

New video deals with youth issues

Stress, bullying and relationships are factors in most teenagers' lives. That's why two DECS high schools have assisted with a new video resource to support secondary students dealing with these issues.

The Stories of Us video series, created by Adelaide-based filmmaker Chris Faull, consists of three episodes: bullying, relationships and stress, each with a teacher's guide.

Underdale High School's Stage 1 year 11 drama class acted in 'Bullying', while Marryatville High School's year 10 and 11 multi-arts class acted in 'Stress'.

The students worked with Chris to develop storylines and characters based on the experiences of some teenagers.

The resource was launched on 4 April at Marryatville HS's new performing arts centre, The Forge.

DECS student behaviour management policy advisor Greg Cox and beyondblue schools research officer Helen Scales have provided feedback on the scripts and video content.

"The exciting thing about this project is it is written and performed by secondary students for secondary students and based on events that can occur in the school ... (the videos) have tapped into the youth culture" Greg said.

"This is a SA project that was always worthy of support as the videos will be sold interstate and have provided DECS students with the opportunity of being involved in writing, producing and performing in a commercial product."

Helen said the videos provide a forum for discussion about important issues many young people face.

"The psychological damage of long term bullying, living in dysfunctional relationships or being unduly stressed is well documented in the videos," she said.

"Schools are more conscious than ever about student wellbeing. This resource provides secondary teachers with a set of tools to have an open discussion about these issues with adolescents."

Marryatville HS Multi-Arts teacher Jenni Henzell said the project allowed students to express themselves about the topic.

"Because the script came from the young people's experiences and ideas and the dialogue is fresh and spontaneous ... I think students viewing it will recognise similar situations that are part of their own lives or those of their friends," she said.

Underdale HS drama teacher Melinda Boston also said the videos developed students' multimedia skills.

"The students learnt a great deal about acting for the camera and about creating a meaningful script ... and despite long hours on the days of the shoot they remained optimistic and committed," she said.

As Chris said, the idea behind the videos was not just to inform, but to engage students.

"At a trial run of the videos with a year 9 class, the students were totally engaged ... and some of the students were convinced that what they were watching was real."

The videos were produced by Readymade Productions in association with the South Australian Film Corporation and Optima Psychologists and Mediators.

Chris said DECS' support played an integral role in helping to gain funding to produce the videos.

"Greg and Helen's work has been great ... and the initial support from Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith was a significant help in the process of securing the necessary production funds," he said.

A MindMatters (a mental health promotion program for secondary schools) workshop will be held on 25 May at the Education Development Centre. The workshop will introduce the resource to teachers and will be facilitated by students from Marryatville and Underdale high schools.

INFORMATION

Readymade Productions
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Underdale High School students Johnny Pisanelli and James Troisi acting in 'Bullying', as part of the Stories of Us video series.



Marryatville High School students Cliff Ellis, Tom Reddecliffe and Sophie Murray acting in 'Stress', as part of the Stories of Us video series.



Underdale High School students Bianca Ventrice, Monique McBurnie, Amy Colley and Marijana Stojadinovic acting in 'Bullying', as part of the Stories of Us video series.