



Sexual Health and Peer Education

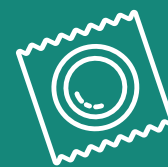


Sexual Health and Peer Education (SHAPE) Best Practice Guidelines

These guidelines are for workers and services that want to start a new sexual health peer education (SHAPE) Program or strengthen a current sexual health program. The guidelines will also help you incorporate sexual health topics into an ongoing peer education program. They provide essential information that will help you complete the SHAPE Checklist.

Your service can seek assistance from your local HIV and Related Programs (HARP) Unit Health Promotion Team or contact the [NSW STI Programs Unit](#) at NSW Health to find your local contacts.

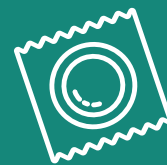
#	SHAPE Checklist	Guidelines
1	Organisational considerations	
1.1	Does your organisation have policies in place that support sexual health work with young people?	It is ideal to have organisational policies in place that support sexual health programming. Refer to the Play Safe Pro Model Policy for sexual health policy that can be adopted in full or adapted to suit your organisation. Also check with your organisation regarding mandatory reporting requirements.
1.2	Does your management support the SHAPE Program?	Having management support for the SHAPE Program is essential. Use the evidence and information provided in the Play Safe Pro Advocacy Tool to help build your organisation's capacity to incorporate the SHAPE Program and address any barriers to engaging in sexual health work.
1.3	Do you have an existing peer education program that could adopt or incorporate the SHAPE Program?	A sexual health component can be added to the existing peer educator program by considering the items in these guidelines.
1.4	Does your organisation have someone to plan and coordinate the SHAPE Program? Is this a volunteer or paid position?	Having a nominated full-time coordinator is recommended, since working effectively with young people requires substantial time and energy. The coordinator can be someone who already works for the organisation or a new recruit. If there is no capacity for a staff member to coordinate the SHAPE Program, a peer educator could assist. This can encourage the peer educator's professional development and build their confidence.
1.5	Have you identified funding sources and resources to maintain the SHAPE program?	Create a clear and realistic budget before the SHAPE Program begins. Include costs for staff, resources, training, events, administration and evaluation. It should include the costs for paying peer educators or providing incentives. Use this process to help clarify how the SHAPE Program will run and how you can maximise funding. Continue to look for more funding sources throughout the SHAPE Program. This could be through grants offered by local councils or other departments, or the private business sector.



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#	SHAPE Checklist	Guidelines
2	Planning	
2.1	Have you defined the goal and objectives of the SHAPE Program?	<p>Develop a SHAPE Program plan to outline the program's goals and objectives.</p> <p>The program goal describes the change desired in the long term. Program objectives describe in detail how to realise specific changes that might contribute to the achievement of the goal, clarifying the direction of the program.</p> <p>To be effective, goals and objectives need to be SMART:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S—specific: well defined, clear to anyone who has a basic knowledge of the project • M—measurable: clear indication for tracking progress and measuring outcomes • A—achievable: the objectives could be achieved in the current conditions • R—realistic: within the availability of resources, knowledge and time • T—time-bound: enough time to achieve the goal
2.2	Do you have access to condoms and other SHAPE resources to support the SHAPE Program?	<p>Establish links with your local HIV and Related Programs (HARP) Unit, sexual health clinic or condom supplier to have resources available to give to young people.</p> <p>Free condoms for your organisation to distribute can be ordered from Play Safe Pro, or your organisation can sign up to become a Condom Credit Card (CCC) provider through Family Planning NSW.</p> <p>Read the Play Safe Pro Condom Protocol for more information about condom distribution.</p>
2.3	Have you engaged young people in the planning process?	<p>Include young people in the planning process when developing the SHAPE Program to ensure it is interesting, responsive and appropriate to young people's needs, and that the target audience can relate to it. This will result in greater levels of engagement and commitment from peer educators and participants.</p> <p>If your service works with young people over a period of time, it is helpful to establish a peer educator advisory group to oversee the SHAPE Program planning and implementation. The group should include young people and members from partner agencies who possess specific strengths.</p> <p>The advisory group can troubleshoot challenges, offer advice and expertise and help promote the SHAPE program.</p>
2.4	Have you identified organisations or people who can support the SHAPE Program (e.g. HARP units, sexual health workers, and local councils)?	<p>Invite key partners to join the SHAPE Program to increase its effectiveness. Government and non-government organisations might be involved and provide resources, information and other support.</p> <p>The Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Centre of NSW (AHMRC), NSW Aboriginal Land Council and local Aboriginal Medical Services can also provide resources and support for the SHAPE Program.</p>



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2.5	Have you identified the young people you want the SHAPE Program to reach? (Consider priority populations in the NSW STI and HIV Strategies .)	<p>The New South Wales (NSW) Sexually Transmissible Infections (STI) Strategy 2016–2020 states that young people aged 15–29 years are a priority population for prevention, testing and treatment for sexually transmissible infections (STIs). In addition, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, and gender diverse, gay and homosexually active people are also priorities.</p> <p>Young people are not a homogenous group. It is important to recruit a diverse group from the local community.</p> <p>Strategies you can use to determine your target population include checking local demographic data, consulting with your key groups and completing a needs assessment.</p> <p>Your target population may be young people who engage with your service and have a particular sexual health need or struggle with a sexual health issue. It may be a group of young people with a need that you feel it is important to reach (e.g. gender and sexually diverse or CALD).</p>
2.6	Have you considered the risks and completed a risk analysis?	<p>Think about the risks specific to your SHAPE Program. Your risk analysis should address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What could possibly go wrong? • What is the likelihood of it happening? • How will it affect the program? • How can it be rectified? <p>Risks to consider:</p> <p>Staff and peer educators: Do the hired peer educators have the right skills? What if a peer educator leaves the program?</p> <p>Organisation: What if your organisation doesn't provide the support they promised? What if a key person withdraws from your advisory committee?</p> <p>Financial: Are there enough funds provided from your organisation? What if your funding source withdraws from the SHAPE Program?</p> <p>Technical: Can you obtain resources? What if the SHAPE Program costs more than you estimated? What if the SHAPE Program plan doesn't work?</p> <p>Legal: Do you need permissions for your activities from your local authorities? What if legal agreements take longer than you think?</p> <p>Plan strategies to prevent these risks from happening or manage them if they occur.</p>



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3	Recruitment and retention	
3.1	Do you have a position description with a clear set of roles and responsibilities?	<p>You need to develop a position description that outlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • roles and responsibilities • type of position (volunteer, incentivised or paid) • work hours or time commitment required • key duties • skills and competencies required • additional training required • relevant information before starting their role <p>Roles and responsibilities of a peer educator could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attending peer educator training and refresher training • committing to the agreed work time • being actively involved in the program activities • adhering to the SHAPE code of conduct* • distributing sexual health resources appropriately • monitoring and reporting on progress through paperwork and debriefing sessions • reporting to peer educator coordinator • attendance at team meetings <p>Elements of the SHAPE Code of Conduct include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assuring and protecting confidentiality • respecting values • respecting diversity • showing cultural sensitivity • providing current, correct and unbiased information • promoting gender equality and equity • recognising personal boundaries • being aware of individual limits and the role of referrals • avoiding abuse of power • sex positivity



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3.2	Have you established a reward or incentive system (e.g. SACS Award or travel reimbursements)?	<p>Establish systems for providing incentives, reimbursement and payments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay your peer educators. Programs are more sustainable when peer educators are paid. • Provide incentives if payment is not possible, such as public recognition, awards, rewards, social and recreational opportunities, exchange opportunities with travel, and developmental advancement within the SHAPE Program. • Establish clear guidelines about reimbursing peer educators for expenses. This could include travel and meals. • Encourage volunteer peer educators to apply for relevant paid internal positions that may arise.
3.3	Have you established a recruitment strategy that is transparent and youth-friendly, including selection criteria, method, promotion and recruitment channels?	<p>Recruiting peer educators:</p> <p>Develop an engaging flyer and youth-friendly application form.</p> <p>Ask demographic details such as age, gender, sexuality and country of birth; this will help you recruit young people from diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>Ask simple open questions about applicants' interests and skills.</p> <p>Developing an online application form using Survey Monkey or other software in addition to a paper application form may help you reach more young people who are interested in becoming peer educators.</p> <p>Consider whether a résumé is needed.</p> <p>There are several ways you can recruit young people as peer educators. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-referrals from service staff • referrals from previous peer educators • flyers distributed through local networks • advertisements in local newspapers, schools and youth service websites and social media pages <p>Working with Children Check</p> <p>In NSW, peer educators over the age of 18 need to complete a Working with Children Check before starting work. If they are volunteers, the check is free. If they are paid, your service's budget may cover the fee. All paid staff must do this check.</p> <p>For more details, see kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/working-with-children-check</p>



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3.4	Have you considered ways to recruit a diversity of peers (e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and gender and sexually diverse young people)?	<p>It is ideal to recruit peer educators from diverse communities and backgrounds, including young people who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or gender and sexually diverse or are from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds</p> <p>Encourage applicants to apply for 'dedicated' positions on the advisory committee or group. You can also specify volunteer positions for people of particular cultural backgrounds.</p> <p>Some young people will prefer to talk with a peer who is similar to themselves. Other people (especially members of some CALD groups) may prefer to speak with someone who is not connected to their community. Having a diversity of peers ensures that all young people can find someone they feel comfortable to talk to.</p> <p>Your SHAPE program can target specific communities or populations if there is a need in your area. Local community organisations and youth services can be contacted to assist recruitment.</p> <p>Refer to the Play Safe Pro Fact Sheets for more information about working inclusively with young people from CALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, young people with a disability, Young people with experience of trauma, and young people who identify as gender and sexually diverse.</p>
3.5	Have you established a culturally safe and appropriate, transparent and youth-friendly selection process (e.g. interview)?	<p>Creating a fair selection process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have clear selection criteria with objective standards; this will help the interview panel justify why they chose the successful candidates. • Be available to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants to help them identify areas where they can improve or gain more experience. • Create a culturally safe, appropriate and supportive process. <p>Interviewing peer educators:</p> <p>Including young people on the interview panel helps assess applicants' interests, capabilities, skills and commitment.</p> <p>An interview panel should include the SHAPE program coordinator, representatives from key organisations or groups, and a peer educator or other representative from your program's target group.</p> <p>Develop a youth-friendly interview and consider asking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one or two open-ended questions about their interest in the role and reason for applying • one or two open-ended questions around the topic of sexual health <p>Sexual health can be an uncomfortable topic for some people. Try to select peer educators who are confident and comfortable with the topic.</p>



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3.6	Do you have an induction and orientation procedure for recruited peer educators?	<p>You will need to orient peer educators to your organisation and the SHAPE program.</p> <p>On commencement, review the job description which includes roles and responsibilities with the peer educators before starting their roles. Have them sign it as a form of agreement.</p> <p>If your organisation has a code of conduct you need to make the peer educators aware of it and other relevant organisational policies.</p> <p>Peer educators need to be trained in the SHAPE program. Refer to the Play Safe Pro SHAPE Training Manual.</p>
3.7	Do you have processes in place for supporting and supervising peer educators, including performance management?	<p>Ongoing support and supervision are essential. They allow peer educators to express their thoughts and help the program coordinator address peer educator performance.</p> <p>Peer educators are often more responsive to program coordinators and supervisors whom they view as friendly and understanding.</p> <p>The SHAPE program coordinator can provide feedback and support by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being readily available to answer questions • holding periodic meetings with individuals and the group so they can report on their work and discuss any issues • observing program activities <p>SHAPE program coordinators need to be sensitive to group dynamics, aware of their own values and attitudes, and perceptive about the psychosocial issues faced by peer educators. Ensure culturally safe and appropriate processes are in place. Participants and workers need to show cultural sensitivity and cultural inclusivity.</p> <p>Promote cooperation and teamwork:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage friendships between peer educators. • Have regular meetings, including debriefing after shifts, to share experiences and give feedback and support. • Allow peer educators to be involved in the planning and implementation of the SHAPE Program.
3.8	Have you considered providing opportunities for career development within your SHAPE Program?	<p>Provide peer educators with opportunities to take on more responsibility within the SHAPE Program, allowing the development of skills that support career progression.</p> <p>Use returning peer educators to help with recruitment of new peer educators. Support ongoing training. Allow peer educators to coordinate or provide leadership on shifts, or have peer educators take on other more senior responsibilities as you see appropriate within your organisation.</p> <p>Providing references for your peer educators when they apply for other jobs is another incentive for young people to be involved in your SHAPE Program, and will assist young people in finding further employment.</p>



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4	Training and ongoing support	
4.1	Have you identified appropriate external and internal services and staff to deliver SHAPE training?	<p>The SHAPE program coordinator may have the capacity and skills to facilitate SHAPE training with the support of other staff members. However, if this is not possible, your organisation could engage an external facilitator to lead the SHAPE training.</p> <p>There are local services and organisations that specialise in sexual health, issues for gender and sexually diverse people, and more. Contact those local services and organisations to facilitate part of the SHAPE training.</p> <p>Specialised services and organisations that you should consider contacting include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the HIV and Related Programs (HARP) Unit in your Local Health District (LHD) • local youth services • local sexual health services • Twenty10 (www.twenty10.org.au) • ACON (www.acon.org.au) • Family Planning NSW (www.fpnsw.org.au) • Yfoundations (www.yfoundations.org.au) • local Aboriginal Medical Service <p>You may want to include training in related topics such as alcohol and other drug use or mental health if you have the capacity.</p>
4.2	Do you have the SHAPE Training Manual to train peer educators in key sexual health messages?	<p>Peer educators need to be trained in key sexual health messages to accurately educate and inform other young people about sexual health.</p> <p>The Play Safe Pro SHAPE Training Manual includes the following key sexual health messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • overview of STIs • how to correctly use condoms • contraceptive methods • accessing services and referral pathways • consent <p>Supplementary key sexual health messages can be drawn from the Play Safe Pro Key Sexual Health Messages Fact Sheet.</p> <p>Additionally, Play Safe provides youth-friendly sexual health information and support services for young people.</p>



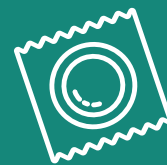
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4.3	Can you provide or arrange training in outreach methods, engagement skills and working with gender and sexual diversity and cultural diversity?	<p>Providing peer educators with core peer educator skills helps them to deliver health messages to other young people in community settings. Developing skills in communication, engagement techniques, working inclusively, and responding to situations on outreach is essential.</p> <p>Core peer educator training should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working inclusively with people from diverse backgrounds, including gender and sexually diverse, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD young people • communication skills and engagement tools • responding to difficult situations on outreach <p>Refer to the Core Peer Educator Skills Training Session in the Play Safe Pro SHAPE Training Manual for more information on how to run peer educator training.</p>
4.4	Do you have the potential to provide or arrange refresher or mid-season training?	<p>Providing additional information and skills training throughout the duration of the SHAPE Program keeps peer educators motivated and involved, and ensures they are able to perform their role effectively.</p> <p>Follow-up training can be completed in short sessions, during regular meetings, in small group work, or by providing written information and updates.</p> <p>The specific topics, issues and skills, as well as the frequency of the follow-up training, should be identified and determined in discussion with the peer educators during team meetings or supervision.</p> <p>Additional training may focus on particular questions which peer educators are having trouble answering or any current developments of interest, such as a new treatment for an STI, or disclosure of previous trauma or abuse. You can refer to the Play Safe Pro Sexual Health Promotion For Young People With an Experience of Trauma Fact Sheet for this specific example.</p>
4.5	Are there processes in place for peer supervision and mentoring on the job?	<p>Ongoing support and supervision are essential for any peer education program.</p> <p>The most common mechanism for providing support and supervision is to set up periodic meetings with individuals and meetings with the group.</p> <p>These meetings allow peer educators to reflect and report about their work and address any issues that have arisen during peer education activities/sessions. Meeting also enable the SHAPE Program coordinator to address peer educators' performance.</p> <p>Other important factors to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SHAPE Program coordinator is readily available to peer educators to answer their questions, provide feedback, and offer support. • Observing activities is another good way to supervise and provide support to peer educators • Peer educators are often more responsive to program coordinators and supervisors whom they view as friendly and understanding. <p>Ensure that experienced peer educators are rostered on to work with less experienced peer educators so that they can provide mentoring and support on the job.</p>



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5	Monitoring and evaluation	
5.1	Does your organisation have the capacity to monitor and evaluate the SHAPE Program?	<p>Include monitoring and evaluation in the SHAPE Program coordinator's role or other nominated person within the organisation if more appropriate.</p> <p>If possible, engage external people or organisations who have experience in research or program monitoring that can support the SHAPE Program coordinator in monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>Ensure that the SHAPE Program is achieving its objectives outlined in the SHAPE Program plan by monitoring (routinely tracking) information throughout the program.</p> <p>Monitoring is closely related to the process of supervision, as it assesses whether the number and types of activities planned are being conducted well enough. Activities should be updated or changed in accordance with the feedback received.</p> <p>Evaluation focuses on the results of the SHAPE Program. When the program is completed, have the objectives outlined in the SHAPE Program Plan been achieved? Draft steps to manage the execution of the SHAPE Program evaluation.</p> <p>What to consider when evaluating the SHAPE Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • process evaluation: measure the SHAPE Program's activities and quality • impact evaluation: measure the immediate effect of the SHAPE Program • information collected in SHAPE activities record sheets, resource distribution sheets and supervision notes • feedback from young people collected through SHAPE activities • quantitative and qualitative data <p>Review the Play Safe Pro SHAPE Checklist to identify changes that occur during the SHAPE Program implementation.</p>



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5	Monitoring and evaluation	
5.2	Have you defined the indicators to meet the SHAPE Program's objectives (e.g. number of shifts, number of young people reached, number of safe sex packs distributed)?	<p>Define indicators based on the goals and objectives of the SHAPE Program and what you are hoping to achieve.</p> <p>Ensure that data collected is regularly reviewed and the information is used to improve the SHAPE Program or address any challenges.</p> <p>It is helpful to collect data on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of shifts • locations worked • gender and cultural backgrounds of young people who engaged with peer educators • number of conversations around safe sex or testing • number of safe sex packs handed out • suggestions from young people for SHAPE Program improvement <p>The Play Safe Pro Sexual Health Activity Evaluation Template is useful in providing an example of the types of data that could be collected.</p>
5.3	Do you have access to monitoring and evaluation tools (e.g. shift reports)?	Create tools to collect the data. Tools could include activity record sheets, resource distribution sheets, supervision notes and feedback surveys from young people.
5.4	Can you do baseline assessments or pre and post surveys (e.g. of peer knowledge, confidence and practice changes)?	<p>It is valuable to assess and gauge the changes in knowledge of the peer educators before and after attending SHAPE training. This can be completed by conducting an anonymous knowledge quiz that collects information on peer educators' knowledge and understanding of sexual health before and after the training.</p> <p>Quiz question examples can be found in the Play Safe Pro SHAPE Training Manual.</p>