Training course in adolescent sexual and reproductive health 2021

Comprehensive sexuality education provision

Samantha Johnson

South East Regional Health Authority, Spanish Town, Jamaica

doctorsamanthajohnson@gmail.com

Question 1

Why do adolescents need comprehensive sexuality education (CSE)? – identify one reason.

Adolescents need comprehensive sexuality education as it acts as preparation for adolescents to have a safe and productive life, allowing them to navigate a world with various challenges and inadequacies such as HIV, gender-based violence and unwanted pregnancies which are still major health risks (UNESCO, 2018).

Question 2

What according to you is the biggest operational constraint in the provision of CSE in your country, and why?

It is difficult to choose, especially in a country like Jamaica where religion and stigma play a huge role in our sexual education or lack of it. However, I believe that the biggest operational constraint in the provision of CSE in Jamaica is, the planning, implementation and sustaining that is our biggest operational constraint (Eggleston et al., 2000). I think this can be extended to engaging with stakeholders and seeking support and then implementing CSE into schools. We actually have Jamaican guidelines but with little implementation. Reports and research out of Jamaica surrounding CSE is also limited, however there is commentary often from advocates about the need for implementation. We do not do enough research about sexual education, I was able to find one on the internet which talks about some good results from teaching CSE- proving it works but made commentary on the lack of longevity for these courses, thus lessening the true impact they can have on the youth of Jamaica (UNESCO, 2019).

Question 3

In what way could CSE be integrated into your country's educational curriculum?

In Jamaica we have classes called 'Personal Development' and 'Guidance Classes'. These classes are aimed at teaching you various life skills and differ from school to school. In my high school, a catholic all girl high school, guidance was a time where we basically had rap sessions with a fairly religious guidance counsellor. Our only CSE class came about in the form of pictures of STIs and abstinence is best and our personal development class was dedicated to being more ladylike. I think that CSE classes should be standalone classes with a dedicated class period. That way the content is not diluted or students are distracted by various subjects being taught at once. As well as being a standalone class, children must feel safe to share and ask questions, versus having didactic lectures filled with scare tactics. Just like we had guidance and personal development teachers, teachers need to be appropriately trained and comfortable with delivering the material. In Evaluation of a sexuality education program for young adolescents in Jamaica (Eggleston et al., 2000), a more dynamic teaching model allowing young people to participate in the lesson versus a didactic lecture is suggested.

Question 4

Identify three strategies that Aahung and Rutgers used to build community support for CSE in Pakistan?

Three strategies that Aahung and Rutgers (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2018) used to build community support for CSE in Pakistan were:

- Using the understanding of local context as the foundation of program design and development
- Gate keepers at many levels are engaged through outreach and sensitisation
- Drawing credibility and support by institutionalising programs within already existing systems

Question 5.1

Within the ecological framework, what are the levels of influences that need to be understood when planning to deliver sexuality education to adolescents?

The levels of influences that need to be understood when planning to deliver sexuality education to adolescents within the ecological framework are: Interpersonal, Organizational, Community and Societal (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2018).

Question 5.2

In the case of Aahung and Rutgers, who were the gatekeepers or influential people in the lives of adolescents that were engaged and sensitized?

The gatekeepers or influential people in the lives of adolescents that were engages and sensitized in the case of Ashung and Rutgers (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2018) are Parents and community members which was done through school administrators and teachers.

Question 5.3

In your context, which gatekeepers or influential people would need to be engaged and sensitized to deliver CSE?

In Jamaica the gatekeepers or influential people who would need to be engaged and sensitized to deliver CSE are teachers, school administrators and parents. Administrators and teachers will be the ones delivering the material and even allowing the materials to be delivered in the schools along with parents.

In 2010 UNESCO wrote about the Levers of Success Case studies of national sexuality education programmes which spoke about the revision period for Jamaica's sexuality education course called Heath and Family Life (HFLE) and engaged parent teacher associations, faith based organisations, NGOs and student bodies in order to revise the curriculum and also since 2007, trained and sensitised schoolteachers, administrators and parents about HFLE (UNESCO, 2010). While this may not be Comprehensive Sexuality Education, implementation of it has similar struggles and obstacles as does CSE and I think this review gives valuable insight on what stakeholders need to be engaged.

Question 6

What strategies did Rutgers and Aahung use to overcome resistance to CSE in Pakistan?

Rutgers and Aahung (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2018) used the following strategies to overcome resistance to CSE in Pakistan:

- Labeling the programme as 'Life skills- based education' (LBSE) therefore making it culturally appropriate
- Strengthening media presence thus building positive public perception. By reaching out to reputable journalists they were able to discredit false statement and build on positive public perception through various media this then resulted in discussions.
- They showed the value of their work by using teachers and school administrators who had been involved in their work from the beginning and they were able to substantiate their claims of CSE being beneficial by using positive stories and firsthand observations.
- They cleared up misconceptions by having targeted meetings and workshops with various stakeholders. Improving upon language, increased transparency around content and used persons who had already 'bought into' CSE as strategic partnerships and advocates.

Question 7

How is CSE different from sexuality education?

The following is how CSE differs from sexuality education. Comprehensive Sexuality Education focuses on both academic and practical education, looking at sexual and reproductive health, human development, gender, gender roles and relationships. These are taught using scientifically accurate information, focuses on human rights, gender equality and sheds a light on concerns such as sexual abuse and discrimination. It also entails the spiritual aspects, by exploring values, attitudes and feelings, including pleasure. Sexuality education is encompassed in CSE with focus more so on sex and reproduction, sexually transmitted infections, contraception and pregnancy (Wahba, 2020).

Question 8.1

What are the considerations that the International Technical Guidance suggests when designing a school-based CSE program?

Considerations that the International Technical Guidance (UNESCO, 2018) suggests when designing a school- based CSE program are:

- Program must follow and coincide with all relevant national policies, guidelines, regulations and laws.
- Adopt clear goals, concepts and learning objectives and be articulated within the contents.
- Follow the life cycle approach and develop in an incremental way by providing information that is appropriate to the age and development of the students
- The curriculum should be acceptable for implementation, covering content that is politically and culturally appropriate.
- Content must be practical, addressing what young people need to know and what they want to know.

- Program must be effective adopting interactive and participator educational approach based on skill- building

Question 8.2

What did the Egyptian Family Health Society (EFHS) do to understand the needs of adolescents related to sexuality education before initiating their school-based SE program?

The Egyptian Family Health Society (EFHS) conducted a "learn by educating" exercise where they had seminars provided by young physicians on the reproductive organs of males and females in 7th grade and allowed them to write anonymous questions which they used to guide the creation of the curriculum. This allowed them to understand the needs of adolescents related to sexuality education before they initiated their school- based SE program (Wahba, 2020).

Question 8.3

What were the protocols used to respond to sensitive questions asked during the EFHS' seminars?

In the EFHS seminars a 'chaperoning' teacher decided what questions would be answered during the Q&A segment, then those considered to be of sensitive nature would be referred to their Youth Health Hotline. The questions were written on pieces of paper- different colours for boys and girls- and examined by the Scientific Committee. This information allowed them to publish a book with answers for workers to use and helped with designing of the curriculum so these would be answered (Wahba, 2020).

Question 9.1

Describe a CSE initiative in your country that you believe has affectively promoted CSE for adolescents in or out of school.

A CSE initiative in Jamaica that has affectively promoted CSE for adolescents in or out of school is The Jamaica Youth Advocacy Network (JYAN). JYAN is a youth led organisation that focuses on equipping young people with advocacy skills. This organization has been vocal about their support for CSE and have engaged stakeholders for the implementation of CSE in Jamaica. They have done this through various forms of advocacy, creating workshops and seminars for youth, allowing space for conversation about CSE amongst youth, participating in discussions with politicians and other stakeholders. They act as advocates for youth by youth.

Question 9.2

Identify one factor that has contributed to the effectiveness of this initiative.

The inclusion of youth and amplification of youth voices, giving them a space to learn how to advocate for themselves by engaging the media, conducting seminars and workshops and open doors for them to meet with key stakeholders such as parliamentarians has been a factor that has contributed to the effectiveness of this initiative.

Question 9.3

Identify 2 factors that you believe are critical for strengthening implementation of CSE in your country?

Here are two factors that I believe are critical for strengthening the implementation of CSE in Jamaica.

1. Support/ Buy in from teachers, school administrators and parents

   These two groups are crucial for the uptake of CSE in Jamaica. Having the support of parents and administrators ensures that children are encouraged and supported to attend classes and sessions in and outside of schools that teach CSE. In order to get this, we would need seminars and training sessions dedicated to these groups.

2. Dedicated Group/ Organization/ NGO

   In Jamaica, there are many NGOs that have support of CSE implementation under their mandate, as a part of their SRHR advocacy, but unlike the examples in this module there is no real group dedicated to CSE only. While we have a guideline for CSE which had a task force with many SRHR advocates, we have not had much implementation. When you google CSE and Jamaica, there is no group that pops up and acts as the champion of this cause. This I think slows the process of CSE being taught both inside and outside of schools. This is not to disregard the work of other NGOs and organisations. Funnily enough, Jamaica does have a group dedicated solely to the censorship of many of the topics that would be taught under CSE.

References

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