

SAMPLE CARD DECK



split
banana

WELCOME

Hello! We're Split Banana, a social enterprise that helps young people nurture healthy relationships with their minds, their bodies and each other.

We believe that a great sex education can be life changing - it encourages young people to be more empathetic, resilient, healthier and happier. That's why we want lots of different people, in different spaces, to be having these conversations.

We know that talking about sex and relationships can be a daunting task. Most of us grew up without receiving any sex education. Lots of people don't feel like they've had relevant training. It can be hard to know what good practice looks like.

We're here to help. No matter how you work with young people - whether you're a teacher, youth worker or any other practitioner - we've can help you to sensitively cover relationships and sex with confidence.

We've created this mini card deck as an introduction to some of the approaches, narratives and content we think should be covered to create an engaging and inclusive RSE curriculum. These resources are pulled from our larger teacher training toolkit which covers a comprehensive range of RSE topics.

If you're looking to gain a more in depth understanding of how to deliver RSE or support young people with sex and relationships, check out our **training options** or if you want some more in depth advice or feedback on your provision take a look at our **consultation service**.

'NARRATIVES' CARDS

Narratives are the messages that we hear in the world around us and which we internalise. If we are uncritical of these as we end up perpetuating harmful stereotypes, and preventing students from receiving the RSE they deserve.

As RSE is centred around our relationships with ourselves and others, it can be a wonderful opportunity to challenge stereotypes, interrogate social 'norms' and to understand and challenge structural violence.

These cards are intended to bring your attention to messages that can dominate - and overlap - within RSE, and offer some advice on how you can begin to address them.

Do:

- + Consider your personal beliefs and values, and how they could impact upon how you think about RSE.
- + Include different perspectives even if your assumption is that it's not relevant to people in the room (eg. disability). Many facets of people's identities are not visible, and you never know what life experiences students will have in the future.
- + Never call upon a person who holds a certain identity to be a spokesperson for issues which affect them.
- + Hire people with underrepresented identities and backgrounds to deliver workshops, talks or targeted support on certain RSE topics.
- + Remember that you are helping to equip all young people to have positive experiences filled with respect, empathy and joy!

HETERONORMATIVITY

Heteronormativity is the promotion of heterosexuality within a gender binary as the only acceptable expression of sexuality. You don't have to look far to see that this perspective is deeply ingrained into our society and worldview. This is a form of homophobia, and is particularly harmful to LGBTQIA+ youth.

In RSE this could be only teaching about penis-in-vagina sex within monogamous, heterosexual relationships. Or it could be only teaching about STIs in relation to heterosexual sex. This tells students that it is the only 'legitimate' or 'correct' sex that is practised.

All students must be empowered to identify heteronormative standards and to celebrate diverse relationships.

Do:

- + Critically engage with your own bias, assumptions and stereotypes surrounding gender and orientations in RSE topics.
- + Explain what heteronormativity is, where it comes from and what it looks like in practise.
- + Consider how heteronormativity could slip into any of the topics, from menstruation to families.
- + Make visible and discuss different types of relationships such as lesbian, queer, bisexual, gay, polyamorous etc.
- + Be open - correct yourself if you find yourself making a heteronormative assumption.

'CONTENT' CARDS

How should these cards be used?

Knowing where to start with certain topics can be one of the hardest parts of RSE. We've created these cards to give you key takeaways for each topic.

They are by no means extensive, but will hopefully help anyone who wants to have better conversations around RSE themes, in whatever context.

- + You can use them to help you **plan a lesson**, to **build out a curriculum** or as a **refresher** before you have to teach a class.
- + **They can be inspiration**: each takeaway could be a whole lesson in itself or a starting point for a wider project. Get creative!
- + **They can be used to reflect on your own knowledge gaps** and help you to identify where you might need to do further learning.
- + **They can be used in other subjects where these topics might come up**, to help you understand what information you could include alongside your subject.

SEX

It's helpful to think of sex as both outercourse and intercourse. Outercourse is any sexual activity which is non-penetrative, such as oral sex and sexual touching. Intercourse is anything which includes vaginal or anal penetration.

We should learn about sex because...

It is a healthy part of human existence and represents a patchwork of different experiences and interactions. By showing that sex isn't just penis-in-vagina (PIV), we can understand consent better and validate sex for people in queer relationships, people with disabilities and everyone else who sees sex as more than penis-in-vagina!

It's important that young people know:

1. **The difference between intercourse and outercourse, and how all sex requires consent.** By highlighting that outercourse counts as sex, we can understand how consent is needed throughout all intimate experiences.
2. **Consensual sex and sexual pleasure are a healthy part of our lives, and shouldn't be shamed or stigmatised.** Sex can be good for both physical and mental health.
3. **People's consensual sexual choices are equally valid, even if they are different from our own.** Some people will have sex with genders different from their own. Some people will have sex with multiple partners. Some will use sex aides. Some will only ever have outercourse. Some will choose not to have sex at all. As long as it's consensual for all involved, people's sexual practises are equally valid.

'APPROACHES' CARDS

Most people find conversations around relationships and sex embarrassing, awkward or uncomfortable. So if this chimes with you, please do not worry.

RSE only became compulsory in schools in 2020. You might have never had RSE, or had a poor experience at best. It's very hard to model good conversations if you haven't seen them in practise.

These cards are intended to give you tips and inspiration to help you deliver great RSE.

We recommend that any approach should be built on a foundation of these principles:

- + **Recognise safeguarding concerns** and follow procedures.
- + **Protect students from harmful behaviour** such as homophobic language. Be confident in stating that a topic is non-debatable - such as the need for consent and the existence of the transgender community.
- + **Be aware that you will never know all the identities and experiences that are present in the room.** You must be sure to understand the experiences, voices and issues that get missed include them.
- + **Include students.** Ask students what they want to be learning, encourage feedback, understand where the gaps are in their support. Understanding students' needs and wishes, and responding accordingly, is crucial to creating an impactful learning experience.

WE CREATE A RESPECTFUL SPACE

We promote a respectful space as opposed to a safe space because we don't think the promise of a completely safe space in a classroom is realistic.

Instead, we think it's important to focus on showing students how to be respectful of one another. And to provide clear guidelines around behaviour, with a promise that they will be upheld by the teacher.

A respectful space is one where:

- + **There are no stupid questions!** Questions and curiosity should be encouraged.
- + **It's a safe place to make a mistake.** Being afraid of saying the wrong thing can stop people asking the questions they need answers for. Listen non-judgmentally and kindly explain why an assumption is incorrect or problematic.
- + **People are open to new ideas.** Good RSE should challenge how people think about topics, and introduce them to new ways of seeing and understanding the world.
- + **It's fine to feel awkward or laugh!** But we don't laugh at each other. Many people find these topics embarrassing and they can cause an eruption of giggles. This is totally fine, but laughing at others should not be tolerated.
- + **Your impact is more important than your intentions.** If a joke or a comment is made that upsets somebody, focus should be given to why it's upsetting. Offensive jokes should never be tolerated.

