

Peer education in a Respectful Relationships program: An excellent idea! Findings from a current study

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Background – our starting point

- A review of the literature on violence and abuse including sexual abuse, indicates a significantly higher level of risk of all violence and abuse and in particular sexual abuse for people and in particular women with an intellectual disability.

Violence and abuse of people with an intellectual disability is a significant personal and social issue

- Programs reviewed indicate that there are very few that involved people with an intellectual disability in the design and delivery of programs

A commitment to the self advocacy dictum – Nothing about us without us

- Evidence that programs that use stories and adult learning approaches including peer education are effective in violence and abuse prevention

Build on existing evidence based programs and approaches – mainstream and disability

There is a dearth of research to inform policy and practice and a lack of evaluation in existing programs (Barger & Wacker, 2009)

Research and evaluation built into program design

Method – our approach

- Literature and program review – to inform model development and research focus
- Participatory approach to program development, program facilitation and review
- Focus on training of peer educators and co-facilitators
- Research with peer educators, workshop participants, co-facilitators – focus on experiences

Emerging themes - evaluation

- People with an intellectual disability can't be educators in a violence and abuse prevention program
- Gatekeeping – barrier to involvement
- Cross sector work – challenges 'silos'
- Lack of willingness to 'own' this work – policy void, resources, confidence to advocate for inclusion

Research questions – peer education

- Why have peer educators?
- What peer educators bring to the program?
- Benefits of peer education – person and the program?
- Best approach to training and facilitating peer education?
- Barriers and challenges to peer education?

Janice, Rachel, Linda: stories about being peer educators

- Rachel – Why? good communicator, good as a role model; been in ‘their shoes’; showing others they can do it; it’s a good job
- Janice – Why? been a peer educator in the past, had skills and expertise; shifting the power from ‘professionals’ to people with an intellectual disability; able to share and use own experiences
- Linda – Why? told my story in other research; people who knew me said I could do it and might be interested; got things in common with people who do the program

Emerging findings from research with peer educators

- In-depth interviews (pre and post training) with 10 peer educators
- Observation of programs in 2 sites

<i>Why involved?</i>	<i>What can you bring?</i>	<i>Challenges</i>
To help people have safe relationships	Own experiences – relationships, abuse, independence, getting help	Hard thing to talk about
To use own experiences	‘Speaking up’ skills	Not sure if I can do it – need some support but don’t want others to take over
It’s about rights – like self advocacy	Not a professional – people relate better to people with disabilities	Time to fit in with other things – work, family etc
Change attitudes		Finding ways to keep it going

Where to?

Research

- to increase knowledge about peer education as an approach in violence and abuse prevention work with people with an intellectual disability

Evaluation

- to learn more about ways of engaging in cross sector (disability/ violence and abuse prevention)

References and resources

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