



LOVE BiTES

What is LOVE BiTES?

LOVE BITES is an extremely successful school-based Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault prevention program that evolved on the Mid North Coast of NSW. Love Bites is based on best practice standards for education programs as recommended by the Federal Government funded Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearing House and other leading academics in the area of violence against women. The LOVE BiTES program consists of two interactive education workshops on Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault followed by creative workshops that consolidate the information from the morning. Male and female facilitators present the program as a team and LOVE BITES consistently models respectful relationships between male and female students, teachers and workers. The artworks and other work created in the creative sessions are the basis for local campaigns to challenge Violence against Women in their community. This campaign is led by and delivered by young people.

Who is the LOVE BiTES program for?

The LOVE BITES domestic and family violence and sexual assault prevention program is for students in Year 9 and 10 of high school, aged between 15 and 17 years. LOVE BITES can also be delivered in out-of-school settings, such as alternative school programs, school support units, Juvenile Justice programs and youth holiday programs.

What are the aims of the LOVE BiTES program?

- To provide a safe environment in which young people can talk about Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault.
- To promote and model respectful relationships for young people.
- To raise awareness about Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault - its prevalence and forms.
- To bring about attitudinal change in relation to Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault.
- To engage young people, male and female, on the issues of Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault in a non-sex-segregated environment with male and female facilitators.
- To challenge gender stereotypes, attitudes, values and social institutions that perpetuate male violence against women.
- To deconstruct the myths that exist in local communities and society generally on domestic and family violence and sexual assault.
- To encourage and educate young people to support their friends.
- To educate young people through a creative and relevant process that builds on their existing knowledge base.
- To introduce young people to local service providers in an informal environment.
- To develop youth-led community campaigns on the issues of Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault.



What makes LoVE BiTES, LoVE BiTES?

- LOVE BITES is a program that promotes a clear, consistent community approach to the issues of Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault from workers and teachers in local communities.
- LOVE BITES is run by male and female facilitators working together.
- Where appropriate, LOVE BITES sessions do not segregate male and female students. All sessions aim to be conducted with an equal number of male and female students.
- LOVE BITES uses several presentation styles to actively involve young people, including youth-led small group activities; peer-to-peer learning, and art, music and drama workshops.
- LOVE BITES creates local community campaigns developed and led by young people to prevent Violence against Women.
- LOVE BITES generates local ownership of the program as communities adapt the model to fit with their communities. The program uses local scenarios and local service providers to discuss the issues from the local perspective.
- LOVE BITES promotes an integrated partnership approach to prevention for services working in the areas of Domestic and Family Violence; Sexual Assault, Youth and Child Protection; bringing together the Police, Women's Refuges, Sexual Assault Services, Child Protection Services, Youth Services, Family Support Services and Aboriginal Services.
- LOVE BITES has the potential to improve working relationships between service providers through the co-facilitation of this positive prevention program.

LOVE BITES

Feedback from Teachers and Students

TEACHERS SAID:

'We talk openly about such matters with kids more now than before. One relationship broke up and then they got back together but under a new set of respect and safety "rules". I think the impact certainly was more on the young women – but the blokes are starting to think more'.

Doreen Conroy – Portland Central School

'THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR HELP ... and to all the other fantastic presenters you managed to bring. The program was well received by the students and we look forward to seeing the material produced. This will be a program that we hope to have delivered every year at the school.'

Norma Bongini – James Sheahan Catholic High School

YOUNG PEOPLE SAID:

'Fresh, inspiring and interesting to get outside facilitators and workers to talk about these things with us'.

'Better and more fun to have someone who is not the teachers. Makes it less formal, the facilitators make it easy to talk about. Good to talk to people we don't usually talk to'.

'The day was well structured and was educational, but because we got to interact and get up and walk around it made it different to normal school'.

'Angela Barker DVD was really good, but was shocking sad and upsetting. You could have heard a pin drop at the end. That makes you think about how serious some things may turn into and to be careful who you should have a relationship with'.

'We knew about some of these issues but nobody really talks about it. By talking about domestic violence and sexual assault we really did learn something new'.

'The art and music sessions were great because you learn so much in the day that it's helpful to relax and use all the information you learnt and put it into something, and you get to wind down'.

'The art session was satisfying because you get to use all your creativity and imagination to make people aware'.

'It was really good to find how you can talk to people and where to go to get help if these things happen'.



An Overview of the LoVE BiTES Program Content

INTRODUCTION SESSION

- Introducing the Love Bites program to students.
- Introducing the facilitators to students.
- Discussing the group agreements.
- Discussing safety for the day.
- Talking about why Love Bites is happening.
- Emphasising that although the majority of perpetrators of domestic violence are male, the majority of men are not violent towards women.
- Talking about the creative sessions and the Community Campaign.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SESSION

- Sharing the Angela Barker Story — a young person's experience of relationship violence.
- Small group activity exploring young people's perspective on what defines a healthy or unhealthy relationship.
- Defining different forms of Domestic and Family Violence for young people and the importance of developing ethical and respectful relationships. Looking at the implications of how certain behaviours impact on others.
- Scenarios to assist the challenging of attitudes and behaviours that support Violence against Women.
- Exploring what to do if relationships are unhealthy, how to talk about it, who to talk with, where to go.
- Exploring the concept of a bystander.
- Deconstructing the myths around Domestic and Family Violence.

SEXUAL ASSAULT SESSION

- Deconstructing the myths around Sexual Assault and establishing if these myths are pertinent in local communities. Focusing on the fact that although perpetrators are overwhelmingly male the majority of men are not perpetrators.
- Understanding and defining sexual assault.
- Understanding what consent is; how to ask for and give consent. This activity focuses on young people's sexual rights and responsibilities, establishing boundaries and understanding that 'only yes means yes'.
- How to support a friend and where to go for support.

ART/MUSIC/DRAMA SESSION

The purpose of the Love Bites ART/MUSIC/DRAMA/ RADIO ADVERTISEMENT workshops is to develop a student-led community engagement campaign.

LOVE BITES FINAL SESSION

The final session brings the Love Bites program to a close. This session showcases the outcomes from the workshops and reinforces messages from the education sessions, including where young people can get support.





LOVE BiTES

Theoretical Approach: What Informs the LoVE BiTES Program?

Love Bites is written from a feminist perspective, which identifies relationship violence as a gendered crime, due to the greater likelihood of females being victims of relationship violence. The causes of this violence are analysed from a contemporary feminist perspective, which acknowledges that multiple factors shape violence. It is recognised that although males are far more likely to be perpetrators of relationship violence than females, the majority of males do not commit these crimes.

BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS IN DELIVERING RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION

The Love Bites program aims to deliver an effective and evidence-based program. In 2009 two papers were released that focused on the best practice criteria for respectful relationship education, which altered the landscape for preventative work in Australia. As the Love Bites program is an established model the recommendations from these papers (discussed below) are being looked at by NAPCAN for implementation within a feasible time frame.

According to emerging standards from the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, there are five criteria that programs need to meet to be considered as good practice.

These are:

1. A whole-school approach
2. A program framework and logic
3. Effective curriculum delivery
4. Relevant, inclusive and culturally sensitive practice
5. Impact evaluation

As stated in the paper released by the Victorian Government, Respectful Relationships Education, 'Together, these criteria represent the minimum standard for effective violence prevention and respectful relationships education in schools.' This paper was released in November 2009 and along with the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence (NASASV) best practice standards acts as a guiding principle for all respectful relationship education programs.

