“I wish I had learnt to keep myself safe”

Sexuality and Relationships Education (SRE) for People with Autistic Spectrum Disorder or Asperger’s Syndrome

Background

- Limited amount of research into appropriateness of present SRE programmes for pupils with ASD or Asperger’s Syndrome
- Impact of ASD or Asperger’s Syndrome upon a pupil’s social skills results in difficulties recognising social rules linked with sex and sexuality, including “scripting”.
- Pupils with ASD or Asperger’s Syndrome have highlighted a need for more specific work about relationships
- Increase in referrals to services relating to inappropriate sexualised behaviour potentially linked to lack of understanding about the subtle aspects of sexuality.

Aim

One key question directing the research along with additional sub-questions:

**How effective is the present SRE programme in relation to pupils with ASD or Asperger’s Syndrome?**
- How is the programme implemented?
- Do they collect pre and post data on pupils’ knowledge?
- Is there a need to adapt the present SRE programme for pupils with ASD or Asperger’s Syndrome?

Methodology

Participants

- Schools within London, Sussex and Surrey
- Schools catering for pupils with ASD or Asperger’s Syndrome; primarily Autism specific, special needs and mainstream schools with autism specific units.
- Primary contact made with either head teacher or appropriate staff member who co-ordinates school SRE programme

Methods

- Online questionnaire completed by participating schools providing background information about the school
- Face to Face interview with primary contact person
- Analysis of interview transcriptions to identify specific themes raised.
- SPSS analysis of online questionnaire to provide background information.

Progress

- Face to face interviews nearing completion.
- Transcription and analysis of interviews commenced with early indications that SRE programmes being used with pupils with ASD or Asperger’s Syndrome are inadequate in meeting their needs.
- Main area of concern centres upon the more abstract areas of relationships and safety/vulnerability

Next Steps

- Completion of analysis
- Development and piloting of a sex education programme suitable for pupils with ASD or Asperger’s Syndrome.