

Health Topics for Personal and Social Education (PSE)

Children and young people were keen to influence the PSE curriculum both in terms of content and how it was delivered.



"People saying nothing about cancer and skin cancer. My Granddad died of skin cancer. They concentrate on drugs too much. I want to find out about cancer."

Young people seemed interested in the opportunity to influence the subject matter of PSE. Perhaps each member of the class could investigate the health or well-being topic of interest to him/her. As well as answering their questions about that topic, which could then be shared in presentation to the rest of the class, it would provide an opportunity for young people to learn to be discerning in the information they download, especially about health issues on which there is a wealth of both excellent and ill-founded information available.

Some classes had had someone with experience of substance misuse come in to speak to them and they had found this very useful. [Tacade](#) have a publication called "Making the Most of Visitors"

"Maybe pick a person who has either smoked in the past or quit. Maybe that person could go into school and talk with children."



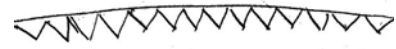
"In HE I get very bored because the way we learn about healthy choices is just quizzes and videos. The videos should be renewed."

Young people were keen for classes to be more practical as well. One class had had the opportunity to look at a smoker's lung compared to a non-smoker's lung and felt this was a very good way of getting the no-smoking message across.

Some young people had taken part in some of the practical baby care exercises, something like the "Flour Babies" described in Anne Fine's book (1994, Puffin).

Health promotion resource enquiry line 01463 704647 have available a range of resources and practical learning tools.

Young people wanted to know why something was good and bad for you not just that it was good or bad for you.



Young people also need help to know how to avoid wrong choices or take action if they have made a wrong choice.



"You can't always make a healthy choice because you are only told to say 'no' not what to do if it happens or if you do it."

"Swimming. I am working hard and my heart is beating fast and I get breathless and it makes me feel good inside."



"When I get a chicken burger at lunch time but it's not healthy, so after I feel bad."

Young people admitted that sometimes where food was concerned the unhealthy choices were tempting and hard to resist. Some young people wanted it to become harder to get the unhealthy food and easier to get the healthy food. Shops selling unhealthy food near secondary schools were seen as part of the problem.

Making the healthy foods that are available tasty and affordable might help (a few young people felt fruit was too dear). Also young people were keen to learn about making healthy food in Home Economics where cake making seemed more prevalent than healthy meals.



"I can't eat that much fruit because my parents sometimes don't have enough money to buy it."



"If a person is smoking beside you and pressuring you in to smoking, you have got a very tough decision to make, because it might be your closest friend."

Young people suggested that it was not a lack of understanding about the consequences of substance misuse that was missing, but the peer pressure or problems at home could lead to young people ignoring these messages and taking the risk anyway.

"My Step-dad hits me and my mum. I started smoking... Can't stop smoking."