needs assessment, regular communication and the parent and carer information session. A parents and carers night was held in term 4, 2016. The theme was 'How to talk to your kids about sex.' The SWG was prepared to lead this event, and were supported by youth services. Upon reflection, the SWG identified that on the night they were uncomfortable doing this. This could be reflective of the SWG being the first time students had been actively engaged in a leadership role, and students may have needed additional support for this. Unfortunately, attendance at this event was low. This may have been due to an ineffective event communication strategy, and misunderstanding of partner roles and responsibilities.

Leadership group

A Leadership Group was established to plan and monitor the program. It comprised of representatives from WHW, cohealth, Manor Lakes and youth services. The leadership group was active throughout 2015 and 2016, concluding at the end of 2016 due to high turnover of staff. At the end of 2016, Manor Lakes received a new principal and leadership team members. Program handover to the principal team experienced some challenges and at the time the principal team did not consider RR a priority. This was seen to be critical to the success of GTGT in 2017, as recommended by both key contacts. This presented significant challenges in the evaluation phase in 2017.

Culture

The whole school approach is core to GTGT. This ensures that the broader school environment reinforces the learning that is happening inside the classroom. Family Planning Victoria's Safe Landing whole school audit tool was used to assess school policies. The Leadership group examined the school's strengths and opportunities. The final score was 250 out of a possible maximum score of 340. The school rated highly in regards to its 'environment', 'policies' and 'practices', which staff stated supports the sexuality and diversity of young people. Policies could be improved with clear dissemination and training for students, parents and carers to empower them to engage with the supportive processes. 'Community links' and 'curriculum, teaching and learning' were key areas of improvement for the school. 'Curriculum, teaching and learning' required the most work according to respondents.

Challenges to program development and implementation

Four factors have been identified as being critical in the success of GTGT: shared vision and understanding, school capacity and program leads, time, and a commitment to the whole school approach.



Shared vision and understanding

Shared vision and understanding of both the whole school approach and GTGT framework are required across the school and among key stakeholders. At Manor Lakes, high staff turnover was a significant challenge from the outset of the program. As a result, staff that were required to implement GTGT had a limited understanding of the program framework and requirements.

Participant: 'There was a lot of transition. Originally the people at Manor Lakes that had expressed interest were the heads of the Wellbeing team and the heads of the Inclusive Education unit of year 8 students. They were really motivated, but then by the time we started they decided that they actually still wanted it for those students. This meant that we were handed over to the year 9 heads.'

There was a limited understanding of what a whole school approach would entail. While the school's leadership team had good intentions to implement the program, they acknowledged that they did not adequately consider, plan and resource the program and this resulted in inadequate resourcing and time being allocated. This may have also been due to not being clear what the program was. There wasn't a shared vision between WHW and Manor Lakes in regard to the implementation of the whole school approach at Manor Lakes.

Participant: 'WHW wanted it to be broader whole of school. But we were developing it for our specialist students and it didn't ever get to that point. It was like we were piloting it with that group, wanting to expand it a bit more with the other supported students, but it didn't really get to that point before I left. Then we got a new principal and I don't know how keen he was for it.'

School capacity and program leads

GTGT is driven by two program leads. While the program leads are supported by the Leadership group, they have a responsibility to ensure that the program is progressing to plan, and meeting the set outcomes.

At Manor Lakes, the delivery of GTGT relied heavily on one individual, who was responsible for developing the curriculum. As the classroom teacher, the project lead was an expert in the teaching and learning needs of the students. However, both the teacher and school leadership acknowledged that this was too much work for one individual and that they did not have sufficient time to do the work. The curriculum was adapted to the teaching and learning needs of student whilst it was being delivered.

Participant: 'The thinking behind GTGT is that it is a model and framework. This means that it has the space to acknowledge people's expertise – students are experts in their lives, and teachers are experts in the teaching aspects... The teachers trained in specialist education were supported to develop the content. This was really trialling and developing at the same time.'

It was highlighted that sustainability becomes a key concern when the program is being driven solely by program leads.

Participant: 'Leadership needs to be really committed to these types of programs. It has to be so embedded in practice. And so the thing with GTGT is that you set up the conditions for sustainability but it is then their decision to embed this in to their practice.'

Time

The framework recommends six terms for successful implementation. This recognises the extensive work required in order to embed changes required in a whole school approach. It was the first time the program was within specialist settings. It has been recognised that the delivery of the program in a specialist setting should be extended across a longer period of time due to the needs of students.

Participant: 'Timing is key. When you are working with young people with a disability they need a lot of time to learn the curriculum. If we want this stuff to be sustainable we need to commit to really long term projects.'

The program allowed partners to reflect on the expansion of the scoping phase in order to build capacity across the school before curriculum development and implementation begins.

Participant: 'This is about setting the scene for parents and the staff. Maybe a community engagement phase.'

Establishing a shared understanding of the program was seen to be key in allocating appropriate time.

Participant: 'Anyone in a school is so busy. You have meetings all of the time, you're in class, it is hard to take time away from that for just one program. So that was probably the biggest challenge. Teachers don't have 2 hours. If you're visiting it needs to be an hour or less, preferably less. Time is so very precious.'

The need to develop curriculum resources appropriate for students at Manor Lakes was identified as a primary factor contributing to the unexpected workload, with staff noting it requires a greater allocation of time. This is especially challenging in a specialist school setting, where curriculum materials to draw upon are limited. Reflections were made in regards to maximising time, including adaptations to the GTGT framework.

Participant: 'It would be good to have some already constructed sequences so that you could look at them and see what would be useful for your school. Coming with nothing except for resources means that we have to take time to go through them all and find what is useful. Whereas this school has done this, and this one that, which bits might be useful to our demographic? That is going to save so much time, you aren't recreating the wheel.'

Program outcomes and impacts

The key outcomes of the GTGT program were:

- An increased awareness of sexuality and RR
- Increased confidence of teachers and parents
- Strengthened connections

Raising awareness of sexual health and healthy relationships

RR was not new at Manor Lakes. GTGT's point of difference was that the teaching and learning materials were being adapted in order to meet the specific needs of students with additional

learning needs. It was noted that the program contributed to raising awareness and putting RR and SRH on the school and its community's agenda. The program also put RR on the agenda for students in the Supported Learning campus, who recognised the importance of receiving such education and demonstrated their interest in learning more.

Participant: 'I knew that there were students that really needed that [lessons on consent] to protect them... for that group, which might not have happened anywhere else had they not done GTGT. They would have just done a term of RR, which half of them didn't fully comprehend. They got what they needed and they might not have got that without GTGT.'

Participant: 'There were a lot of misconceptions that were cleared up. They didn't know how long pregnancy was... but nothing can be assumed. Then they knew quite intricate things and information about quite adult or difficult concepts, but were really missing the basics. This really drove home that they need sexuality education.'

Manor Lakes was the only school in the specialist school program in which extensive evaluation was conducted to determine the impact of curriculum delivery on student knowledge. Results from this evaluation showed increased understanding of respectful relationships, sexual health and sexuality, and significant shifts in attitudes and behaviours.

The program was also considered to have fostered an environment in which students felt safe and supported to discuss their sexuality. Teachers reported that they had seen changes in student behaviour, conversations and language.

Participant: 'They brought up everything, they wanted to talk about everything. This was really reflective of the safe space that (teacher) had created and the level of trust the students had in her.'

Increased confidence amongst teachers and parents

Teachers felt that their understanding of and confidence to deliver RR increased throughout the program. In 2017, teachers still identified challenges in responding to disclosures (of family violence, sexual abuse or harassment). Teaching staff reflected on the importance of delivering RR to young people with a disability.

Participant: 'It made me a lot more confident in addressing those sorts of things with the students. We knew what the parents wanted them to know, we knew what they wanted to know... It was always appropriate for us to teach. Young people with disabilities are kept young... Because they come across younger they can get in to trouble because they might be put in to scenarios where they don't understand. It really gave me the confidence to take that stance moving forward. We need to do this to keep these students safe.'

While there was low attendance at the parent/carer information night, teaching staff reflected on changes within the parent group.

Participant: 'Our communications in Student Support Groups, info night... helped to get the parents on board. The SWG was also a great way to get the parents on board.'

Strengthened connections

Manor Lake's connections with local services were strengthened, with a new relationship formed with youth services. Awareness of and referrals to local services were also increased.

Participant: 'We saw a lot of referrals on to Youth Services. This was really important because in the past I don't really know if these students would have been accessing these services.'

Partnering on the development and delivery of GTGT enabled partner organisations to each contribute unique skills and expertise to the program. The partnerships were seen to be integral in referring students on to appropriate services when needed and as a useful network to seek feedback and peer learning.

Participant: 'It (the partnership) really gave an opportunity to connect, and things would come up that we hadn't anticipated. It's action research... You're learning all the time, that it was really necessary to reflect and talk about it as a group and learn together.'

An understanding of roles and responsibilities was seen to be a significant challenge.

Participant: 'I don't think that everyone fully understood their roles and responsibilities. The school needed to be trained and educated a little bit more around what their role was.'

Participant: 'We were always at the whim of the school. (YS) and (WHW) were always available, but if the school wasn't available things would just get cancelled. This happened a lot, and it wasn't communicated well at all. It was really last minute... [schools] are so busy.'

The partnership between cohealth and WHW added value to the program by bringing together staff members who contributed complementary skills and expertise to the program. Both organisations valued the opportunities the partnership provided in enabling them to connect, reflect on the program, and discuss arising issues as a group. While the partnership between cohealth and WHW was beneficial, it did have some challenges. There was, at times, a need for clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities. This was particularly evident at the beginning of the program, which required staff to work together closely to determine how partnership would work. This was attributed to the lack of a formal partnership agreement, staff changes and internal restructures.

Sustainability

GTGT is designed to be sustainable in the host school once the external support of the lead community organisation is withdrawn. While it is positive that the key individuals at Manor Lakes recognise the need to have a RR program, there are a number of factors affecting the sustainability of GTGT at Manor Lakes.

Questions were raised as to how a whole school approach could work in a school as large as Manor Lakes, with an inclusive ethos. This highlights the importance of high level commitment from leadership.

Participant: 'You might even need to change the model in a school that is that big. There were two difficulties, one it was an inclusive school so you are working with kids with a disability, but

the mainstream teachers aren't even actually being trained in this.'

Participant: 'You have to educate the principal. I think this is why the EOI is so important. I think there was some concern that teachers can teach this really badly, so he was happy that WHW was on board for expertise.'

It was recognised that the adaptive approach to curriculum development and delivery met the needs of students. However, concerns were raised as to how this could be sustainable long term. When asked if GTGT could continue at Manor Lakes, high staff turnover was identified as a significant challenge. However, all key individuals agreed that GTGT was valuable, especially for students with additional learning needs.

There is a demand from students who are supportive of the program continuing. Teaching staff highlighted that the program should be included as part of the school's higher level planning to ensure it is prioritised accordingly, such as in the school's Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan.

A further influence on the sustainability of GTGT at Manor Lakes is the broader context in which it is delivered. Manor Lakes decided not to apply to be a partner school in state government's RR mandated program. In order for RR to be sustained at Manor Lakes, the whole staff group needs to commit to embedding this work as a priority.

Limitations

- Evaluation of the Manor Lakes implementation of GTGT highlighted the following limitations:
- The program was only implemented with one group of students from the Supported Learning campus.
- The students in the working group were selected based on their responses to the needs assessment. It was determined that these students had some understanding of RR and SRH, and that this was necessary in forming a foundation to build on during GTGT.
- Students that did not participate in GTGT received RR in line with their needs, with a focus on puberty and safe spaces.
- The evaluation did not aim to assess the quality of curriculum that was developed and delivered. It did, however, evaluate student understanding around core topics.
- Data was not collected from parents and carers at the completion of GTGT. Data was collected in the initial needs assessment conducted with parents and carers.
- A large number of the Leadership team left Manor Lakes at the end of 2016. As such, a final Leadership team evaluation was not conducted.
- A limited number of students participated in the final SWG evaluation due to turnover.

Lessons learned

Program planning and development

Prioritising a comprehensive planning and development phase is a key recommendation. Aspects of the program were adapted based on the needs of the school, however this occurred in a reactive manner throughout the implementation phase, with a focus on curriculum.

The need to prioritise comprehensive planning and development was evident in the three schools, although all schools had varied approaches to this phase. It is proposed that extending the planning and development period is critical in assessing the school's needs and readiness, and the program's feasibility to inform a program that is realistic, appropriate and based on the specific needs of the school. In the GTGT framework, one term is recommended for 'Getting started'. It is proposed that more time is needed to establish the partnerships, lead team and assess the needs of the school to ensure a successful whole school approach is embedded. This recommendation is also reflected in the [Respectful Relationships Education in School pilot program](#).

An extended/tailored planning and development phase would ensure that challenges on the basis of expectations, feasibility, capacity and responsibly would be mitigated. This time is also critical for assessing and identifying resourcing requirements, anticipated outcomes, and the best approach to execute a true whole school program, imbedded across all three C's.

Program suitability

The implementation of GTGT at Manor Lakes took longer than anticipated, exacerbated by limitations in staff resourcing, changes in the school leadership team, and the lack of existing curriculum resources appropriate for the needs of the students. Students had varying levels of knowledge of SRH and RR despite participating in the Respectful Relationship Education in Schools pilot. The six-term implementation period was therefore not realistic for the needs of this student group. This was reflected across all of the schools involved in the specialist school program. These factors need to be considered in the planning and development of RR programs in special education schools, with programs to be tailored on the needs of individual schools.

Partnerships added value to the program. There were, however, some challenges relating to program roles and responsibilities. Staff turnover within partner agencies was a challenge throughout the program. Co-designing the program to ensure commitment and ownership across partners, and clear documentation and communication promotes clarity among partners and minimise the impact of staff changes. Specialist support from youth services positively contributed to the program. However, it is suggested that these partnerships were dependent on current staff members. The prioritisation of relationships with community organisations in the Wyndham municipality, and other appropriate organisations, is critical for the school.

While a whole school approach to RR should extend across all years, this is especially important in specialist settings where students have little prior knowledge of RR, sexuality and sexual health. Consideration of the developmental and cognitive needs of students is recommended so students can participate in curriculum sessions based on their individual needs (rather than year level). The capacity of school staff to implement GTGT was limited given the resources and time available. In order to effectively influence culture change as a core outcome of GTGT, extending program timeframes would provide schools adequate time to plan for and implement the program, and importantly provide students with more time to experience the curriculum and promote knowledge retention.



Recommendations

Manor Lakes

Women's Health West recommends the following considerations relating to continued delivery of RR education, acknowledging the current rollout of the state government respectful relationship mandate.

- Formalise a commitment to RR by prioritising it in the school's Strategic Plan or Annual Implementation Plan.
- Prioritise the whole school approach to RR by reviewing and updating school policies.
- Resource the whole school approach to RR, taking into consideration existing staff responsibilities and workloads.
- Continue to engage with local external organisations including youth services in the planning and delivery of RR and youth referral pathways.
- Connecting with other specialist schools in the RR Community of Practice (including Warringa Park) to share and learn from the experience and expertise of peers.

Women's Health West

Agencies such as WHW have an important role to play continue supporting the state government RR rollout, through the provision of knowledge and recommendations to the Department of Education and Training and others. Advocating for greater inclusion of integration of sexuality and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) education, especially in specialist schools, is a key consideration for Women's Health West and the Action for Equity SRH regional partnership. Women's Health West currently sit on the Respectful Relationships Expert Advisory Committee, and will use this platform to advocate for the inclusion of sexuality and SRH education.

Recently developed by WHW, the SRH/RR online Resource Hub (<https://respectfulrelationships.org.au>) is a useful resource that will be promoted to relevant agencies including the Department of Education and Training, project partners and schools. This online hub houses appropriate resources for the development, delivery and evaluation of sexual health and RR education programs with and for young people. These resources, including GTGT, have been developed to support the diverse needs of young people in Melbourne's west with consideration to literacy support needs, whole-of-setting approaches and culturally appropriate content. The hub also includes program resources for working with newly arrived migrant and refugee young people and other young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

There is also a role for WHW to play in supporting project partners such as cohealth in their future endeavours in the RR space, and how this work might align with the primary prevention priority areas of SRH and the prevention of men's violence against women.

Conclusion

The delivery of GTGT in Manor Lakes was part of a wider specialist school program, delivered across three schools in collaboration with cohealth and other partner agencies. The evaluation findings demonstrate a number of positive outcomes from the program at Manor Lakes, most specifically the strong commitment to student voice. Manor Lakes embedded both a student working group and thorough evaluation of student knowledge on respectful relationships, sexuality and sexual health topics. The evaluation also highlights challenges to the development and implementation of GTGT at Manor Lakes. The most significant challenges related to staff turnover and program lead time/ implementation time. There are significant opportunities for Manor Lakes to continue build on their experience with a range of RR programs.

There is strong interest in and demand for RR from the teaching group, student group and broader community, especially when considering students with a disability and the increased risk of poor sexual and reproductive health outcomes.

GTGT has proved a valuable framework for a whole school approach to RR. The specialist school program demonstrated a number of limitations affecting its delivery and impacts in a specialist education setting. If it to be used in the future, the framework needs to be further adapted to the needs of specialist schools. It is suggested that prioritising and extending the scoping and development phase in GTGT would allow for more meaningful and effective establishment of the foundations necessary for success. It is suggested that this recommendation is relevant for any school undergoing a whole school approach to RR. Every school has varied teaching and learning needs, priorities, successes and challenges, and the framework needs to be adaptable to effectively respond to this.

Regardless of the delivery method (GTGT or state government mandated program), Manor Lakes students will continue to benefit from the inclusion of RR education. The school has a unique opportunity to further develop the planning, prioritisation and delivery of RR more broadly through their experience in the Victorian Government’s Respectful Relationship Education in Schools pilot and GTGT.

Finally, any ongoing RR programs need to be included as part of the school’s higher level planning to ensure it is prioritised accordingly. Methods include through the school’s Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan and related policies and procedures. It is also imperative to include the student voice, which needs to be heard and have influence in the delivery of appropriate content, to ensure improved sexual and reproductive health outcomes for young people with a disability.

