Soulsby, frye, or health educators, it was a momentous occasion. The school nurses would teach the teachers about health education, which is a complex and multifaceted field. This was the first time in 1992 that the school nurses had the opportunity to explain the intricacies of health education to the teachers, and it was a moment of great significance.

The teachers were given a thorough overview of the health education curriculum, including topics such as nutrition, exercise, and mental health. They were also introduced to the various resources available to them, including the Health Education Priorities for the Primary School Curriculum, which is a comprehensive guide to health education in primary schools.

The teachers were encouraged to incorporate health education into their daily lessons, and they were provided with a range of materials to assist them in doing so. They were also given the opportunity to participate in workshops and training sessions to further develop their skills and knowledge in this important area.

Overall, the collaboration between school nurses and teachers was a success. The teachers were enthusiastic and engaged, and they were eager to learn more about health education. The school nurses were able to share their knowledge and experience, and they were supported in their efforts to improve the health and well-being of the students in their care.

The collaborative approach taken by the school nurses and teachers was a model for other schools to follow. It demonstrated the importance of partnerships in health education, and it showed how effective collaboration can lead to positive outcomes for students.
The authors: Anne Simpson teaching the teachers, Helen West taking a break.

Even staff that felt they were already well-informed have found the modules helpful.

has been increasing contact between the school nurses and the Health Education Unit. This has included joint training sessions, regular planning meetings and a closer working relationship generally.

The modules

Modules currently available in the Child Health Care series are on Asthma, Epilepsy, Diabetes, Infection Control, Basic Resuscitation and HIV/AIDS. They are designed for use by trainers working with teachers, school welfare assistants, residential care staff and youth leaders. They may, with minimal changes, also be useful in helping parents and possibly older children to a greater understanding of health-related issues which may affect them. It is recommended that, if possible, a suitable health professional, such as a school nurse, attends the session, either as trainer or consultant, to deal with any questions arising which may be beyond the scope of the information presented in the modules.

The standardised format enables users to move easily from one pack to another. Additional resources, such as resource cards or examples of asthma inhalers, which are required for particular sessions, are listed in the preparation section at the front of each pack. There are also master copies of appropriate handouts and evaluation sheets for use if desired.

The structure of the training sessions allows for considerable flexibility so that the needs of particular groups may be met. Trainers are advised to collect certain local information and statistics which will be helpful in their presentation. National statistics are included where appropriate, with information on national avenues of support. Most modules include a video, which expands on the trainer’s script and offers a change of pace during the session.

School nurses may be invited to present a session during a staff meeting or as part of an in-service training day. Each module takes around an hour to present, and we have found that even staff that felt they were already well-informed have found them helpful. As a school nurse, Anne found the idea of training teachers quite threatening at first, but having such thoroughly-prepared and easily-used resources was very helpful and gave her confidence.

Asthma

The Asthma module is particularly popular. With at least one in ten children affected, everyone working with this age group will have to cope with an attack at some time. The National Asthma Campaign’s video Every Little Breath is included in the pack, and the session includes a demonstration of inhalers and spacers. Trigger factors, preventative treatment and emergency care are discussed and the possible implications on children’s lifestyles are explored. Most participants have found this session extremely helpful.

Epilepsy

Epilepsy affects approximately four children in a thousand and the condition is still poorly understood by many lay people. In addition to information on triggers, management and safety, the Epilepsy module provides an opportunity for dispelling myths and addressing fear and prejudice. The British Epilepsy Association/Ciba Geigy video, Adventure Club, is included. A short, specially-prepared video made with footage supplied by Perks-Davis showing examples of seizures is also provided at the request of teachers attending our pilot sessions.

Diabetes

The Diabetes module also includes a particularly attractive, specially-produced video funded by Novo-Nordisk, based on an original idea by a specialist Diabetes Nurse, which explains the condition in simple terms. The emotional and social impact of diabetes on the child and family are explored in some detail. Management, supervision and emergency care are also discussed, and common misconceptions about the condition are addressed.

Resuscitation

The Basic Resuscitation module, because of its participatory nature, may require a longer time-slot to allow everyone to try out the basic skills. The British Heart Foundation’s Heartstart pack, including a training video, is provided. This session is quite active and is perhaps better suited to a training day than an after-school meeting.

Infection & HIV/AIDS

Outbreaks of infection among the population of a school or other institution can attract unfavourable publicity and considerably disrupt normal routines. The Infection Control module aims to raise awareness around the issue of the transmission of infections and promote understanding of the concept of standard hygiene precautions. The HIV/AIDS module contains similar elements and looks at attitudes and values in a non-threatening way. Both sessions include activities in small groups to enable participants to review current practice in their own place of work and assess whether changes should be made.

Take-up

The modules have been well received in all the schools that have hosted a presentation, and everyone concerned with the production of the modules hopes that independent schools and residential facilities in our area will also be interested. This could become a source of additional income, in addition to improving children’s health.

In Mid-Downs Health Authority, all school nurse bases have been supplied with the complete library of modules, so offering maximum freedom to provide training appropriate to the needs of the children and the schools’ schedules. Packs are also being offered to schools as a reference source. The content of modules will be frequently reviewed so that any changes can be incorporated in newly-printed editions.

Demand for these sessions is increasing as word spreads among staff groups. The school nurses involved feel that the time spent delivering them is very worthwhile. Although the results in terms of child health are difficult to evaluate, a more confident and competent approach to health issues must be beneficial.

Future plans and availability

Possible modules which could be considered for development in the future are Eating Disorders, Attention Deficit Disorder (hyperactivity), Sickle Cell Disease, and Thalassaemia, if funding should become available.

The cost of a complete library of modules is £295.00 which gives a saving on buying the packs singly. Individual packs are as follows: Asthma £95.95, Basic Resuscitation £95.95, Diabetes £95.95, Epilepsy £95.95, HIV/AIDS £44.95, Infection Control £44.95, plus VAT and postage. They are available from Merlin Communications (UK) Ltd., 37A Market Place, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 2NX (0285 641851).

Reference


SCHOOL NURSES A PROFESSIONAL INQUIRY

School Nurses do it in Schools!

TRENDS IN SCHOOL NURSING PRACTICE

Kay Fletcher
Chairwoman, School Nurses’ Association

Juno Balding
Chairwoman, School Nurses’ Association