Supplementary File 2. ALPHA consultation report

ALPHA meeting: 24th June 2017
Project Respect: Honor Young

Project Respect is a school based programme designed to prevent violence in young people's dating and relationships. The project includes a survey which year 8 and year 9 pupils complete before completing a series of lesson-based activities (along with other intervention components) followed by a second follow up survey during year 10 and year 11. If taken to a full scale trial, this questionnaire will enable the researchers to assess the success of the programme in reducing dating and relationship violence among young people.

Honor Young came to meet with ALPHA and we looked at the 5 of the 6 lesson plans with ALPHA commenting on the aims and methods and discussing particular aspects of the lesson plans. The ALPHA group then looked at the suitability of some questions on physical violence and gender identity, before a brief discussion on confidentiality during data collection and their comfort in answering questions about these topics.

Members present

Age	Males	Females
15	1	0
16	0	0
17	2	2
18	1	0

Initial comments

ALPHA raised a concern over possible relationships within the year where one partner is abusing the other. If this comes out during a lesson this could have an impact on both people in the relationship
- ALPHA were also unsure whether pupils would be honest about their own experiences in relationships if they were completing this in a group, especially if sitting next to someone they don't know.

With this in mind the group suggested that the methods be reconsidered.
- They suggested instead that group activities could be used for discussing ideas. Private activities like a survey could be used for pupils to share experiences, especially at the content could be about partners who are in their school.
- Shy pupils could also be reluctant to take part, even if with their friends and it was felt that involvement should be optional.

Lesson plans

Lesson 1: Challenging gender norms

A member of ALPHA has a transgender person in their school and wanted to know how that would be included sensitively. Honor clarified that the session would be designed to include sexual harassment of all forms, and will challenge transgender issues too.

The male members of ALPHA in the session were unsure about the value of the first session. Some of the boy's schools already look at gender stereotypes around jobs (for example that men become doctors and women become nurses) but they do not feel that these stereotypes are as strong in their generation. The female members of ALPHA neither agreed nor disagreed with these statements.

ALPHA felt that the first lesson needs to introduce the topic, including defining what behaviours the researchers view as sexual bullying, sexual harassment and gender based harassment relationship violence.

Lesson 2: Defining healthy relationships and boundaries

Honor introduced three scenarios that pupils will be given with ALPHA, explaining that they are designed to questions whether students think the relationships are healthy. ALPHA looked at the value of each scenario as well as the lesson plan and use of scenarios as a whole:

Tom bought Nic a present for her Birthday. At first Nic was very happy with the present and asked him what else he had bought for her. When he said there wasn't anything else she threw the present at him and said it was stupid. She said that she expected him to get more. **Is Nic abusive? Why or why not?**

- As the scenario intends, this generated discussion among ALPHA members as to whether this is a form of abuse.
- They agreed with the idea of the genders being reversed so see whether this affects people's views and suggested that the genders could be swapped first.
- ALPHA felt that the pupils would not be old enough to buy proper presents, often due to a lack of money, so would not be able relate. It was suggested that it could be changed to buying lunch, but overall the group was unsure about the scenario.

Jordan invites his friends over to his house and his girlfriend Marie is there too. When his friends arrive they all sat round talking and looking at their phones and generally catching up. Jordan asks Marie to get his friends some drinks from the kitchen. Marie does this once but refuses when Jordan asks her to get some snacks for his friends. She says they should help themselves or he should do it. Jordan got angry and pulled Marie by the arm into the kitchen. Jordan's friends had seen him behave like this before. **Is Jordan abusive? Why or why not? What if instead of pulling Marie by the arm Jordan had shouted in her face? Is it abuse? Why or why not? If it was the first time it had happened would it be abuse?**

- This was seen as a more realistic scenario, with friends spending time together at each others houses and ALPHA agreeing that Jordan would want to be dominant in front of his friends.
- The scenario led to a discussion over who would deliver the workshops, and ALPHA were pleased to hear that it would be delivered by NSPCC staff and not teachers.

Tam has a group of very close friends and she enjoys spending time with them. Since she started going out with Lee they've started to spend every spare minute together. Tam's friends like Lee but they miss spending time with their friend. Tam wants to see her friends too but Lee always says how much she misses Tam when they're not together and Tam feels guilty. Lee tells Tam who much she loves her and how she always wants to be with her. Lee constantly calls and messages Tam when Tam is out with her friends. If Tam doesn't reply then Lee sends more and more angry messages saying that Tam would rather be with her friends than her. Tam loves Lee and doesn't want to hurt her feelings. **Is Lee abusive? Why or why not? What would you do if you were Tam?**

- ALPHA were happy with the work including boy-boy and girl-girl relationships but felt it was confusing as they had assumed Lee was a boy. They suggested that all names need to be obviously a boy or girl.
- This was seen as the most realistic, especially due to the inclusion of social media.

Overall ALPHA agreed with the use of scenarios as a method for the lesson.

We also asked ALPHA members if schools currently cover this topic and define what a healthy relationship is.
- Amongst the ALPHA group their schools were very variable with one school including it in a single daylong PSE lesson each year, one school teaching it in their form session, and one teaching it in Year 10 lessons on sexual health.
- The topics is also covered outside of PSE but the message can be inconsistent, and ALPHA felt that schools need a single message that is regularly reinforced.
- The researchers will need to consider how the project can be introduced on top of this previous teaching.

Lesson 3: Mapping hotspots and boundaries

ALPHA felt that the personal boundaries in the lesson plan will be difficult to define as these are likely to change all the time.

They were unsure about the idea of mapping hotspots with some of the group feeling that school is generally a cool spot, while the hotspots would be where young people drink in the evenings.
- Some of the group felt that relationship violence does happen in school but not in particular places.

The lesson objective relating to the meaning and importance of consent in a relationship reminded ALPHA of the video that compares consent to offering someone a cup of tea, and it was felt that this could be useful in the lesson.

Lesson 4: Empowering students to run campaigns

The lesson includes a video about a girl being pressured to have sex by an older boy friend, and it was suggested this be shown at the start of the lesson.

ALPHA were unsure about whether a public campaign would work. They felt that schools would not welcome it as it would be admitting that they were doing something wrong, and that they would be reluctant to help. This would be particular difficult if schools are showing a visitor around when a campaign is happening.

One member however suggested that it could be an awareness raising campaign for within the school rather than a protest. This could get pupils thinking about a particular issue and their own behaviour.

The lesson plan includes a learning outcome of pupils being able to help a friend that they were worried about, and this was seen as a good idea.

Lesson 5: Communication skills and anger management

ALPHA agreed with this lesson focusing on friendships as well as relationships, especially for Year 8 pupils.

The group focused on whether schools have an anger management programme, with ALPHA unsure about their own schools as most keep the programme quiet except for the pupils who use it.
- Some schools use an external company with pupils either meeting them on school grounds or outside of the school. Others have sessions as part of the wider advice and counselling services, where pupils can either chat or have some time outside of lessons.
- Some schools also have a badge that a pupil can show a teacher if they want a break. This can be either kept in or on their bag, but ALPHA were worried that it could mark them out as someone to avoid and potentially affect their relationships.

The group also discussed how social media is increasingly important with an argument on social media between two people pulling in other friends. As social media is a snapshot of some's life it can also give what one of the group called an 'illusion of other people's problems' where people get the wrong idea of the relationship. This lesson should include consideration of social media communication as well as communication directly to their partner.

Surveys

Gender questions

Honor bought a question which asks about 'gender' to ALPHA. The question provides response options including 'Male (including trans male)' and 'Female (including trans female)'.
- ALPHA agreed that the survey needs to be as inclusive as possible, and they agreed with the question as it currently is.
- However we did discuss whether all Year 8 and Year 9 pupils would understand the terms with potential confusion over the different stages of transitioning. ALPHA suggested a small amount of text to clarify this.
- We also discussed the reason for both having 'Other' and 'Prefer not say'. Honor explained that 'Other' is used because people may identify as something else, while 'Prefer not to say' is included because we can't force people to answer.

Sensitive questions

The NSPCC have been consulted throughout Project Respect and have raised some concerns about some of the questions used in the questionnaire, specifically their suitability for use with Year 8 and 9 pupils. These questions have been removed. However we asked ALPHA if they would be suitable for pupils who are completing the second, follow-up questionnaire at the end of the project (Year 10 and 11).

Most of ALPHA were fine with Q1-12 but opinions were more varied on later questions about vaginal sex, anal sex and touching genitals (Q13-19, Q22-25).
- Some members felt that these questions should not be included, while others were ok with them being in the survey. Some had a middle ground of them being included if essential to the research.

ALPHA were unsure how honest pupils would be, with pupils with bad experiences potentially not wanting to answer.
- We also talked about whether someone would want to admit negative behaviour. Some members felt that young people would not admit this due to worries of police involvement and suggested that those questions be removed. Other ALPHA members felt that pupils might see it as a way to seek help.

Members of the group also queried whether pupils would be asked every question, for example if they said they've not had sex or are gay. Honor confirmed that the questions would be routed, so previous answers affect the questions that you're asked.

ALPHA suggested that the Q30 on rape myths (for example if a girl is to blame if she is raped while drunk) should be covered in detail in one of the lessons and not in the survey.

Discussing question sets

We looked at 2 possible sets of questions that could be used to measure dating and relationship violence (CADRI and Safe Dates) which have been used in other projects. We discussed both the question types and also the behaviours that each focused on. Again these would only be part of a larger survey but responses to each question would affect the questions that follow.

Overall ALPHA felt that Safe Dates has more content with it giving more data. It also acts as a learning curve that explains the different unsuitable behaviours and lets pupils develop an understanding of the topic gradually.
- However some felt that it is too long, with the potential for pupils to stop answering, click any answer or get distracted. There were suggestions to combine questions in places.
- Honor mentioned that the survey will be held in a 45 minute lesson. Pupils will be given an activity once they finish but as with usual lessons, would not be able to leave early.

Other members preferred CADRI because of the length. They also felt that slightly fewer questions will reduce the detail but may be preferred by pupils who don't want to answer in too much detail.

Overall the group were divided but most preferred the CADRI questions.

Specific changes for each included:

CADRI
- Q15. They kept track of who I was with and where I was → Wanted to know where I was all the time

Safe Dates
- Q29. Physically twisted my arm → Physically twisted my arm/hand/fingers
- Q30. Slammed me or held me against a wall → Held me against a wall
- Q33. Bit me hard → Bit me hard enough to draw blood
- Q34. Tried to choke me → Tried to or did choke me
- Q38 – Q40. Hit me with a fist/Hit me with something hard/Beat me up → Combine
- Q41. Attacked me with a knife →Threatened to or attacked me with a weapon
- Q57. Damaged something that belonged to me → Damaged or broke a personal item of mine
- Q58-Q59. Said things to hurt my feelings on purpose/Insulted me in front of others → Insulted me
- Q61. Would not let me do things with other people → Would not let me see friends
- Q62. Threatened to start seeing someone else → Threatened to break up
- Q66. Blamed me for bad things they did →Put blame on me for bad things they did
- Q68. Made me describe where I every minute of the day → Wanted to know where I was when I was out.

Confidentiality and data protection

We briefly looked at the information sheet and consent form with a specific focus on asking ALPHA about data protection and confidentiality.
- ALPHA identified the following short paragraph as being crucial and suggested it be near the top of the sheet, underlined and in bold. In addition that paragraph should be included at the start of the questionnaire and reinforced by the person running the session:

The questionnaire is completely anonymous and confidential. This means that your name will not be connected to your answers. Anything you report in the questionnaire will be kept private. We will not share it with other people such as teachers and parents.

The text was fine, especially where it says that their name is not connected to answers. It was felt that pupils would understand the information.

Honor asked the group the best way for a young person to ask a question to a researcher/member of staff when they were completing the questionnaire in a classroom of other pupils. Some suggested that they could leave the room but it was felt that this could draw attention to them.
- A young person staying behind at the end to ask the question was also not suitable as ALPHA felt they would not want to stay after the lesson
- ALPHA suggested instead having teachers walking round the room similar to in exam conditions.

Finally we thought about young people being concerned about others watching them during the survey. There were different levels of concern from members of the groups.

- We thought about different ways to tackle this with ALPHA suggesting that the survey be completed by friendship groups who know each other, rather than by large groups where you might be next to someone you don't know.
- Alternatively it was suggested that booths be used though this could be difficult to organise.