

Talking to CALD Young People About Sexual Health Comics Facilitator Guide



Introduction

Youth workers, counsellors, teachers and other professionals play an important role in supporting young people's sexual and reproductive health. Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) young people experience unique challenges in relation to sexual and reproductive health, and require support tailored to their needs and experiences.

These 4 comics have been designed to support anyone who works with young people to have positive conversations about sexual and reproductive health and communicate simple but important key messages. They can be used by youth workers, teachers, nurses, counsellors or anyone working with young people. They have been developed with CALD young people living in regional Victoria in mind, but the issues they explore are common to many young people regardless of their background.

Each comic tells a simple story, exploring an issue relating to sexual and/or reproductive health. The text bubbles have intentionally been left blank, so that you and the young people you work with can discuss what the characters may be saying, thinking and feeling. For each comic we have provided key messages, a simple explanation of the story, sample text for each frame, prompt questions and supporting resources.

These comics are intended to be used in two settings:

One on one

In this setting the comics are intended to support conversations with young people who may be uncomfortable raising sexual and reproductive health concerns, or reluctant to engage. This may be helpful in case work, or counselling settings. By shifting the focus of a conversation onto the characters in the comics, and the issues/ concerns/ feelings they are navigating, it can be easier for young people to engage and for workers to communicate important messages.

You may want to invite a young person to discuss a comic with you or simply make the comics available in a private or common space as conversation starters.

Group or classroom

These comics can also be used for a group activity or in a classroom setting. Divide young people into four groups and give each group one comic. Give them 10 minutes to fill in the speech bubbles and come up with three "lessons or messages" that the comic raises.

Then have each group present their version of their comic to the class and open up discussion about the lessons or messages raised. Refer to the key messages for each comic listed in the facilitator guide, and prompt discussion to make sure these messages are highlighted. If need be, raise them yourself.



Key Messages

- **Pharmacies can provide emergency contraception**, condoms, and lubricants, and guide you to other healthcare services.
- **Emergency contraception** ('the morning-after pill' / 'Plan B') is a safe and effective way to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex or if a condom breaks. It works best when taken as soon as possible, ideally within 72 hours.
- **Sexually transmitted infections** (STIs) are spread through unprotected sex and usually don't have symptoms. Condoms are the only method of contraception that protects you from both STIs and unplanned pregnancies.
- **There is no shame in seeking sexual health care.** Sexual health is just as important as any other aspect of your health.

The Story

In this comic, two friends are walking together when one receives a text from her boyfriend telling her that the condom they used the night before broke. She is concerned and unsure about what to do. Her friend remains calm and suggests going to the pharmacy to get emergency contraception ('the morning-after pill' / 'Plan B').

The pharmacist is non-judgmental, provides emergency contraception, and helpful information (about getting a STI test, and information about how long after unprotected sex emergency contraception is effective). Her friend is there to support her the whole way.

Facilitator notes

Many young people have incorrect understandings of emergency contraception, with misconceptions about safety and effectiveness being common. Many young people are also unaware of how to access emergency contraception.

Youth workers can play an important role, making sure young people have all the information they may need to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health.

In Victoria, emergency contraception is available from some pharmacists, General Practitioners (GPs), sexual and reproductive health hubs and emergency departments.

You can find nearby pharmacies that do provide emergency contraception using the **1800 My Options** website or by calling 1800 My Options - 1800 696 784.



Frame by Frame Sample Text and Prompt Questions

You can use these questions to start a conversation about what is happening in the comic, and the issue being explored.

Frames 1-2:

Prompt Questions:

- What do you think is happening here?
- Why is the girl concerned?

Sample text:

- Main character: Oh no!
- Friend: What's wrong?
- Main character: I just received a text from my boyfriend saying the condom from last night broke. I'm really worried! What do I do?! What if?...
- Friend: It's OK. Deep breaths. It's going to be fine.

Frame 3:

Prompt Questions:

- What do you think the character who got the text could do?
- What could a supportive friend do to help?

Sample text:

- Friend: First, let's go to the pharmacy. It's convenient, discreet and pharmacists are trustworthy. You can get the morning-after pill.
- Main character: I don't know... I've never done this before. What if it's too late?
- Friend: The morning-after pill is safe and effective if taken within 72 hours. You've got this. I'll be with you every step of the way.

Frame 4:

Prompt Questions:

- Do you know where to find a pharmacy in town?
- Do you know how to find pharmacies that provide emergency contraception (1800 MyOptions)

Frame 5-6:

Prompt Questions:

- Would you feel comfortable talking about sexual health with a pharmacist?
- Do you know where to find local GPs / sexual health clinics?
- Do you have your own Medicare card?

Sample text:

- Pharmacist: Here is the medication you need to take and a pamphlet with some more information. If you have any questions or concerns about how it works or what to expect. I'd also recommend visiting a health clinic for an STI test, just to make sure everything's okay – it's a routine step and a great way to take care of your health.

Frame 7:

Prompt Questions:

- Do you have friends you feel comfortable talking about sexual health with?

Sample text:

- Main character: Thank you for supporting me. You're a great friend.



Key Messages

- **Condoms** are the only way to protect yourself from both STIs and unplanned pregnancy, they are safe and effective.
- **Sexually transmitted infections** (STIs) are spread through unprotected sex and usually don't have symptoms.
- **STI testing** is simple, confidential, and essential to protect your health and the health of your partners. It is also free at some sexual health clinics.
- **Affirmative consent** means that all participants in sexual activity freely, actively and enthusiastically agree. This is important to ensure everyone feels safe, respected, and comfortable.

The Story

In this comic, a young couple are shown together in a bedroom being physically affectionate, it is implied they are about to have sex.

The next day at school, they learn about sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and are both worried. After class they have a difficult conversation or argument.

They then go to their friends separately for advice. With encouragement, they both visit a sexual health clinic for a STI test, and later we see that they are back to enjoying being together.

Facilitator notes

Depending on interpretation, the issues this comic explores may include safe sex, condom use, STIs, the importance of STI testing and/or affirmative consent. The dispute the young couple have may be about agreeing to not use a condom or one of the pair pressuring the other not to use a condom.

Encouraging condom use and STI testing is still one of the most important things youth workers can do to support young people's sexual health and wellbeing.

While young people generally understand the importance of condom use and STI testing, condom use is still low for Australian young people. Additionally for some young people (especially CALD young people) STI testing carries some stigma. This comic may help workers to have conversations that destigmatise condom use and STI testing.

Alternate scenario: *the couple learn about respectful relationships and affirmative consent at school, realising they both could have done more to ensure the other felt safe and comfortable.*



Frame by Frame Sample Text and Prompt Questions

You can use these questions to start a conversation about what is happening in the comic, and the issue being explored.

Frame 1:

Prompt Questions:

- What do you think is happening in this frame?
- Does this look like a consensual interaction? How can you tell?
- In real life how do you know if a sexual interaction is consensual?
- What are some good responses when someone suggests NOT using a condom?

Sample text:

- Character 1: I've really been looking forward to this.
- Character 2: Me too. Let's not worry about a condom. It'll ruin the mood.

Frame 2:

Prompt Questions:

- The two characters look worried to me, what do you think they may be worried about?
- Have you had relationship and sexuality education (RSE) at school?
- What have you learnt about sex at school?

Frame 3:

Prompt Questions:

- Why do you think they are arguing?
- Is there any way to tell if someone has a STI? (No, the only way to know is to have a STI test).

Sample text:

- Character 1: You said we didn't need a condom!! What if I've caught something?
- Character 2: I didn't think it was a big deal!
- Character 1: How do you even know that? You've never been tested!

Frame 4:

Prompt Questions:

- Do you have a friend you feel comfortable talking about sexual health and relationships with?
- How would you support a friend in this situation?

Sample text:

- Character 1: I'm so mad at them! What if I have an STI now because of them?
- Friend 1: You should both get tested. You can go to the GP or the sexual health clinic to get an STI test.
- Character 2: I guess I shouldn't have just assumed I'm STI free. Do you think they'll forgive me?
- Friend 2: You should start by going to get an STI test. They'll respect you for taking it seriously.

Frame 5:

Prompt Questions:

- Do you know where to find local GPs / sexual health clinics?
- Would you feel comfortable talking about sexual health with a GP / nurse?
- Do you have your own Medicare card?

Sample text:

- Clinician: Good to see you. Come back any time.
- Friend 1: No need to be nervous, I'll be here in the waiting room the whole time.

Frame 6:

Prompt Questions:

- Do you have any questions about STIs or getting tested?
- How do you think the characters feel here? Why?

Sample text:

- Character 1: We got lucky this time. But we're using condoms from now on – no excuses.
- Character 2: You're right. I promise, every time.



Am I Okay?



Key Messages

- **It's ok to talk to a doctor about private issues.** It is always confidential and private when you speak to a doctor. Talking about sex is part of their job and you have a right to health care that includes sexual and reproductive health.
- If you are an Australian citizen, **you can get your own Medicare card** when you turn 15.

The Story

In this comic a young woman is standing in front of a mirror and looking down at her body. We can tell from the look on her face that she is concerned about something that is happening, presumably to her private body parts.

The young woman is unsure who she can talk to about her concerns, so she goes to the public library to do some anonymous research. She discovers that the local community health service provides women's health services, so she visits the clinic. At the clinic she is warmly greeted by reception staff and picks up a pamphlet relating to her concern.

Later at home she reads the pamphlets and then calls the health service to make an appointment.

At her appointment she is able to see a female doctor who shares her faith. Later on, the young woman is having fun with her friends, and we can see that she feels much better.

Facilitator notes

The concern the young woman in this comic is experiencing is intentionally vague, some examples could be her first period, period pain, STI symptoms, a late period, or other unwanted pregnancy symptoms. All of these are "private" health issues that a young person, especially a CALD young person may be reluctant to discuss.

Some CALD young people have lower health literacy, especially in relation to sexual and reproductive health, and may be unsure or unaware of what issues they can talk to a doctor about. As youth workers we can support young people by making sure they know that they can access confidential and culturally appropriate sexual and reproductive health care.

Youth workers can also support young people to access care by assisting with making bookings and helping young people get their own Medicare card.



Am I Okay?



Frame by Frame Sample Text and Prompt Questions

You can use these questions to start a conversation about what is happening in the comic, and the issue being explored.

Frame 1 – 3

Prompt Questions

- What is happening in these first three frames?
- What do you think the character might be worried about?
- Why would someone use the computers at the library instead of their phone or personal computer?
- What is she looking up?

Frame 4

Prompt Questions

- What is happening in this frame?
- Where are the characters?
- What do you think the characters are saying?
- What feelings do you think the girl may be having?

Sample text

- Receptionist: Hello. Let me know if you need any help. But feel free to just look at the information.
- Main character: Thanks. I'm just looking.

Frame 5 (including cut away)

Prompt Questions

- What is happening in these frames?
- Who do you think she is calling, and why?

Frame 6

Prompt Questions

- What is happening in this frame?
- The doctor is wearing a Hijab, the same as the girl. How do you think this would make her feel?

Frame 7

Prompt Questions

- Looking at this frame do you think the girl feels better than at the start of the comic?
- Do you think she had a positive experience at her appointment?
- What can help make seeing a doctor a positive experience?



Key Messages

- **Image-based abuse is never OK.** Sharing, or threatening to share a “intimate” photo or video of someone without their consent is abuse and can cause serious harm and distress. If someone shares a intimate photo or video of you, you can get judgment free help and support from trusted adults, and online resources like the eSafety Commissioner website.
- **Image-based abuse is a crime.** Sharing, or threatening to share a “intimate” photo or video of someone without their consent is illegal and can lead to serious consequences.
- **It is always illegal to share an intimate photo or video of anyone under 18.** This includes sharing intimate photos or videos of yourself if you were under 18 when they were created.

The Story

In this comic, two young men are riding public transport. One of them receives a link to a “revenge porn” website where he sees a nude photo of a friend.

The two young men agree that this is not ok. They report the image on the eSafety Commissioner website.

Later, the two young men from the bus/train run into their friend from the photo. They show him the photo and provide him with non-judgmental support. They then help him to make a report on the eSafety Commissioner website.

Facilitator notes

Sharing or threatening to share an intimate or sexual photo or video of someone without their consent is considered image-based abuse. It is illegal and can cause serious harm and distress.

As youth workers it is important that we model and promote positive and constructive attitudes towards situations like the one shown in the comic. The two young men from the bus understand that this is a serious issue. They are concerned for their friend’s wellbeing, and they respond responsibly and empathetically to the situation.

It is also important for us to equip young people with practical tools to deal with similar situations. Reporting image-based abuse to the eSafety Commissioner website is an effective way to respond to image-based abuse and can be done anonymously.



Frame by Frame Sample Text and Prompt Questions

You can use these questions to start a conversation about what is happening in the comic, and the issue being explored.

Frame 1 – 3

Prompt Questions

- What is happening in these first three frames?
- How are the two characters on the bus responding to seeing the photo of their friend?
- What do you think of their response?

Sample text

- Character 1: Who would share this, that's not ok!
- Character 2: This wasn't meant for us to see. People shouldn't be sharing this.
- Character 1: We should tell our friend, he would want to know this is being shared.
- Character 2: We should report this and try to get it taken down.

Frame 4

Prompt Questions

- Have you ever heard of the eSafety Commissioner?
- In this comic, the photo is being shared on a website, but often image-based abuse is shared through direct messages. Can you still report image-based abuse if it is shared this way? (Yes).

Frame 6

Prompt Questions

- What is happening in this frame?
- How do you think the character from the photo would feel?
- What do you think he might be worried about?

Sample text

- Character from photo: What the... how do you have this? Oh no this is so embarrassing. Everyone is going to judge me.

Frame 7

Prompt Questions

- What do you think the characters from the bus might be saying to support their friend?

Sample text

- Character from photo: This feels really bad. I don't know what to do, can you help me?
- Character 1: It's ok, you didn't do anything wrong.
- Character 2: We can help you get this taken down. It's illegal for someone to share this without your consent. Whoever shared this should be embarrassed not you.

Frame 8

Prompt Questions

- What is happening in this frame?
- Why is it important to report intimate images shared without consent?

Sample text

- Character 1: The best thing you can do is to make a report on the eSafety Commissioner website.
- Character 2: It's quick and easy to report it. Hopefully that will get it taken down, fast!
- Character from photo: Thanks so much for your support. You are good friends.

Key Messages – Expanded

- **Condoms** are the only way to protect yourself from both STIs and unplanned pregnancy. They are safe and effective. **Dental dams** can also be used to reduce the risk of STIs by providing a barrier between the mouth and/or genital areas during sex.
- **Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)** are spread through unprotected sex and usually don't have symptoms. STIs can have a range of serious impacts on our health and the health of our sexual partners. An STI test can detect STIs early, enabling early treatment and prevention of complications like infertility and chronic pain.
- **STI testing is a simple**, confidential, and essential way to protect your health and the health of your partners. It is also free at some sexual health clinics. You should get tested every 6-12 months, or whenever you change partners.
- **Affirmative consent** means that all participants in sexual activity freely, actively and enthusiastically agree. This is important to ensure everyone feels safe, respected, and comfortable.
- In Victoria, the **legal age of consent is 16 years**. (Note: for people aged 12 – 15 years, sex with someone within 24-months-of-age of them is NOT a crime.) The legal definition of 'sex' isn't just about penetration. It also includes oral sex, anal sex and sexual touching. Always check that the person you want to have sex with is sober and is comfortable with the decision to have sex.
- Pharmacies can be convenient, discreet and trustworthy source of sexual healthcare. **Pharmacists can provide emergency contraception**, condoms, and lubricants, and guide you to other healthcare services, such as STI testing or GP clinics. Note: not all pharmacies provide emergency contraception. You can find nearby pharmacies that do provide emergency contraception using the [1800 My Options](#) website or by calling 1800 My Options - 1800 696 784.
- **Emergency contraception** ('the morning-after pill' / 'Plan B') is a safe and effective way to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex or if a condom breaks. It works best when taken as soon as possible, ideally within 72 hours, but some options can work up to 5 days later. Emergency contraception is available without a prescription from pharmacies that choose to carry it.
- **There is no shame in seeking sexual or reproductive health care** – it's a responsible, empowering step toward protecting your health and wellbeing. Sexual health is just as important as any other aspect of your health, and asking for help or getting tested shows strength, self-respect, and care for yourself and others.
- **Image based abuse is never OK**. Sharing, or threatening to share a "intimate" photo or video of someone without their consent is abuse and can cause serious harm and distress. It's never ok to share an intimate photo or video of someone without their consent. If someone shares an intimate photo or video of you, you can get judgment free help and support from trusted adults, and online resources like the eSafety Commissioner website.
- **Image based abuse is a crime**. Sharing, or threatening to share an "intimate" photo or video of someone without their consent is illegal and can lead to serious consequences.
- **It is always illegal to share an intimate photo or video of anyone under 18**, this includes sharing intimate photos or videos of yourself if you were under 18 when they were created.