

Healthy Relationships



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An interactive Programme for People with Intellectual Disabilities

What is the Healthy Relationships Programme?

Healthy Relationships is a programme for older teens and adults with intellectual disabilities. Ministry of Justice funded the development of the resources, the independent evaluation of year one and the current piloting of version 3 in five schools across New Zealand. [This project is also thanks to a collaboration with Kidpower Teenpower Fullpower International, which provided permission to use copyrighted curriculum and drawings from the Fullpower Teaching Kits as well as consultation.](#)

The programme covers:

- A Healthy Relationships
 - 1 What are Healthy Relationships?
 - 2 Understanding When Something is NOT a Choice
- B Saying Stop and Stopping
 - 1 When and How to say Stop
 - 2 Listening When Other People say Stop
- C Getting Help
 - 1 What is Urgent?
 - 2 Where to Get Help
 - 3 How to Get Help

The programme does

1. **Provide an experiential, success-based programme and interactive resources for people with intellectual disabilities** where they learn and apply empowerment, self-advocacy, positive social interaction and personal safety concepts and turn them into skills through role-plays in a safe, anxiety-reducing, competence-building way that is age and ability appropriate and culturally sensitive.

Build capacity and foster long-term sustainable change

2. **Strengthen the supporter role in dealing with their disabled person's social and personal safety issues** by training staff, parents and other people working with intellectually disabled in how to teach, how to reinforce and how to incorporate the skills into their support work on an ongoing basis.
An online forum offers a platform for exchange and collaboration of all stakeholders.

The programme is adaptable and effective for a wide range of disabilities, including Autism/Asperger's, Down Syndrome and other developmental disabilities; dual diagnosis of developmental disability and severe emotional disturbance; Tourette's Syndrome; post traumatic stress disorder; auditory and/or visual processing disorders; and physical disabilities that limit movement, such as paralysis, and/or that require aids such as walkers, braces, canes, service dogs, and/or manual or motorised wheelchairs.

Proven Results

The independent evaluation of the first year by Clarity Research found that the teachers and other school staff were impressed by what they have seen of the programme in Year I (2009) of the two-year project. Some of their comments were:

- "It's the shiniest tool in my cupboard because it is used most often"
- "This programme is brilliant!"
- "100% of my students have shown improvement"

We already have several reports of young people using the skills to keep safe and to improve relationships after such a short time, i.e.:

- "For example we have a very compliant very pretty girl and she was always saying yes and this form of compliance got her into trouble in the past. She says no now and that just means so much in terms of her own safety, it's unbelievable!"
- "... Then a couple weeks later one of the kids had a seizure and the student who came and told me used the keywords from the programme "it's an emergency."
- "She usually has no way to express herself so she would lash out without ever talking about feelings; instead we sat down and asked what we should do with them after this incident rather than lashing out with violence". She recognised "that it was not okay [to be kissed when she did not like it] and that they needed to sort it out with the other student. That is the miracle. Here no other programme does this so simply."

Resources

The package includes a facilitators' guide, three posters and three workbooks with animated stories that can be played on computers and interactive whiteboards.



What are the Expected Outcomes?

The recently conducted independent evaluation of the first year highlights that the programme is held in very high regards by teachers and confirms that the following outcomes are realistic:

- People with intellectual disabilities, parents/caregivers, and professionals acquire relevant and useful risk reducing, social skills, knowledge, attitude and behaviour.
- The disabled people use the skills to build positive, healthy relationships with their peers, people in general and with their supporters, family members and caregivers.
- Reduction of sexual violence, abuse and neglect in families, Whanau, school and community committed BY or targeting people with intellectual disabilities.
- Increase of adults with intellectual disabilities to fit into their environment, into society and to learn and reach their full potential.

More Information contact



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