



SEXUAL LIVES AND RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS NSW

EVALUATION REPORT

“A LEARNING CURVE”

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1. INTRODUCTION.

This is a report of the action research final evaluation of the Sexual Lives & Respectful Relationships (SL&RR) program established in NSW 2017-8. An interim report produced in February 2018 is attached and provides a summary of the project to that date. The current report provides some background to the project and a description of how it developed in NSW. It then focuses on the learning from the project gained from the research undertaken primarily between March and June 2018. The report concludes with a set of recommendations to inform the further development of SL&RR in new sites, in particular where these are outside Victoria.

2. BACKGROUND

This section of the report draws on the interim report (SL&RR team, Deakin University, 2018). It provides a brief history of the SL&RR program leading to the development of the program in NSW.

The SL&RR model

SL&RR is a violence and abuse prevention model with four components: peer education by people with an intellectual disability delivering a respectful relationships program; supporting change in support relationships through learning partnerships; sector development through partnerships with community organisations involved in domestic/family/ sexual violence, women's and community health and disability advocacy; and systemic change through research and translation of outcomes. (See figure 1).

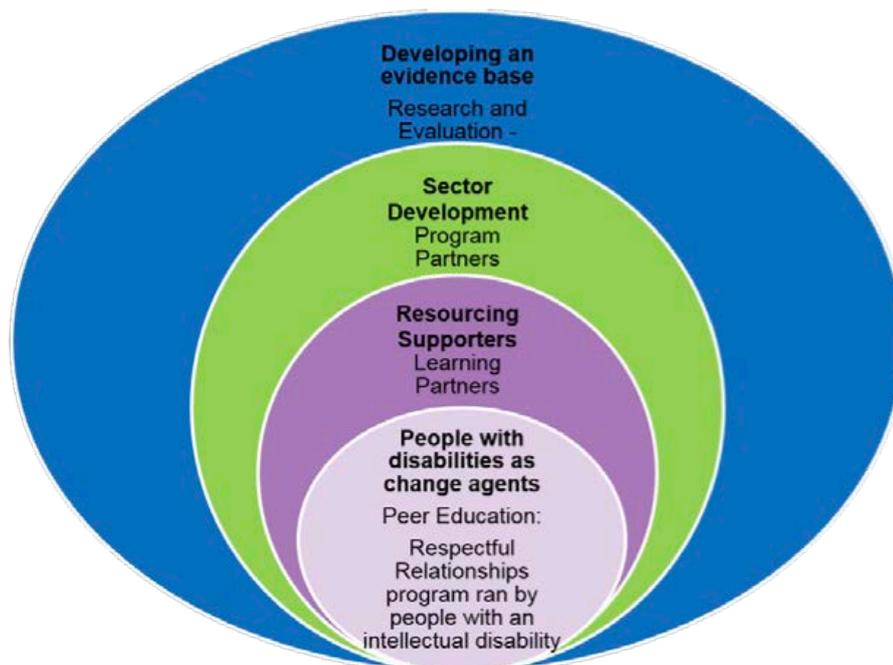


Figure 1 SL&RR model

The development of local partnerships and networks aims to provide a base for collaborative action by people with intellectual disabilities on issues of concern to them, as well as providing skilled people to facilitate the program with people with intellectual disabilities.

The SL&RR model is implemented in local communities that express an interest in engaging in violence and abuse prevention work with people with an intellectual disability. Peer Educators (people with intellectual disability) and Program Partners (from community organisations) work within local site networks to run the Respectful Relationships program in their area. People with intellectual disability are central to the SL&RR model and are involved within networks as trainers, as conduits to their peers and communities, and as colleagues with the program partners; through the program they become connected to and involved in broader work around violence and abuse prevention and sexuality and relationships. In this way the SL&RR model develops a collaboration between people with an intellectual disability, community professionals from sexual health, sexual assault and violence abuse services, and local communities.

Research and evaluation of the model has found that the model supports the development of positive attitudes and responses for people with intellectual disability including that they:

- Are sexual, can live sexual lives, have sexual rights and have relationships which include positive and negative experiences (Johnson, Hillier, Harrison, & Frawley, 2000);
- Can learn about respectful relationships, community resources and supports (Frawley & Bigby, 2015) and successfully share their experiences with others within a peer education framework (Frawley, Barrett, & Dyson, 2012) and
- Benefit from a cross-sectoral response which engages with disability and mainstream service provision in violence and abuse prevention (Frawley & Anderson, 2014).

Research on implementation of the SL&RR model has also identified five components that build the capacity for sites to work with this model and that can underpin successful implementation in sites (Frawley & Anderson, 2014, p. 17):

- Champions and drivers including program partners and partner organisations who understand the need for such a model and are committed to overcoming some of the barriers which may make its development difficult.
- Recognition that people with intellectual disabilities need to be taken account of and included in violence and abuse prevention work and should be at the centre of this work.
- Building the model and program delivery into the 'core business' of partner organisations – linking it to the broader work of these organisations.
- Cross sector collaboration (disability and community) and sharing of resources and expertise.
- Having a strong foundation to build the model on evidence through prior experience in working collaboratively for inclusion (disability, gender, culture).



Figure 2 Core components for building capacity to implement SL&RR

SL&RR operates in seven Australian sites: Gippsland, Bendigo, Melbourne Metro North, Melbourne Metro West, Mornington Peninsula, Sydney South West, and Sydney West. It is being adapted for use by colleagues in New Zealand and Sweden, and additional sites in Barwon (Vic) and Blue Mountains/Nepean (NSW) are in development. Once a site is developed, these local networks are supported by the SL&RR national program team situated in the SL&RR research group at Deakin University led by Associate Professor Patsie Frawley and coordinated by Dr Amie O’Shea. Support is provided to sites to continue building their capacity to implement this model in their communities.

Respectful Relationships Program

The SL&RR team, which includes women with an intellectual disability, have developed the current SL&RR Respectful Relationships program from earlier research and program work (Frawley et al., 2012; Frawley & O’Shea, 2012). This program is based on the life stories of people with an intellectual disability delivered within a rights context using adult learning principles. The program is co-facilitated by Peer Educators and Program Partners who have completed the ‘train the trainer’ program delivered by the national team. The trained peer educators and program partners work within local networks in their local community-based sites to promote and run the program and are involved in other activities locally that relate to sexuality and relationship rights.

SL&RR reflects best practice in violence and abuse prevention and inclusion (Barger, Wacker, Macy, & Parish, 2009). A key foundation of the model is ‘nothing about us with us’, honouring the dictum of the self advocacy movement and claiming a rightful place for people with an intellectual disability in sexuality and relationship education and support. An approach that places people with an intellectual disability at the centre acknowledges the impact of violence and abuse in the lives of people with an intellectual disability and the capacity of people with an intellectual disability to enact change.

3. THE SL&RR PROGRAM IN NSW.

In June 2016, the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) and Ageing Disability and Home Care (ADHC) commissioned the development and implementation of the SL&RR model in NSW. Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association (MDAA) were engaged by FACS to coordinate the project development and implementation in three sites in NSW. Dr Zhila Hasanloo was employed by MDAA as the Project Manager in this facilitation role. This section describes the project including the management structure, development of sites, training, and delivery of the program.

3.1 The work of the project

Three streams of work were involved in the project:

- Initiation and development of local networks including recruitment and training of program partners and peer educators.
- The delivery of the program by local networks of program partners and peer educators to people with intellectual disabilities in their area.
- An action research evaluation of the development of the project.

Initiation development and training of local networks comprising program partners and peer educators

This stream of work involved the initiation and development of three local sites in NSW. MDAA was responsible for contacting community organisations that worked in the sexual health, community health, domestic and family violence and disability advocacy area to be recruited to join the network as program partners and/or partner organisations. MDAA was also responsible for contacting people with an intellectual disability in these area who may have been interested in joining the network and/or becoming peer educators. MDAA used its networks to identify relevant organisations and people with intellectual disabilities. Some of these people were selected by organisations in the local area. Others were part of the MDAA network as MDAA was a program partner in the project.

At the time of writing the SL&RR model has been established in two NSW sites; Sydney South West (Liverpool area) and Sydney West (Blacktown area). These sites commenced running the SL&RR program in the first wave of implementation. Work had begun to establish SL&RR in a third NSW site in the Blue Mountains/Nepean; however, this was paused in December 2017 due to issues discussed later in this report, and is now being developed with NSW CID as the managing organisation with support from the national team. Funding for the project in relation to the two sites in Sydney South West and Sydney West will come to an end in June 2018, with funded site development in the Blue Mountains continuing after this date. MDAA recruited 14 Peer Educators and 10 Program Partners to be involved in these two sites.

Partner organisations represented were:

- Synapse/Brain Injury NSW
- Bonnie Support Services
- Ethnic Community Services Co-operative
- Intellectual Disability Rights Service
- Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association
- Family Planning NSW
- First Peoples Disability Network
- Blacktown Women's and Girls Health Centre
- Wash House
- Immigrant Women's Speakout Association

MDAA liaised with the national SL&RR team during this development stage to coordinate the 'train the trainer' program of peer educators and program partners which was undertaken in early 2017. The 'train the trainer sessions' were facilitated by the national team. Many of these organisations participated in the information sessions run by the SL&RR national team in early 2017. MDAA engaged with these organisations from December 2016, communicating with them about their potential involvement in the NSW sites. Most of the people with an intellectual disability who attended the information sessions and the subsequent 'train the trainer' program were also recruited through these organisations. MDAA also had ongoing contact with them over this time to facilitate their understanding of the model and their potential involvement in the project.

Deakin University was funded to run the training, to provide mentor support to the developing sites, and to conduct an action research evaluation of the project in NSW. The mentor role was a job share position; an experienced Victorian peer educator Emily Ardley was appointed as the peer educator

mentor, and an experienced program partner Alisha Gilliland was appointed as the program partner mentor. They were appointed on a part-time basis as program liaison workers (one day and two days a week respectively).

They undertook this role by liaising and meeting with the NSW sites and MDAA.

As noted above, there were originally 14 people with an intellectual disability recruited to be trained as peer educators across the two sites, and 10 program partners. Although the networks met on a regular basis, there was some drop off of program partners in 2017 due to factors which were largely beyond the control of the project. In May 2018, there were three program partners involved in one network: Blacktown (Family Planning NSW, MDAA and Washhouse). There were three program partners still active in the second network: Liverpool (Family Planning NSW, MDAA and Bonnie Support Services). In the Blacktown network, there were six peer educators and in the Liverpool network there were four active peer educators. Three peer educators and three program partners had left the Blacktown program and two program partners and one peer educator had left the Liverpool network. Factors impacting on sustainability of involvement for program partners and peer educators are discussed later in this report.

A third site in Nepean Blue Mountains was initiated in the project in late 2017, but due to issues relating to recruitment of peer educators and program partners and in the 'train the trainer' program, a decision was made to pause this site and reconsider development in 2018.

As part of the development of the local sites, 'train the trainer' programs, consisting of four days training in facilitating the SL&RR program, were provided by the national SL&RR team to program partners and peer educators. Some peer educators also attended the SL&RR professional development day facilitated by the Deakin University team in October 2017 in Melbourne. All peer educators were paid at sessional rates for their involvement in the project, including attendance at regular local network meetings and facilitation of the program in their area.

The delivery of the program by local networks of program partners and peer educators to people with intellectual disabilities in their area.

Time was needed to develop the local networks and provide a 'train the trainer' program for peer educators and program partners. Previous experience with the program recommended that there should be 6-8 people with intellectual disabilities participating in the program facilitated by a local network.

One program was facilitated by each of the sites in 2017. One consisted of 6 women with intellectual disabilities who were parents. The other consisted of approximately 8 people. It is not possible to know from the record who these people were. During the program, some people came for only one or two sessions and, due to other commitments or because they did not find it useful, did not come to others. In one of the programs, only one person attended all four sessions. While an individual evaluation was made of the sessions at their completion, this was not available to the researcher.

One program partner and one peer educator facilitated each program though, in one, some additional peer educators also attended. One of the programs was run with people with intellectual disabilities using their service. The facilitator was a member of staff and the peer educator came from the local network. The other included people using a number of different services. It is not possible at this point to know from the documents how they were recruited.

Action research evaluation

The NSW SL&RR evaluation aimed to document and evaluate the implementation and evolution of the SL&RR model in NSW from the perspectives and experiences of program participants, Peer Educators, Program Partners, and key stakeholders in NSW, and to provide feedback to them on the development of the project. It addressed three questions:

- What factors (individual, community and systemic) influence the development of a peer-led sexuality and relationships program for people with intellectual disabilities in NSW?

- What are the impacts of developing SL&RR programs at an individual, community and systemic level?
- What can be learned from this model for improved policy and practice in sexuality, sexual health and violence prevention for people with disabilities?

The SL&RR evaluation drew on principles of Action Research and Developmental Evaluation. Specifically, it was guided by Action Research cycles of planning, action, and review (Dick, Stringer & Huxham, 2009) and the eight key Developmental Evaluation Framework principles identified by Patton et al., (2016, p.309): developmental purpose, evaluation rigor, utilization focus, innovation niche, complexity perspective, systems thinking, co-creation, and timely feedback.

A researcher was appointed at Deakin University in June 2017. Her role was to work with the participants in the project, sites, and management groups in NSW, and to gather data from interviews, focus groups, and participant observation and provide feedback to them as the project developed. A Research Reference Group (RRG) was established consisting of three women with experience in the SL&RR program in Victoria to work alongside the researcher to inform and engage with the research and evaluation. They met on a monthly basis in Victoria (see section 3.2). The researcher provided training to the RRG in research methods, and the group provided input in relation to ensuring that questions for interviews and focus groups were in accessible language and undertook some analysis of the data from the research. The researcher also reported on a regular basis to the Research Advisory Group (RAG) consisting of organisations with an interest in SL&RR which was based in NSW. She reported to Associate Professor Patsie Frawley and was provided with regular supervision.

Following the resignation of the researcher in February 2018, Professor Kelley Johnson undertook the action research role in the project. She worked with the RRG to develop a plain English version of the Interim Report.

While data was collected during 2017, and some analysis of this data was undertaken by the researcher with input from the RRG, there did not seem to be consistent feedback to the sites in NSW. Most of the feedback was given directly to the RAG, MDAA, and the program liaison workers through regular discussions and meetings.

3.2 Coordination and Management of SL&RR in NSW

The NSW project was the first time that SL&RR had been implemented with an external organisation in the coordination role outside of Victoria. In the pilot of LSSL:RR (the original peer education based model of this program), when the program was implemented in two sites in Victoria and one in Tasmania, the National project team coordinated the whole project (Frawley, Barret and Dyson, 2012). Developing the management and co-ordination of the project in NSW was complex.

Management of the NSW project

FACs appointed MDAA to coordinate the NSW SL&RR project. Dr Zhila Hasanloo was employed by MDAA as the SL&RR NSW project manager. The Deakin national project team did not have a management role or responsibilities for the MDAA coordinator. As noted above, the project was resourced through Deakin University by two funded roles: a 0.7 project liaison position that was a job share, and a 0.5 FTE research position filled by Ms Millie Oclay until February 2017. The NSW site implementation also included a significant amount of support from the national SL&RR program team both at the beginning of the project, before these other roles were appointed, and throughout. The national coordinator Dr Amie O'Shea provided some mentoring and guidance to the project liaison workers; Associate Professor Patsie Frawley provided overall oversight and ran the initial information session and training; Ms Linda Stokoe ran some of the 'train the trainer' sessions; and Ms Rebecca Davie co-facilitated an information session. The support from the National team from June 2017 onwards was provided in kind as these roles were not funded through the NSW project budget.

Research Advisory Group

FACS was the funding body for the project; however, it also took responsibility for the development and chairing of the Research Advisory Group in NSW. This group consisted of 12 representatives from relevant organisations selected by FACS as having an interest, commitment and skills in relation to the program (see Attachment 4). Terms of reference were established for the group which met on a quarterly basis throughout 2017-18 (Attachment 4). The tasks of the Research Advisory Group were to:

- Consider the research project approach and any issues that may arise
- Provide guidance for data collection, analysis, and dissemination phases as required.
- Provide recommendations and/or support where appropriate.

(Terms of Reference Research Advisory Group, 2017, page 2)

There were no people with intellectual disabilities represented on the RAG. However the RRG is comprised of three women with an intellectual disability who are experienced SL&RR peer educators and who worked on the revision of the SL&RR program in 2016. This group was expected to engage with the RAG.

Research Reference Group

As noted above, the Research Reference Group was established in Victoria to provide their expertise in SL&RR to the researcher and to provide regular reports to the RAG in NSW. The group consisted of three women who were experienced peer educators in Victoria. They were paid sessional workers chosen by the Deakin University team. They met monthly throughout the project and provided advice to the researcher about ensuring the accessibility of interview questions and in providing some support in relation to data analysis. In 2018, they were responsible for developing a plain English version of the interim report. While they provided an introductory film to the RAG, they did not in practice have contact with this group and did not provide separate reports to it. Rather, any feedback was provided through the researcher's report to the RAG.

3.3 Evaluation of the NSW SL&RR project

As described in the Interim Report, the NSW SL&RR evaluation led by Millie Olcay with Associate Professor Patsie Frawley aimed to document and evaluate the implementation and evolution of the SL&RR model in NSW from the perspectives and experiences of program participants, peer educators, program partners, and key stakeholders in NSW.

The SL&RR NSW program was established with an action research approach in which the researcher was expected to work closely with the sites established in NSW and with the organisations involved with them. Using action research involves cycles of planning and research, followed by action and review (Dick, Stringer and Huxham, 2009). This enables ongoing development of a project using the findings from the research as it progresses. The researcher undertaking this work left the project in February 2018 and was replaced by Professor Kelley Johnson who began research on the project in March of this year. The data analysed in this report includes both the written records of research completed during 2017 and data collected between March and June 2018.

Research Methods 2017

The current report includes analysis of written information available from the research undertaken in 2017. During this time, data was collected through semi-structured interviews, focus groups, observations (e.g. anecdotal records, running records, photographs, audio/video-recordings) and field notes. Secondary sources such as SL&RR program documentation and other publications about the program have also been used. At the time of writing data had been collected from the 'community' level only (see figure 2). The first wave of project input as described below focussed on this level of participants. The data included interviews with: 1 Peer Educator; 2 Program Partners; the project coordination team (MDAA: 2 interviews, 9 teleconferences) project liaison workers (1 interview, 11 teleconferences with program liaison and MDAA); and 6 research reference group meetings.' (SL&RR team at Deakin University, 2017, page 6).

Research Methods 2018

The following methods were used to collect data from March-June 2018.

- Interviews with the management team in NSW. These were held either by Skype or in person. Four interviews were held with the management team. Each interview lasted approximately one hour.
- Participant observation of a Research Advisory Group meeting in Sydney, which was followed by a focus group with 5 members of the group lasting approximately 45 minutes.
- Interviews with the national SL&RR team (four interviews) of approximately one hour each.
- Participant observation of two site meetings in Sydney (approximately one and half hours each) followed by a focus group with people who were present at one site meeting (five site members, four peer educators and one program partner) and two individual peer educator members at the other site (approximately 45 minutes each).
- A focus group with the Research Reference Group in Victoria (two people) and ongoing work with them to produce Plain English versions of reports. This involved four meetings.
- All documents pertaining to the project including minutes of meetings, transcriptions of interviews undertaken in 2017, fact sheets, manuals for the project, the interim report and information provided to sites by the Deakin team throughout the project were included as data.
- Because the two operating sites had undertaken one program delivery each during the project (held during 2017), and little written information was available to the researcher about the direct experience of program participants, it was not possible to analyse how the program was received by those who attended it.

In order to protect the confidentiality of those taking part in focus groups and interviews, names have not been used in this report. People are identified in terms of their general role in the program (Site members (peer educators and program partners), management team in NSW which includes FACS staff, the Research Advisory Group and MDAA staff), the Deakin Team (liaison workers, overall manager of the research, national co-ordinator of SL&RR and the Research Reference Group). In this report the term project is used to indicate the whole project in NSW while program is used specifically to identify the program of SL&RR facilitated by local networks.

This data was analysed using primarily a thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2016; 2012). The focus was on what was learned from the project and the participants' experience of their involvement in it.

4. WHAT WAS LEARNED FROM THE SL&RR PROJECT IN NSW?

4.1 Commitment to the SL&RR Program

Interviews with those involved in the project at all levels indicated a commitment to its ideas and principles. This commitment was particularly focused on three aspects of the program. There was a recognised lack of programs in NSW in relation to sexuality, particularly the prevention of abuse and assault and people with intellectual disabilities. There was both excitement and interest in the development and implementation of a program which involved people with intellectual disabilities in peer education and in being leaders in the area. Finally, the location of the program in local areas, which brought together a range of organisations concerned with sexual issues – including sexual assault and sexual health – as well as organisations working with people with intellectual disabilities, was seen as an important feature of the program.

Interviews and focus groups revealed a strong view from those involved in the program that there was a lack of attention given to issues of sexuality in relation to people with intellectual disabilities, in particular to issues of abuse and violence. The focus of the SL&RR program on these issues was a strong motivating force for those who were involved with it.

Members of the Research Advisory group commented that they had become involved in the project because of the 'co-design and co-delivery' aspects of the project which involved people with intellectual disabilities working as peer educators with program partners. A view was expressed that the program offered a new approach through the empowerment of people with intellectual disabilities as peer educators. There was an expressed need to 'educate everyone' about sexual issues and people with intellectual disability, and both the content and program processes were seen by some members as consistent with their more general working aims and practices.

Similar views were expressed by other members of the NSW management team in focus groups and interviews. In particular the role of peer educators and the importance of involving organisations outside of the disability field were stressed. One person involved in the management in NSW commented that they had learned a lot from their involvement in the project, including new perspectives of people with intellectual disabilities and their lives and the importance of bringing different services in a locality together for discussion.

Others indicated that their involvement was based on a view that the program dealt with a neglected and difficult issue for people with intellectual disabilities, and that it offered a new approach in which people with intellectual disabilities and a range of services could come together for discussion of issues of common interest as well as developing the program.

A member of the NSW team commented:

...so little happens on this topic. That's the other thing that's why I think it's so important and that's why...We persevered because we wanted to see this be successful.'(Interview with NSW management team member).

The need for the program was particularly strongly voiced by peer educators. For some, the training and involvement had been important to them personally:

This program is so important to me. It has been healing for me. I had bad experiences when I was a child. It has really helped me. (Peer educator 2)

My confidence has improved since I have been coming to this meeting. (Peer educator 1)

Others strongly expressed the view that the program was needed by people with intellectual disabilities so that they would know their rights in relation to sexuality, relationships and abuse.

It's trying to get other people to stay interested and speak out about their experience of being sexually abused by a family member or being pushed by the community where they're going to have sex outside a home they shouldn't have to run away and not be allowed to have that privacy in that room with the respect - they're in a group home. It gives them more courage and more rights to actually use their rights and speak out that they're being mistreated by normal people that don't have disabilities, to stop being prejudiced, to stop people being like: 'you've got a retardation; you're stupid; you're hopeless; you go lock yourself away; you don't have a right to live in community. (Peer educator 3)

I want to use what I now know to help other...[people] to know and protect themselves. (Peer educator 1)

Peer educators spoke about the need to represent those who had experienced abuse and to provide support to them through the program delivery.

Someone interested it to me, and I'm going 'Okay, I'm going to give it a try.' Because I have a disability and I've been through what everyone else has been through, like I've been through sexual abuse and everything else, so I'm going to represent the people that I've been so I'm going give them courage. So the time that we did the four day course I think it encouraged me. I

thought more and more 'I'm going to do this. So I heard about it and thought, 'Okay I'll give it a try. No worries. (Peer educator 3).

I think I'm passionate about people with disability from a multicultural background, learning about domestic violence and safety and sexual health, because we don't talk about that in our culture. I'm really passionate about it. Because we need to have an open discussion about that in my culture which we don't. (Peer educator 4).

There was unanimity among peer educators about the importance of the work, the need to provide opportunities for other people with intellectual disabilities to know their rights in relation to sexuality, and also to be more informed about prevention of violence and abuse.

The commitment by peer educators was also demonstrated in the anxiety that was expressed at the approaching conclusion of the project funding and the need to continue the work. For example, one group of peer educators advanced ideas on how to keep the program going after the conclusion of the current funding. Ideas advanced by peer educators included lobbying MPs, the local council and peak disability organisations and talking with particular agencies about running the project on a funded basis.

Commitment was also shown by some program partners at the sites in the actions they were taking. For example, one program partner has submitted a grant to sustain the project. Another program partner organised with a peer educator to check the possibility of running the program with an agency which had expressed an interest.

All members of the Deakin Team (with the exception of the researcher who had been newly appointed) had a long-term commitment to the project and were keen to see it develop in States other than Victoria. In considering the possible future of the program in NSW, one person commented:

I do [want to see the program continue] because when it comes back to what this whole thing is about, I desperately do, because there's people out there who are in awful relationships or have been abused, need services that can support them. So when you come back to that, that's what needs to up it. And services like CASAs who do a pretty good job here, [in Victoria] but in NSW they're not involved in this, because they don't see it as their priority area. So think about all those people who need that support and this organisation hasn't got it on their radar. So that's why the program needs to continue, for the reason that there's people out there who need that information, need to feel that it's okay for them to ask for that in a way that - you know what I'm saying don't you? (Interview with Deakin University team member 1)

In talking of the sites in NSW, one member of the national team commented:

...there are amazing people in that room, they've connected some really diverse and like-minded and full of potential people. I think that's been done really well and I've loved their motivation and their attitude. (Interview Deakin University team member 2).

4.2 Roles and Responsibilities

SL&RR in NSW was a complex project. While its implementation was to occur in NSW, much of the expertise in the program was with people who were based in Victoria. There is clear evidence of the success of the program in Victoria where it has been running for ten years (Frawley et al, 2012). However, there are differences in the way that it has developed in Victorian sites and how the program was developed and implemented in the NSW project. In all other sites, since the first pilot program that was implemented in Victoria and Tasmania, the sites have developed 'from the bottom up' with people with an intellectual disability and community organisations, with a particular interest in sexual health, sexual assault or disability, contacting the SL&RR (and before this program the LSSL:RR researcher (now

at Deakin University but previously at LaTrobe University)) and indicating an interest in developing a network at a local level. In NSW, the process was more 'top down'. FACS had provided funding to one organisation, MDAA, to implement the program, including initiating and supporting local networks. Funding was provided to Deakin University to run the 'train the trainer' program and to employ the researcher and the program liaison staff. The Research Advisory Group in Sydney was appointed by FACS, and the Research Reference Group in Melbourne was chosen by the Deakin team. Further, the liaison people were appointed by Deakin, although their primary role was to support the sites in Sydney. Perhaps as a result of this complexity, the interviews and focus groups revealed some confusion of roles.

Interviews with the management team in NSW revealed a lack of clarity of role within the RAG. While terms of reference had been developed, people did not seem to know what they were. Comments from the focus group with the RAG about their role included:

*We were to give our opinions, not sure what kind of input was needed
Thought we were here to talk about research and methodology
(Focus group with RAG members)*

Minutes of the RAG over the twelve months revealed meetings where reports from the researcher were given, but where there was not very much interaction between members of the group or discussion of particular concerns or issues. Members of the RAG commented that they would have liked more information about the project in order to be able to promote it within their networks.

In NSW, there was an expectation that the organisation holding the funding, MDAA, would have a clear role in initiation and development of the project. However, the discussions with program partners revealed that the project was a learning curve for MDAA which had no prior experience in working on sexual issues and did not know the program before being tasked with its implementation. This made it very difficult for all program partners in NSW. One commented:

My role at the beginning was quite different from my role at the final stages of the program, because many things changed, including my role and responsibilities. This wasn't easy... (Interview with member of NSW management team)

MDAA staff were involved in the initial training offered to program partners and peer educators, and were also participants in a meeting of Victorian sites held at the 2017 Having a Say Conference in Geelong and a professional development day held in October 2017 in Melbourne. Regular support and mentoring was provided by the project liaison workers from their time of appointment. This included weekly or fortnightly conversations between the project liaison workers and the NSW project manager, five face to face meetings with the sites, and other phone and Skype contact with individual program partners and peer educators. The national team provided some secondary support, and Amie O'Shea and Patsie Frawley attended two combined site meetings: one in February 2018 and one in June 2018. The RRG also attended the the June meeting. While there was clear evidence of the continuing commitment and involvement of the people in Victoria, distance in a project – which was essentially one of community development – made immediate accessibility to their expertise by NSW program partners and members of the NSW management team difficult.

The expertise in the program and in the community development processes needed to develop and support the ongoing implementation and development of the sites, and was intended to be shared and made available to the sites by the project liaison worker roles. While it was originally anticipated that these roles would be filled by people based in NSW, it was not possible to find people with the requisite skills in Sydney. As the active program sites were all in Victoria at the time of the development of the NSW project, a decision was made to appoint two people who had 10 years experience – one as

a peer educator and one as a program partner – to mentor the NSW program partners and peer educators. They were based in Victoria which meant ‘on the ground’ support for the sites, for MDAA was not always available. As noted above, the program liaison staff provided a combination of face-to-face, phone, and Skype support to MDAA and to the sites. At times this did not allow for quick responses to questions, and there were organisational difficulties in making contact with program partners and peer educators using these methods. Time was a major factor in the development of a rapport with sites, including with individual program partners and peer educators, and in relation to undertaking this liaison and mentoring role. This issue was exacerbated by the inevitable lack of knowledge of the organisations, and people involved in sites in NSW by the project liaison workers who researched the organisations in order to better understand their needs. Time was also a factor in relation to the sites developing as cohesive groups that could fully understand the program and their roles, and have the capacity to work together to run programs.

The Deakin University team was responsible for the action research; however, again they were based in Victoria. The researcher went to Sydney for RAG meetings and to undertake interviews and focus groups and to meet with the sites. The national SL&RR team became involved in providing support and expertise in relation to the development of the project which had not been anticipated when the project began. Because they had long-term experience with the program, they were seen as the ‘experts’ and so perhaps inevitably there was a reliance on the advice that they gave to the NSW team. At times, this countered proposed actions by NSW participants leading to confusion in relation to the development of the project.

Given that any community development project is heuristic in nature, it was inevitable that roles changed over time. From interviews it was apparent that involvement in the project was a ‘learning curve, for those involved and, at times, this led to uncertainty or confusion about their roles. In the light of this, it may have been useful to have reviewed the roles and responsibilities of the MDAA coordinating role, Deakin University, employed staff, and the overall management and coordination roles on a regular basis.

4.3 The Peer Educator Role

People with an intellectual disability are central to the SL&RR model and to the delivery of the SL&RR program and to the principles of it. Interviews and focus groups revealed their strong commitment and investment in the work of the project (see section 4.1). They valued the training that they had received and the increased confidence that some felt from their involvement in the project. In particular, they valued their role both in terms of supporting the rights of other people with intellectual disabilities and that it was a paid position.

The program manual describes peer educators as follows:

Peer Educators are people who identify as ‘peers’ of, or the same as, people with intellectual disability. They complete four days of training to become a Peer Educator. (SL&RR Team, 2017, p9).

Peer Educators were required to be over 18 years of age. Their role was described as follows:

Peer Educators

- Introduce the program
- Introduce the stories and talk about them using the key messages
- Introduce other activities and help the group to do them
- Are a role model about positive attitudes and values about sexuality and relationship rights
- Make sure everyone has a chance to have their say

- Share some things about themselves if they feel safe and ok about doing this.
(SL&RR Team, 2017, page 9)

The task of the peer educator is a sensitive one requiring a capacity to support group learning and to respond to the group's needs. It may be particularly complex for peer educators who have themselves experienced difficult or abusive relationships and who need to be able to hold these in working with a group in the program. The SL&RR model that links peer educators with experienced program partners who, in their work roles, have expertise in education, counselling and support around sexuality and relationships, and recognise the complexity of this work. The model and the training of peer educators and program partners reinforces that facilitation of the program is a shared role. The research revealed that there were a few instances in which both program partners and peer educators had found it difficult to 'hold' their own experiences during the program and an explicit request from peer educators for further training on this issue.

The role of peer educators also extends to the network sites. While the 'train the trainer' sessions focus on the facilitation role of peer educators their role, as a network member, is not formally addressed in training. The peer educators interviewed in the research focused on their roles in facilitating the program. They did not articulate a view about their role in the networks.

MDAA, in collaboration with each site, were responsible for recruiting people with an intellectual disability to the NSW SL&RR pilot project, which included the role of peer educator in facilitating the program and participation in the sites. However, it is not clear from the documentation how peer educators were actually selected. In some instances, from interviews with peer educators, this appeared to be an invitation to attend training. There did not seem to be a clear selection process. The peer educator role is a sessionally paid position and all sites approach recruitment differently. In Victoria, some sites were initiated by people with an intellectual disability through self advocacy organisations.

The experience of peer educators who had facilitated the program revealed that it had been a learning curve for them. For example:

... I did it in the first session and that was worse because the session got longer because of it. And so we had to keep on topic and not go into personal stories too much. And after that it became better, because I was trying to focus on topic can also lead the discussion from people expressing their feelings. And I got a bit more passionate about delivery and enjoying it more, and so I learnt a lot from the whole experience. And I also learnt a lot about group dynamics and working with different people. (Interview with peer educator 5)

This peer educator received support and training from the program partner following the delivery of the program, which they felt had been very useful and had increased their skills and learning.

In another situation, the peer educator felt that they were being 'controlled' by the program partner, and this led to difficulties in facilitating the program. The aim of the local site development was in part to develop relationships between program partners and peer educators. In this instance, it was felt that there was insufficient time for the two people to get to know each other and to trust each other in the facilitation.

The manual for the program and statements from people involved in the training of peer educators reveal that the issue of holding negative personal experiences is part of the preparation for facilitation of the program. In spite of this, sometimes people (whether program partners or peer educators) may continue to find this difficult. For example, the third proposed site experienced difficulties at the training sessions for peer educators because of this issue. It was decided following this training

program that the development of the third site envisaged by the project should be paused. It is now being re-developed.

While it may be part of the peer educator's role to be able to self disclose in a facilitation role, this needs to be clearly defined and boundaried through prior discussion. Where, in spite of training and support, it becomes clear that this is not possible for the person, care needs to be taken in finding another role for them or in having procedures in place for ending their involvement.

Peer educators at both sites expressed frustration that after the training they had not been involved in facilitation. This was because only two programs were run during the time of the project. Some felt that they had lost confidence or skills because of the time elapsing since the training with no opportunities to implement the skills and knowledge they had gained.

When we were doing the [site] meetings I kept saying 'how come we haven't done this yet [run the program]?' Because it felt like to me that we were going round in circles, we kept having all these meetings. I got told today it was because they were still doing it ... I didn't know. But I thought by now it would be up and running. For me it's taken a long time, and if it keeps going the way it is, people are going to start like, 'we're not going anywhere, what are we doing here?' There's little enough people as it is. You don't need anymore people leaving. (Focus group Peer Educator 3)

They say practice makes perfect, you do it all more and more, you do become better at it, because you're doing as much as you can. That's your aim: to get the practice to do your skills, to achieve those goals and those skills you were aiming for. When You've got to that point, and you've achieved, and you can to pat yourself on the back and say 'I've done it. I can run a group and I don't have to look at the material because I could do it over and over again fluently.' You're not feeling like you're going nowhere. But when I don't get that practice, it's a never-ending barricade, it's just coming up in front of me. This is stopping me getting there. It's like a wall that just keeps falling in front of me. And I've got to keep knocking each wall down just to try and reach the end. That's what hasn't been good for me. It's wall after wall, knocking it down. I'm not getting to where I want to be. (Focus group Peer Educator 4)

It would be useful, given that there will be inevitable time lapses between training and facilitation of the program, for there to be regular practices of activities during site meetings and time for debriefing with the site after delivery of the program. There was a stated need by peer educators to have these opportunities. It is also important that peer educators understand there may be time gaps between training and program delivery. Neither of the sites had developed action plans early in the project, although these were in process in the later stages of the project. This might be helpful in terms of planning ahead for program delivery so that people are working towards a goal. Setting forward goals of times when the program will run and who will facilitate it may enable program partners and peer educators to work together to prepare with more time and would also allow for the local network to support its members in doing so.

The peer educators were keen to undertake further training. Of particular importance to them was training which would enable them to support people or to take action if something went wrong during the program. One person said that they would like to have training in first aid. Three others commented that they were anxious if people got upset and they did not know what to do when this happened.

...because something you could be saying, you could be explaining what someone else has gone through, but you don't stop and think 'oh is it all right to go ahead if someone could be triggered until it's too late. And then you think 'Oh boy, now we've got to stop.' We need to have a lot of people aware before you start. Just be careful what you say. Sometimes we can forget. I know I would forget sometimes, and if I'm going to run a program like your workshop, I've got to stop and think before, or plan myself well before I go up there, and say 'ah, is this a good idea to bring that up while I'm doing my demonstration? So get yourself coached well before the next network meeting that you'll stop and go 'Oh well I'll know what to do'. 'I know what areas to talk about and what areas I shouldn't indulge or go into because I could trigger. (Peer educator 3)

While preliminary training seeks to cover these issues, and it is expected that the peer educator and program partner will work collaboratively together, the expressed need by peer educators for further training is a positive statement of their interest and recognition of learning needs based on their experience. This may include specific training by a counsellor during the development of networks.

Payment of peer educators was particularly important to them. The SL&RR model where program partners' organisations support the program implementation often 'in kind' should include planning for ongoing payment of peer educators. This is the main cost for program delivery and for network development. The sites have begun planning to ensure funds will be available to cover this into the future either through in kind contribution by organisations or by applying for grants. Despite some concerns being raised by peer educators about their preparation, and the role and implementation of the program, in both sites included in this research the peer educators remained involved, interested, and committed to the continuation of the program.

4.4 Process and Content

There are two important components in SL&RR: the development of local networks (involving program partners and peer educators); and the successful delivery of the program to people with intellectual disabilities in the local area. In the NSW project, the outcomes seemed to be stronger in the first of these components; however, there was a strong focus on the 'need' to run programs.

One of the strengths of SL&RR involves a process of local community networks and the collaboration of different organisations working together with peer educators. There was consensus by all those involved in the project that it takes time to develop these, and that given the time constraints of the project it was difficult to implement fully. Networks did meet regularly throughout the project and were supported by the project liaison staff. However, for part of the time they met as two groups, perhaps reducing their capacity to address their local geographical needs. From the end of 2017, the two networks met separately; this seemed to provide them with a stronger focus on network development and working together. One of the goals of the overall project is for the collaboration at local network level to lead to other forms of joint work. This did not seem to happen in the project, and perhaps needs to be more clearly stated as an aim. However, the very positive personal statements from peer educators indicated that they had gained confidence and skills through their involvement.

Two programs of SL&RR were delivered during the project. One of these was directly focused on clients of one of the program partners and was favourably reviewed by the facilitator and peer educator. The other involved a program partner and a peer educator from a different organisation with a diverse group of people with intellectual disabilities. In the latter case, while there was preparation for the program by the two facilitators, this did not seem sufficient for them to be able to work easily together. The need for sufficient time in planning the program would seem to be important.

The frustration of peer educators at both sites (see section 4.2) with respect to not actually being given an opportunity to facilitate a program is understandable. It may be useful to integrate the development of the network alongside preparation for local preplanned programs, thus both giving people an opportunity to practise their skills and to focus on what many of them saw as 'our work'.

The two liaison staff kept contact with the sites by distance and attended five site meetings. They also prepared 'tip sheets' to support the sites in their development and sought to mentor the sites. In the two site meetings attended by the researcher in 2018, the liaison staff had prepared agendas and minutes and chaired the meetings. While this allowed the program partner and peer educators to discuss issues, it was problematic to some extent as the issues raised at the meeting were related to an agenda which was prepared interstate. Finding ways to devolve responsibility to the local networks and to combine more general process development with the delivery of the program would seem to be important for the long-term development of the sites.

4.5 Flexibility of the Program

The program manual (SL&RR Team, 2017) provides guidance to the peer educators and program partners in facilitating the program. The manual has been carefully thought through and reviewed by both experienced peer educators and program partners in collaboration with Deakin University staff. In Victoria, the work of developing the program was devolved to local networks supported when necessary by the Deakin team – this seemed to work well. However, some issues were raised by program partners and peer educators in NSW which suggest a need for some additional guidance.

One peer educator commented that some of the people coming to the program workshops did not know very much about sex and that 'we had to start over again'. Members of the management team and peer educators suggested that it would be useful to know who was coming to the program and what they wanted to gain from it. This could be easily done by asking for some information when people indicate their interest in attending. In NSW, one of the programs was run internally by an organisation with its own clients, and this seemed to work well. However, there may be ethical issues in undertaking the program in this way. Some people may not feel comfortable in talking about sensitive issues to a facilitator who is employed by the service that they use, or to a peer educator who may also be part of the organisation. A member of the Deakin University team commented that the program should be run by the network as a whole, not by a particular organisation with its own clients.

While one program run in NSW did not lead to concerns about safety, there were instances in both training sessions for peer educators and in the other program when people became upset by the content. Interviews with program partners, and analysis of documents in the 2017 research, suggested the need for someone to be present (preferably a program partner from the local network) who is skilled in this situation. This cannot be the facilitator as they may need to spend time with person outside of the room. In one local network in Victoria, planning includes the presence of a skilled sexual assault counsellor. While the manual suggests resources which someone can use if they require further support it is difficult to arrange this in a workshop although it is a helpful resource for those facilitating it.

The use of filmed life stories is a powerful and positive way for people to learn, but it will lead to self-disclosure by some people. Being prepared for this and knowing what to do is important both for the individuals and for other participants.

Some program partners indicated anxiety about the need to follow up people who had become upset during a workshop. There are both ethical and legal issues of duty of care in this regard. Although follow up took place, this was not planned in advance.

One of the continuing strengths of the program has been the use of authentic life stories told by people with intellectual disability. However, some of these are confronting for some people. While there are some examples of positive sexual experiences and respectful relationships in the resources, the focus of the work is on the difficulties which people have experienced. The workshop ends with Hussein's story, which was reported by some management team members as very confronting and at times upsetting for participants. Knowing something of the needs of people attending the workshop may lead to decisions by the facilitators about which stories should be used within the program to meet the learning needs of a particular group. It might also be useful to conclude with a positive story which demonstrates what a good sexual and respectful relationship can be. This might also be a useful starting point for the workshops as previous research revealed that knowing what a positive relationship is could empower people to recognise one that is abusive (Johnson et al, 2000). The addition of more diverse stories would also allow some flexibility in how the other stories and activities are used.

An evaluation of the program is the last activity of the final workshop in the program. Unfortunately, documentation of the results of this evaluation in NSW were not available to this researcher. It would be useful to keep a record at the local network on feedback from participants and to use this in future planning of the program.

The program is designed to be relevant for adults with intellectual disabilities, including both men and women. A need for programs for younger people was raised in one focus group. This would require a redevelopment of the content of the program and it was not seen to be appropriate to use the current program with younger people.

Both men and women were trained as peer educators and the men included in the current evaluation were committed to the project and, in one instance, had spent a good deal of time drafting terms of reference for their site. However, no men were involved in the delivery of the program in NSW nor was there a male representation on the RRG. It is unclear from the manual whether only same-gendered groups should participate in the program, and whether male program partners and peer educators could work in a woman-only program or vice versa.

Perhaps, because of the focus on abuse and violence and the history of the development of the program, there is a focus on women in the manual. Yet there is evidence that men with intellectual disabilities do experience sexual abuse and assault and their sexual needs are often ignored by those around them (Cambridge and Mellan, 2000; Johnson et al, 2000; McCarthy, 1999). In future reviews of the program manual, this issue could be revisited with the addition of more stories which provide a diversity of examples of men's experiences.

4.6 The Need for Resources

While those involved in the project in NSW were supported by an organisation based there, and by mentors and advisors in Victoria, interviews and focus groups with both sites and the management teams revealed a need for more written guidance in the development of the project.

The SL&RR manual is carefully developed, but this project indicated that because 'expert' support on the program was available at distance there was a need for more guidance in both the development of sites and in the preparation for program delivery. At the heart of the SL&RR model is the local collaboration of organisations with peer educators and the initiatives, and the development of particular sites is seen to be the responsibility of the people involved at this level. Therefore a 'heavy manual' about development which restricts local development was seen to be inappropriate. In response to stated needs from sites, the liaison workers prepared a series of 'tip sheets' which focused on the development of local networks. However, these were only finalised towards the end of the

project and so their usefulness is not currently known. A draft action plan for networks to plan future work was also provided, but again very late in the project.

Using the experience of the Victorian sites and the two in NSW to develop a set of process guidance sheets would be of assistance to networks which are just beginning their journey. This would seem to be particularly important to future projects of a similar kind which might be developed interstate or internationally. Such resources should also include a clear statement that they are not prescriptive and can be amended to suit local needs. The following kinds of resources were discussed in interviews and focus groups and may provide a starting point for development:

- Establishing and developing networks for SL&RR (draft tip sheets available)
- Job descriptions for peer educators and program partners
- Terms of reference for advisory groups and sites (draft terms of reference now available for one site).
- Selection criteria and processes for employment of peer educators.
- Action plan templates for sites (available in draft)
- Draft flyers (to be adapted) for promoting the program and the project.
- Guidance in developing and implementing specific SL&RR program including some of the learnings from experience in relation to timing, preparation of facilitators and support for individuals participating in the program.

Other helpful information could be prepared following discussion and further experience. These resources would need to be prepared in Plain English and could be done with support from peer educators and program partners.

4.7 Contextual Learnings

A number of contextual factors affected the development of the project in NSW. These were the rolling out of the NDIS in NSW, and the time and distance constraints of the project.

Rolling out the NDIS

The NDIS was rolling out in NSW throughout the life of the SL&RR project. This national project had implications for all disability organisations in the state. It affected the project in the following ways. Some program partners withdrew from the project because specific staff members left to take up new positions, leaving a gap or leading to their replacement by people who had not received training or who were unfamiliar with the project. Other organisations found that their available time for the project was reduced because of increased commitments due to the NDIS. In some instances, funding changes led to reduced capacity of specific organisations.

Time and Distance

Community development takes time and ongoing support (Kenny, 1999) as well as commitment and relevance to the individuals involved. There was clear commitment by all those involved in management teams and at the sites, and the general consensus was that the project was relevant to their work and lives. However, there were time constraints on the project. It was funded for two years and the aim was to have three sites developed and program delivery to have occurred during this time. Two sites were established and a third is currently in development. It was clear that time was needed to develop working collaborations and trust among the people at the sites. There was time pressure to both develop the processes of the project and to deliver the program.

Prior discussion in this report has revealed that distance was a problem in this project. The need for liaison people to be based in the state, in spite of the efforts of the Victorian staff, was apparent, and the need for the management organisation in NSW to have ongoing support proved to complicate their role and to put increased pressure on the Victorian team.

5. CONCLUSION

This report is titled 'a learning curve' because the phrase was used by two peer educators (in different contexts) and two members of the NSW management team to describe their experience. Learning within the project took different forms. It brought together a range of different program partners and peer educators at a local level to learn from each other and from the training provided by Deakin staff and to use the learning to both to implement the SL&RR program and to develop new collaborations. It was clear from the interviews and focus groups that this learning was particularly valued at both a personal and professional level by the peer educators who were articulate advocates for it. It was also a learning curve for some members of the NSW management team who learned more about both the life experiences of people with intellectual disabilities, their abilities, and the degree of support that was needed for a devolved project to work effectively.

The project achieved the establishment and development of two sites in NSW, with a third currently being separately developed in the Blue Mountains, supported by NSW CID and Blue Mountains Womens Health. Training was provided by the Deakin Team to both sites and professional development was also available in Victoria during the life of the project. One program of SL&RR was facilitated by each of the sites. Research into the project was undertaken during 2017 and 2018, with the aim of supporting both current and future development of the project.

While these are significant achievements, it is also clear from the research that there were difficulties in carrying out the project. The need for intensive training and continuing support of any organization, based at a distance from Victoria, if they are to manage the project effectively became apparent. This is particularly the case if the organisation has had limited experience in relation to working with people with intellectual disabilities or with the SL&RR program. The need for resources which can be readily available to people involved in the project was also apparent. While every effort was made by the program liaison workers to provide support and mentoring, the distance proved to be a problem in terms of face to face contact and support. The difficulties experienced in facilitating the program by some people emphasise the need for careful preparation and guidance for peer educators and program partners in managing difficult situations which might arise in workshops on sensitive issues. A closer interaction between the process of developing networks and delivering the program may address some of these issues.

In preparing this report, I am conscious as a researcher that time constraints limited the fieldwork I was able to undertake. I was not able to observe the facilitation of the program in NSW, and time constraints prevented me from interviewing all of the important people involved in NSW. This report is based on the documents provided from the research in 2017 and on the fieldwork undertaken since March this year. It is important that these limitations be taken into account when reading the report. The content of the report and its recommendations aim to consolidate learnings from the NSW project and to recommend ways in which SL&RR may be effectively translated beyond Victoria.

In conclusion, SL&RR is a program which is innovative and creative. It recognises the established right of people with intellectual disabilities to have power in decision-making about their lives (UNCRPD, 2006) and provides the opportunity for relevant and diverse organisations and people to come together to work on issues important to them. It also provides an established model in working with highly sensitive and often neglected issues of how to develop respectful relationships. However, this

work takes time and resources, and involves significant learning by all those involved. Learning from the experience of the NSW project can be used to undertake future projects.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below are based on the research findings discussed earlier in this report. They are designed to support future developments of the SL&RR program in both the development of local networks and specific program facilitation; they may also be useful to existing and developing activity on the program in NSW. In some instances, development in relation to these recommendations has commenced in preparation for the further development in NSW.

Planning the development of a SL&RR project

6.1 Where funding is obtained to appoint an agency external to national SL&RR team at Deakin University to establish SL&RR, rather than it arising directly from local interest, care needs to be taken in establishing clear lines of responsibility and clear roles.

6.2 The prospective lead organisation selected to manage the project should be involved in the development of funding proposals in order to ensure an understanding of the nature of their role and to support ownership of it.

6.3 The national co-ordinator of the SL&RR program at Deakin should discuss with the lead organisation in the state or country, the nature of their involvement, the strengths that the organisation brings to the project, and the training needs which they may have in relation to it.

6.4 Appropriate and relevant training and support should be given to the management organisation by the national SL&RR team and the extent of ongoing support that team can provide during the project should be clearly stated. Funding provision should be made so that this support can be provided.

6.5 Where local organisations or networks approach Deakin University to establish a local network in their area, the degree of support and training available to them should be clearly stated in a memorandum of understanding.

Initiation and development of local networks

6.6 If a lead organisation is involved in locating and initiating local networks, the importance of including both relevant generic services and disability organisations should be considered carefully.

6.7 Additional guidelines (to the developing 'tip sheets') based on the extensive experience of existing networks should be developed and provided to support the development of local networks. These should include a clear statement of both the possibility of a process of collaborative work outside of the SL&RR project and the work of facilitating the program itself; the devolutionary nature of the project where local networks are expected to take responsibility for the work they do, with some support from designated people; and the issues which need to be considered in both the employment of peer educators and the facilitation of the program.

6.8 Terms of reference for the network should be provided as a guide for discussion and amendment by each network and be available at the beginning of the network's development.

6.9 Following training of peer educators and program partners, site meetings should include regular rehearsals of the skills and activities needed for program facilitation to support the confidence and

continuing skills of program partners and peer educators and strengthen the partnerships between them as possible facilitators.

6.10 The use of a dedicated website, currently being developed, which can link different networks and allow for discussion between them would increase the capacity for those involved in SL&RR to learn from each other.

6.11 Action plans for facilitation of the program should be developed each year. These would provide a guide to activities by sites and allow for forward planning.

6.12 The employment of skilled peer educators and program partners experienced in SL&RR to support and liaise with local networks may be a useful resource. If these people are employed at a distance, interstate for example, their role should be clear to all parties and should be a mentoring role, not a facilitating one.

Employment of Peer Educators

6.13 Peer education is a complex role and requires particular skills and knowledge, as well as lived experience. Following current practice in SL&RR, peer educators should continue to be paid for their work on the project.

6.14 Because of past experiences, not all people with intellectual disabilities may be able to take on the role of peer educator on issues which are sensitive to them. Criteria for selection should be developed with provision guidance notes and in consultation with local networks, and a process for selection should be developed via national guidelines and discussion by local networks. Such guidelines and criteria should reflect the principles of the SL&RR program in relation to the centrality of peer educators in the program.

6.15 The nature of the work involved in peer education and SL&RR needs to be clearly stated to peer educators, including the intermittent nature of the program facilitation.

6.16 There should be an opportunity for debriefing after facilitating a program for both program partners and peer educators with another member of the network. A report to the network on the learning from facilitation of the program should be provided to the network.

Training of program partners and peer educators

6.17 Initial training of peer educators and program partners is essential to the success of the program. Given the difficulties experienced by some organisations and individuals in attending a four day face-to-face training, the current movement by the national team and Family Planning NSW to develop a combination of mixed mode training (on line and face to face) should be expedited. This part of the training could be undertaken at a network level with peer educators and program partners working together.

6.18 However, face-to-face training is essential in the light of the sensitivity of the issues involved. People who are unable to attend workshops should not be regarded as trained.

6.19 Given the turnover of personnel in organisations, training at a local level should be undertaken on a regular basis or as a result of requests from local networks.

6.20 In the light of concerns raised by some peer educators, stronger emphasis in initial training or provision of more advanced training should include segments on group process management and on dealing with difficult situations during facilitation.

Facilitating the program

6.21 Adequate time needs to be allowed for program facilitators and peer educators involved in facilitation to plan the program together and to be at ease in working together. If program mentors are involved in supporting sites, this needs to be a focus and should also be included as a guide to sites.

6.22 Prospective participants should be invited as part of the planning for the program to indicate what they hope to gain from the program.

6.23 Given the nature of the content of the program, the possibility of self disclosure, which is distressing for a participant, need to be planned for. Experience from other local networks suggest that the presence of a sexual assault or other counsellor at the program may be useful, or that a program partner with skills in this area be available. Alternative processes may involve the participation of a counsellor in a network meeting so that members of the network know a person to whom participants can be referred.

6.24 Follow up procedures should be planned in order to ensure that anyone who is upset during the facilitation of the program is followed up to check on their wellbeing. The need for this should be included in guidelines for sites.

6.25 The evaluation at the end of the program should be recorded and used as part of a report back to the network responsible for the particular program delivery.

Program Content

6.26 The SL&RR program content is reviewed regularly by a team of people with experience in the program, including peer educators and program partners. It is recommended that peer educators and program partners from the NSW sites be invited to participate in the next review of the program.

6.27 In undertaking a review of the the program, it is recommended that additional stories be added to enable a more flexible approach to its facilitation in accordance with the learning needs of participants.

6.28 The current focus in the manual on women in the introduction and activities may need amendment if the program is facilitated with men.

Resources

6.29 Resources, in the form of guidelines which can be discussed and amended at local network level, should be provided by the national SL&RR team in consultation with local networks which have experience in the program.

Research

6.30 Action research is a useful way of supporting the program to develop. If this is used, then regular feedback to all those involved on the findings from the research needs to be implemented.

6.31 A research advisory group established to advise on the research should have a clear role and be actively involved in the issues arising from the research in order to support the development of the project.

6.32 Consistent with the principles of SL&RR, any advisory groups established should have representation by people with intellectual disabilities.

6.32 Given that the program is available to all adults with intellectual disability, it is important that gender and sexual diversity be represented on advisory groups.

6.33 It is important that the research be undertaken independent of those with an involvement in the implementation of the project.

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Sexual Lives & Respectful Relationships (SL&RR) NSW Interim report

Prepared by the SL&RR team, Deakin
University

9 Feb 2018

Background

This is an interim report on the development, implementation and program evolution of Sexual Lives & Respectful Relationships (SL&RR) in New South Wales. This report focuses on the key findings from the first wave of research from July 2017 to February 2018.

The SL&RR model

SL&RR is a violence and abuse prevention model with four components; peer education by people with an intellectual disability delivering a respectful relationships program; supporting change in support relationships through learning partnerships; sector development through partnerships with community organisations involved in domestic/family/ sexual violence, women's and community health and disability advocacy; and systemic change through research and translation of outcomes. (See figure 1).

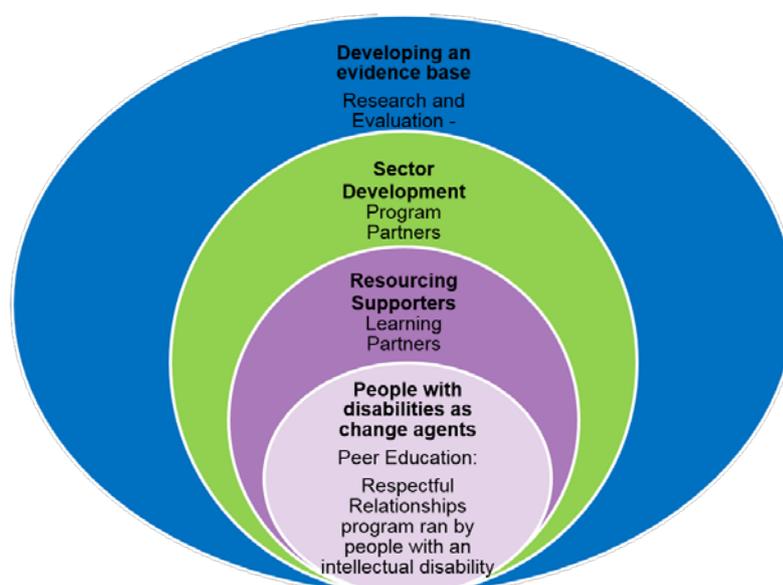


Figure 1 SL&RR model

The SL&RR model is implemented in local communities that express an interest in engaging in violence and abuse prevention work with people with an intellectual disability. Peer Educators (people with intellectual disability) and Program Partners (from community organisations) work within local site networks to run the Respectful Relationships program in their area. People with intellectual disability are central to the SL&RR model and are involved within networks as trainers, as conduits to their peers and communities, as colleagues with the program partners and through the program become connected to and involved in broader work around violence and abuse prevention and sexuality and relationships. In this way the SL&RR model develops a collaboration between people with an intellectual disability, community professionals from sexual health, sexual assault and violence abuse services and local communities.

Research and evaluation of the model has found that the model supports the development of positive attitudes and responses for people with intellectual disability including that they:

- Are sexual, can live sexual lives and have relationships which include positive and negative experiences (Johnson, Hillier, Harrison, & Frawley, 2000);

- Can learn about respectful relationships, community resources and supports (Frawley & Bigby, 2015) and successfully share their experiences with others within a peer education framework (Frawley, Barrett, & Dyson, 2012) and
- Benefit from a cross-sectoral response which engages with disability and mainstream service provision in violence and abuse prevention (Frawley & Anderson, 2014).

Research on implementation of the SL&RR model has also identified five components that build the capacity for sites to work with this model and that can underpin successful implementation in sites (Frawley & Anderson, 2014, p. 17):

- Champions and drivers including program partners and partner organisations who understand the need for such a model and are committed to overcoming some of the barriers which may make its development difficult.
- Recognition that people with intellectual disabilities need to be taken account of and included in violence and abuse prevention work and should be at the centre of this work.
- Building the model and program delivery into the ‘core business’ of partner organisations – linking it to the broader work of these organisations.
- Cross sector collaboration (disability and community) and sharing of resources and expertise.
- Having a strong foundation to build the model on evidenced through prior experience in working collaboratively for inclusion (disability, gender, culture).



Figure 2 Core components for building capacity to implement SL&RR

SL&RR operates in 7 Australian sites: Gippsland, Bendigo, Melbourne Metro North, Melbourne Metro West, Mornington Peninsula, Sydney South West, and Sydney West. It is being adapted for use by colleagues in New Zealand and Sweden, and additional sites in Barwon (Vic) and Blue Mountains/Nepean (NSW) are in development. Once a site is developed these local networks are supported by the Deakin University SL&RR research program to continue building their capacity to implement this model in their communities. This report will focus on the implementation of SL&RR in the NSW sites.

Respectful relationships program

Dr Patsie Frawley and the SL&RR project team which includes women with an intellectual disability at Deakin University have developed this the current program from earlier research and program

work (Frawley et al., 2012; Frawley & O'Shea, 2012). This program is based on the real life stories of people with an intellectual disability delivered within a rights context using adult learning principles. The program is co-facilitated by Peer Educators and Program Partners who have completed the train the trainer program delivered by Deakin University and who work together in local community-based sites.

SL&RR reflects best practice in violence and abuse prevention and inclusion (Barger, Wacker, Macy, & Parish, 2009). A key foundation of the model is 'nothing about us without us' honouring the dictum of the self advocacy movement and claiming a rightful place for people with an intellectual disability in violence and abuse prevention work. An approach that places people with an intellectual disability at the centre acknowledges the impact of violence and abuse in the lives of people with an intellectual disability and the capacity of people with an intellectual disability to enact change.

SL&RR in NSW

In June 2016 the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS), Ageing Disability and Home Care (ADHC), commissioned the development and implementation of the SL&RR model in NSW. Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association (MDAA) have been engaged by FACS to have a facilitation role. Dr Zhila Hasanloo has been employed by MDAA as the Project Manager in this facilitation role.

The SL&RR model has been established in two NSW sites Sydney South West (Liverpool area) and Sydney West (Blacktown area). These sites commenced running the SL&RR program in the first wave of implementation. Work has begun to establish SL&RR in a third NSW site in the Blue Mountains/Nepean however this has been paused to enable MDAA to connect with and engage people and organisations that are committed and able to establish the model in that area. The SL&RR NSW project is taking place over 12 months and will be completed and evaluated by July 2018.

There are 14 Peer Educators and 10 Program Partners involved in these two sites. Partner organisations represented are:

- Synapse/Brain Injury NSW
- Bonnie Support Services
- Ethnic Community Services Co-operative
- Intellectual Disability Rights Service
- Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association
- Family Planning NSW
- First Peoples Disability Network
- Blacktown Women's and Girls Health Centre
- Wash house
- Immigrant Women's Speakout Association

Coordination and management of SL&RR in NSW

This is the first time SL&RR has been implemented with an interstate implementation organisation coordinating the development of the model and state based liaison with sites. In the pilot of LSSL:RR (the original peer education based model of this program) when the program was implemented in 2 sites in Victoria and one in Tasmania, the National project team coordinated this (see Frawley, Barret and Dyson, 2012). The NSW model has MDAA performing this role through the project manager Dr Zhila Hasanloo supported by a program liaison role resourced from Deakin University as job share between Alisha Gilliland and Emily Ardley. Alisha is an experienced SL&RR Program Partner from a

Victorian site and Emily is an experienced SL&RR Peer Educator from the same site. The MDAA project manager role is also supported by FACS and has had regular input from Millie Olcay in her role as the Deakin University based program evaluator. The NSW site implementation also includes some support from the national SL&RR coordinator Dr Amie O'Shea and overall oversight by Associate Professor Patsie Frawley both from Deakin University.

Evaluation of NSW SL&RR implementation

The NSW SL&RR evaluation led by Millie Olcay with Associate Professor Patsie Frawley aims to document and evaluate the implementation and evolution of the SL&RR model in NSW from the perspectives and experiences of program participants, Peer Educators, Program Partners and key stakeholders in NSW. It addresses three questions:

1. *What factors (individual, community and systemic) influence the development of a peer-led sexuality and relationships program for people with intellectual disabilities in NSW?*
2. *What are the impacts of developing SL&RR programs at an individual, community and systemic level?*
3. *What can be learned from this model for improved policy and practice in sexuality, sexual health and violence prevention for people with disabilities?*

The SL&RR evaluation draws on principles of Action Research and Developmental Evaluation. Specifically, it is guided by Action Research cycles of planning, action and review (Dick, Stringer & Huxham, 2009) and the eight key Developmental Evaluation Framework principles identified by Patton et al., (2016, p.309): developmental purpose, evaluation rigor, utilization focus, innovation niche, complexity perspective, systems thinking, co-creation, and timely feedback. The were recruited through the NSW SL&RR sites and organisations involved in the implementation. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, focus groups, observations (e.g. anecdotal records, running records, photographs, audio/video-recordings) and field notes. Secondary sources such as SL&RR program documentation and other publications about the program have also been used. In line with an Action Research approach, data analysis begins as the project commences and evolves as preliminary research findings are systematically collected, reflected upon and continuously fed back. The Research Reference Group (comprised of Peer Educators with experience in the program in Victoria) and Research Advisory Group (comprised of relevant industry representatives) have met regularly since the project began, and contributed their understandings and interpretations of the research themes as they arise.

Analysis

Three approaches to analysis have been employed to develop an understanding and to articulate key themes emerging from the establishment and implementation of the SL&RR model in the first wave of implementation.

1. **Content analysis of field notes [these include written records and reflections of phone calls, observations from meetings and other activities associated with implementation]**
2. **Thematic analysis of interview data undertaken in collaboration with the Research Reference Group [experienced peer educators from the SL&RR national program]**
3. **Reflexive engagement with emerging themes in supervision with the Associate Investigator, Associate Professor Patsie Frawley.**

Informing the analysis are the findings from previous research on the model (Frawley & Anderson, 2014; Frawley et al., 2012) and a broad ecological framework (see figure 4 below). This framework

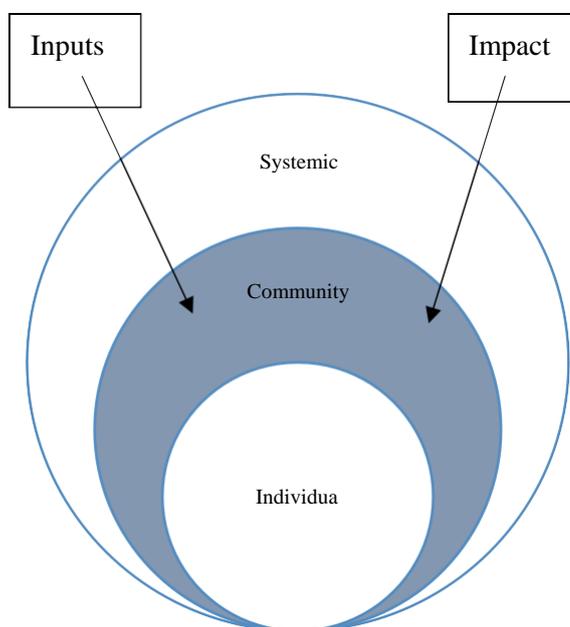
looks at the inputs and impacts at the individual, community and systemic levels and how these have interacted in the first wave of the program implementation. At the time of writing data had been collected and analysed from the 'community' level only; 1 Peer Educator; 2 Program Partners; the project coordination team (MDAA: 2 interviews, 9 teleconferences) project liaison workers (1 interview, 11 teleconferences with program liaison and MDAA); and 6 research reference group meetings. The second wave of research will collect data from program participants, FACS and the national SL&RR team.

Telling 'the story' of the establishment of SL&RR NSW

This section tells the story of the first wave of SL&RR in NSW drawing on analysis of the data outlined above. It discusses the inputs, influences and impact at the community level where 'community' refers to the SL&RR NSW community; peer educators, program partners, project workers and supporters, to begin to answer the first two evaluation questions:

1. *What factors (individual, community and systemic) influence the development of a peer-led sexuality and relationships program for people with intellectual disabilities in NSW?*
2. *What are the impacts of developing SL&RR programs at an individual, community and systemic level?*

Drawing on earlier research on the model this section looks at the inputs, influences and impact of the model establishment and implementation in NSW in relation to capacity building to become a 'champion and driver' for the model. It uses data identified above and analysis of this data to tell the story of this first wave or implementation and identify areas of focus for the next wave. Reflection on and analysis of outcomes in relation to the other three components for success will be the focus of the next wave of the evaluation.



Capacity building to become a champion and driver

As outlined above, this pilot differs from other experiences of implementation of SL&RR and its precursor LSSL:RR in that there is an external organisation with coordination and liaison roles. This role is to engage with communities to develop as a site including:

- recruitment and/or support for recruitment of Peer Educators and Program Partners,

- bringing interested people together to develop an understanding of the model,
- arranging for information sessions and training,
- working alongside these sites through establishment to ensure they are resourced to implement the model including to run the SL&RR program.

In other sites this is a role performed by the Deakin University SL&RR team. This process can take from between one to two years and involves a significant amount of consultation with key organisations in the local areas to ensure the sites are developing in a way that reflects the model principles and practices, in particular that people with an intellectual disability are involved from the beginning and that there is adequate cross sector representation and collaboration. Normally these groups would meet a number of times before their train the trainer program.

Central to this role is a clear understanding of the model and capacity to work with and support the development of a local network that has the key ingredients to become a strong foundation for the model. In particular that there is 'buy in' from organisations that have either violence and abuse prevention or disability advocacy as their core business and that these organisations are supported in the early stages of implementation of the model to engage effectively with people with an intellectual disability in the process of setting up a site.

Inputs

Deakin University signed the collaboration agreement with MDAA to establish and implement SL&RR in NSW in February 2017. The program manager at this time Dr Patsie Frawley liaised with MDAA to begin the process of identifying and engaging with potential Peer Educators and Program Partners and information sessions were held in three sites. From March to May 2017 the Deakin team was established and the Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee granted approval for evaluation. Two positions were appointed to the Deakin University team to support the implementation of the model in NSW; 0.5 research and evaluation and 0.6 program liaison (job shared between an experienced Program Partner and an experienced Peer Educator). The program liaison role was established to provide mentorship to support the implementation of the model in three sites in NSW. The evaluation role was appointed to conduct an action research evaluation of the model establishment and implementation.

Analysis of contact data between MDAA and the Deakin team indicates that both the researcher and program liaison staff had regular contact by telephone/teleconference with the MDAA project manager. Content analysis of these contacts and thematic analysis of interviews between the researcher and the MDAA project manager indicate that a focus of these contacts were clarification of the principles and key foundations of the model and points of clarification about the Respectful Relationships program content and delivery. The program liaison staff shared research findings from earlier research and evaluation of the SL&RR models with MDAA highlighting core components for success for the model guiding MDAA to these key documents. Another key focus was operational issues relating to communication with and management of liaison with the sites where the program liaison staff shared written and verbal outlines of their experiences and approaches for these operational components of the model implementation. An early discussion noted the projected outcomes of one program delivery in each site and positive views that this was achievable.

MDAA staff also attended all information sessions and training sessions and the national network professional development day held in Melbourne by Deakin University in October 2017.

Impact

The aim of the engagement between the program liaison staff and the MDAA project manager was to develop MDAA's capacity to liaise with and support the site development. A feature of these contacts was the building of a strong and trusted relationship between the program liaison staff and MDAA and careful documentation and follow up between contacts.

A clear understanding of and adherence to the core principles of the model and the Respectful Relationships program is essential from all involved with the program. Program liaison staff and the program evaluator spent many hours over this first wave of the model establishment and implementation phase in conversation with the MDAA project manager. This took the form of fortnightly formal phone meetings to develop MDAA's capacity to be the conduit between Deakin and the sites and through this to reinforce and strengthen the sites understanding of the context of the model. This allowed discussion about the overarching ideas and principles which inform the program, and their direct application as it was implemented in NSW through MDAA.

Content analysis of these contacts between the program liaison workers and MDAA indicated some role confusion by MDAA, a lack of clarity about the model and some questioning about core principles of the model and the Respectful Relationships program. These issues continued over the six months. It is clear from this analysis that despite the amount of time spent in conversations and the depth of discussions, many of the core principles and practices of the model and the intent and approach of the program were not well understood by MDAA. Reflections by the program liaison staff indicate that by the end of the first wave of implementation they were aware of the need to shift their mentorship to the sites. This will ensure the sites' capacity is built directly through the mentoring of the program liaison workers from Deakin University. It became clear that the ongoing development of MDAA's capacity to build the capacity of the sites needed some further attention, in particular in relation to clarity about the model and the core principles and practices in the delivery of the program.

Capacity building – sites (Program partners and peer educators)

Successful establishment, implementation and sustainability of the SL&RR model relies significantly on the capacity of local networks sites to work together. This means that people with intellectual disability are equally respected as colleagues with the right to be involved in violence and abuse prevention and to have access to information about respectful relationships. Successful recruitment of staff from community organisations to be program partners and people with an intellectual disability to be Peer Educators is central to this. Earlier research found the strength of these partnerships 'trumps all' (Frawley and Anderson, 2014). MDAA were responsible for identifying and recruiting to these roles.

Inputs

An initial information session was held in Sydney in August 2016 hosted by FACS. Following this MDAA used their networks to share information about SL&RR and a further information session was held in December 2016. Information sessions held at this time in the West and South West of Sydney attracted a very strong representation of key organisations and people with an intellectual disability interested in the model. The four day train the trainer program was conducted by Linda Stokoe (Lead Deakin Peer Educator) and Patsie Frawley from Deakin University early in 2017 with the combined sites in Merrylands. There was a significant lag in time between this training and the engagement of the program liaison roles at Deakin University due to the time needed for ethics approval for the program research, and recruitment and appointment of the program liaison staff. When they began in this role in May as outlined above regular fortnightly discussions were

established. The program liaison staff also attended site network meetings and offered telephone support and mentoring to Peer Educators and Program Partners each Friday. This was not taken up during the first wave of the implementation.

Impact

Seven Peer Educators and five Program Partners have maintained their involvement in the Blacktown network and seven Peer Educators and seven Program Partners have maintained their involvement in the Liverpool network. Each site has delivered a program. Interviews with two Program Partners/partner organisations and one Peer Educator indicate some early findings. In summary, this suggests that overall these active network members and in particular those that have delivered a respectful relationships program have gained significant capacity to run the program, but that additional work is needed to build the collegiality and capacity of the networks to function and be sustained in each site. Key to this capacity building was the quality of the training, as noted by a Peer Educator:

The actual training was really, really helpful. We had four sessions of training with Patsie and Linda in Feb and March this year. The training was really, really helpful... I said 'what?!' I am OK with the training, and I can learn the stories, and be familiar with that.

Program Partners in both sites have in the main maintained a commitment to the delivery of the programs however there is still some work to do on the partnership development. A Peer Educator reflected:

I felt a little pressured by [the Program Partner]. This is not only one person. This is not only about the Peer Educators being supported. This is everybody's role. This is everybody's initiative.

Recent email contact from a Program Partner also suggests they may have a more individual way of engaging with the task of running SL&RR. They asked if they could 'choose' one Peer Educator and engage with one service to deliver the program, rather than working through the network and collectively deciding on program facilitators. A summary of another Program Partners' reflection on their engagement with SL&RR found they held very positive views about their involvement:

- Able to build on new and old skills
- Content is great
- Content can be used and passed on to other areas of work
- People can follow up at [partner organisation] house
- Encourages team work
- Supportive program material that helps in delivery
- The program delivery was easier than expected
- The program supports people to know their rights
- Creates great relationships between facilitators
- Doing the program with people you know can be helpful to the facilitation
- Great support from partner organisations
- The program is adaptable to use in different settings (such as at other WASH house programs).

In one site there were some concerns raised about the capacity of the Peer Educator to manage their own personal disclosures when facilitating the program. This highlighted some tensions around support for Peer Educators by Program Partners in program delivery and the possibility of a need for additional training or mentorship for Program Partners and Peer Educators together on how best to

prepare for and manage their roles. Strengthening the networks during the pre-training phase is another strategy that would alleviate these tensions.

Emergent themes

As discussed above, building capacity of sites to become established as SL&RR networks, to implement and run the SL&RR program and to plan for sustainability has been the focus of the first wave of the SL&RR pilot in NSW. Data analysis using the ecological framework has identified some emerging themes about influencing factors at the individual and systemic levels on the model implementation in NSW. The following quotes reflect these and serve to focus attention on what approaches and inputs will be required in the second wave of implementation to address these.

Individual influencing factors

These relate to the experiences of individuals in their roles in SL&RR and the factors they perceive to be influencing their capacity.

Peer Educators point to the training and the support they receive from Program Partners as the key influencing factor on their capacity to successfully engage in their role.

The first session was really, really, kind of daunting....you were thinking of noise control, you were thinking of managing discussions...keeping everything on time...that was a bit too hard for me to handle because a lot of issues come up in that one. And I was like 'oh God, so nobody should start crying'.

I was a bit scared with coordinating the participants, whether I was going to do that. Was I going to do that and deliver the program? I wasn't sure...it was also very quickly organised...so we didn't have much time to organise this... We need to think about all those planning questions beforehand. So that when delivering the program, all those things are thought about... Session 2 was just me sort of realising 'oh I don't have to disclose part of my life'.

Program Partners reflect on their professional practice, connecting the program with their work roles and their experience, knowledge and skills working with people with an intellectual disability:

I think it is a great program but I have been so nervous and terrified... the content is great. I have been taking it home...I have dusted off some old skills that I had in structured facilitation...I just felt that there might have been some assumed knowledge...we were just assuming that people would know what different types of sex are... that was a learning experience for me.

One of the best things about running the group, it's being able to work with Peer Educators.

The project manager also reflected on what was influencing and impacting their capacity to engage noting that development of knowledge about the program and about the place of people with an intellectual disability within it was key.

We were not really clear at the beginning. We didn't know what the project was about and what the expectations were...I learned a lot about the program, about needs and interests of people with intellectual disability...I think I really learned about ways of thinking [about this] ... I started to read some things for myself as well.

Systemic influencing factors

The implementation of SL&RR in NSW has taken place within a changing disability funding, service and support landscape. This has had a significant impact on the program implementation as indicated by SL&RR stakeholders:

We faced some challenges and that's about just NDIS rolling out in NSW and that many organisations are losing their funds for disability by June 2018... that's why we are losing some of the Program Partners...they planned to apply for a grant...we of course said 'Yes, we are happy to provide a reference .

There's been heaps of people who have lost jobs and programs have changed, because of the NDIS...there's just rapid change in the sector... They haven't seemed to have lost a lot of peer educators, but they've lost quite a few key program partners...If they [the Peer Educators] haven't got a Program Partner to support them, it will not make that an easy thing for them to do.

[There is] a general push for empowerment for people with disability at the moment. The whole paradigm is about choice and control and enabling people to make as many informed choices as they can possibly make...[the challenge will be] how the project will be sustained in the future, particularly if there is no government body ...to assist with funding

I would like to see...more groups, and more organisations join the program... Because peer education is something that [should] stay under the NDIS model.

These systemic influences indicate some key challenges for the next wave of implementation of SL&RR in NSW. While some of these challenges are not likely to be addressed or influenced by SL&RR it is also clear that there is recognition of the opportunity this model affords within this new landscape, as one Program Partner reflected:

It is just absolutely key especially in the NSW environment where we are moving towards NDIS, that mainstream organisations become far more inclusive of people with intellectual disability....There is a major benefit to society by mainstream organisations becoming more inclusive but there is also benefit to mainstream organisations. It just fosters community...to have a wider variety of people accessing services and so on

Discussion

The second wave of implementation will see the Deakin program liaison workers engaging directly with the sites, focussing on building their capacity as sites working together and developing more knowledge about the model and skills in delivering the program. It will also see planning for the transition of the NSW sites into the national network engaging them more with other sites and the capacity building work that comes through this. Deakin University works across all sites to provide ongoing support including accessing the improved resources, central training, program website access and engagement through the program closed Facebook group for trained Peer Educators and Program Partners. The evaluation will focus on feeding information gathered and learnings from the first wave of the SL&RR NSW implementation to all stakeholders through the action research cycle and gathering data on the impact of the inputs into the program in the second wave.

This report has focussed on learnings from the two sites where the model is more established. Implementation in the third site did not proceed and the evaluation cycle did not capture data from the preliminary work done in this third site. Analysis of some of the outcomes of site establishment

approaches in the two establishing sites strongly indicates the need for some further capacity building of MDAA to build the capacity of new sites, in particular developing strong links through people with intellectual disabilities in proposed new sites to drive the establishment of the model in a new site. An increased understanding of the model will ensure that organisations and individuals involved in the third site network reflect the ideas of mainstream community engagement and the independence of people with intellectual disability from services which support them. This may require some additional support for MDAA to make these links. This includes engagement with people with an intellectual disability and key mainstream organisations to initially explore the core principles of the model which must underpin the work of SL&RR and also continue to be the focus for established sites.

Evaluation limitations and future focus

The evaluation methodology which is an action research approach and developmental evaluation process requires significant time for cycles of data gathering, analysis, and feedback, implementation of revised approaches and continuation of this cycle over the lifetime of the project. A number of factors have impacted on the Deakin University researchers' capacity to fully engage with and implement this approach. Two factors impacting here have been the timeframe for implementation and the particularly lengthy period of time it has taken for sites to become well enough established to engage fully with the model implementation to reflect on the individual, community and systemic influences on its implementation.

Wave two of the evaluation will aim to include at least one more action cycle. Over the next three months there will be a focus on using the findings from this first wave in the sites, looking closely at more fully answering the evaluation question about impact for individuals who participate in the SL&RR programs in the two established sites, and analysis that can reflect on the broader systemic outcomes.

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**SEXUAL LIVES & RESPECTFUL
RELATIONSHIPS (SL&RR) NSW**

RESEARCH REPORT

FIRST SIX MONTHS: REPORT

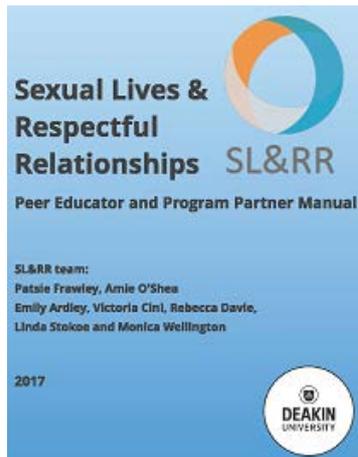
PLAIN ENGLISH SUMMARY

April 2018



Photo of the RRG: Monica Wellington (Program Assistant), Rebecca Davie (Peer Educator), Linda Stokoe (Peer Educator), Victoria Cini (Peer Educator) and Millie Olcay (Researcher))

This Plain English Report was prepared by the Research Reference Group for Sexual Lives & Respectful Relationships NSW: Linda Stokoe, Rebecca Davie, Victoria Cini with Kelley Johnson



This report is about the first half of the Sexual Lives & Respectful Relationships Program in NSW.

In the report we write about what the project is, what has been going well and what we have learned from doing the research up to this point in time.

WHAT IS SEXUAL LIVES & RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS (SL&RR)?

(Photo from the 2017 SL&RR conference)



SL&RR brings people with intellectual disabilities and community organisations together to work on sexuality and respectful relationships.

It has been running since 2009 and was first set up in Victoria and Tasmania. The program now runs in four sites in Victoria and two sites in NSW.

Who is involved in Sexual Lives and Respectful Relationships (SL&RR)?

People with intellectual disabilities are trained to run the SL&RR program. They are called **Peer Educators**.

People who work in community organisations like sexual assault services, women's services and disability advocacy organisations are trained to run the program with the peer educators. They are called **Program Partners**.

Organisations that support SL&RR in local areas are called **Partner Organisations**. Sometimes peer educators and program partners come from these organisations.

There are also people at Deakin University in Victoria who work in the research team.

They developed the program. They work with partner organisations and peer educators providing training. They make materials used in the program and support the sites to run it.

What is SL&RR?

SL&RR aims to help people with intellectual disabilities know more about being in respectful relationships

People with intellectual disabilities come to the program to talk with the peer educators and the program partners about rights and respect in relationships and other things to do with sexuality and relationships.

They do this over four sessions using five stories that have been written and filmed with people with intellectual disabilities.

In this program people with intellectual disabilities learn about their rights to have a sexual life and relationships that are respectful.

They also develop their own ideas about sexuality and respectful relationships in their lives.



Photo of the Peer Educators and Program Partners working together

What has been happening in NSW with SL&RR?

In 2016 the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS), Ageing Disability and Home Care (ADHC) in NSW asked the Deakin University SL&RR team to set up SL&RR in NSW.

They also organised for Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association (MDAA) to be the lead partner organisation in NSW.

There are now two areas in Sydney where SL&RR is set up and running. These are Sydney West - Blacktown and Sydney South-West - Liverpool.

Fourteen peer educators and 10 program partners have been trained to work in these two sites.

Liverpool and Blacktown (NSW) have each run one program for people with intellectual disabilities.

One site is being set up in the Blue Mountains.

The SL&RR groups at Blacktown and Liverpool get support from an experienced program partner Alisha Gilliland and an experienced peer educator, Emily Ardley. These people are employed by Deakin University.

Doing the research on Sexual Lives & Respectful Relationships in NSW

It is important to find out how a new program is working and what we can learn from it. To do this means doing **research** about the program. Doing research means finding out how the program is working by talking with people who are involved in it.

Deakin University is in charge of the research about SL&RR.

The researchers (Millie Oclay (2017) and Kelley Johnson (2018), the Research Reference Group (RRG) and a Research Advisory Group have been finding out how the program in NSW has been working.

The **Research Reference Group**, Linda Stokoe, Rebecca Davie and Victoria Cini and the researcher are based at Deakin University in Victoria.

The **Research Reference Group** has had 8 meetings. We worked with the researcher and did the following things.

- We learned how to do the research.
- We made videos so that other people in the NSW project know who we are.
- We gave advice about the questions used in interviews so they were in Plain English.

- When the interviews were done we looked at some of what had been said and why it was important.
- We prepared this report.

The **Research Advisory Group** in Sydney has people from from organisations working with people on sexuality and relationships and/or with people with intellectual disabilities in NSW. When this report was written they had met four times. The Research Advisory Group gives advice to the researchers.

In the first six months the researcher (Millie Olcay) interviewed 1 Peer Educator, 3 Program Partners and did interviews with MDAA, FACS and the Deakin program staff.

What has the research found out?



Things that were done well.

- People organising the program in NSW were learning about the program as it was getting started.
- MDAA (the Sydney organisation managing the program) found lots of people with an intellectual disability who wanted to be involved as Peer Educators and community organisations that wanted to be involved as Program Partners
- People with intellectual disabilities were really interested and got involved as Peer Educators.
- The Peer Educators and Program Partners really liked the training.

- Program Partners thought Peer Educators were good at their work.



(Photo of the Patsie Frawley and Emily Ardley, Peer Educator, presenting together at the 2017 SL&RR conference)

Things that need more work:

- It is important when setting up SL&RR in a new place that people doing it know how it has worked in other places.
- It is important that time is given at the beginning of the program to make sure everyone understands about SL&RR.
- It is important Program Partners and Peer Educators take time and planning to work together before running a program.
- It would have been easier if the program support staff (Alisha and Emily) had been based in Sydney. This was the plan but we could not find people in Sydney who knew about the program.
- It would have been useful if the Research Reference Group could have had more contact with people in NSW.
- The people who knew the most about SL&RR were all in Victoria even though they travelled up to Sydney many times.
- Changes to funding in services from the NDIS meant some Program Partners left.

WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN FOR THE REST OF THE PROJECT?

(Photo of the Peer Educators playing an energiser activity)



- The program support staff, Emily and Alisha, will work closely with the two sites in Sydney to support them to work together and be able to run programs.
- The research team will talk with Peer Educators and Program Partners in Liverpool and Blacktown.
- The research team will make contact with the Research Advisory Group and let them know what they have been doing.
- The research team will talk with all the people who are managing the program in NSW
- The research team will give information back to people in NSW about what we have found out by talking with them and giving them a final report.