

SELBSTBEWUSST

Verein für Sexualpädagogik und
Prävention
von sexuellem Kindesmissbrauch

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Project Description:

Vom Du zum Wir ("From You to We")

Workshop series on values and sexuality for male unaccompanied refugee minors (URM)

The large-scale wave of refugees that began in 2015 has presented and continues to pose new challenges, not only for society but also for sexual education. The mostly traumatised refugee minors enter a world completely alien to them, and they run the risk of (unknowingly) crossing moral and legal boundaries. In addition, the population's resentment of "the foreigners" is becoming ever greater so that contact between the URM and the Austrian population is becoming increasingly difficult. On behalf of the Integration Office of the City of Salzburg, **the workshop series "Vom Du zum Wir" ("From You to We") was designed with new and adapted methods for the target group of male unaccompanied refugee minors.**

The workshop series in this form is the first and only in Austria, perhaps also in central Europe.

An examination of the correct type of communication, content, local conditions, group size, personal resources of the refugees, trauma and origins of the participants underlies each module and topic.

The goals for male URM are familiarisation with our values and laws, reflection on different cultures, equality of the sexes and sexual enlightenment on the basis of human rights and sexual and reproductive rights.

The experiences and observations of the caretakers in the accommodation have been and are always incorporated into both the conception as well as the execution of each individual series of workshops.

The young refugees themselves can contribute to the content and, on the basis of freedom of expression and respect, can ask any sensitive questions (including anonymously in writing).

One of the biggest challenges was the "accurate" overcoming of language barriers. The series of workshops will be conducted by language mediators.

These have been tasked with translating carefully and thematically. It was essential to prepare and train the language mediators.

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a) Setting and approach

When selecting groups, it is not only the same language that is taken into account; level of education, origins (city or country), religion, age and level of maturity of the participants are also essential. For this we have developed a standardised form that is available to caretakers at refugee accommodations for the selection of participants. Contact between the workshop leader and the participants are established in the “relaxed” atmosphere of the familiar environment of the refugees’ accommodation during a **first meeting** together with the language mediator. Here the participants not only meet the workshop leader, but the workshop leader also gets to know the youths’ requests and interests. The **URMs help design the content of the workshop series from the beginning**. The approximate content and goal of the workshop, as well as rules, will be defined together at the end of this first meeting. The series of workshops themselves will take place at a location other than the accommodation facilities as these sensitive topics can be better dealt with in a neutral location.

b) Duration

The series of workshops is scheduled for a **period of four, three-hour sessions – one session per week – thus allowing for mentoring over the course of one month**. Before and after a workshop with the entire group, **one-to-one meetings with the workshop leader** can be held for individual participants with questions. An **additional joint excursion** with the young people and the workshop leader to a public event or activity (for example, to a climbing hall) is also included. The experiences and observations of the young people are discussed and reflected upon.

c) Content and specifics

The exact content of the workshop sessions depends on the **questions and interests of the participants**. We provide a common theme (see point d). During the **first two workshop days**, we will cover information and questions on the following topics in a male-only round:

- Specific “rules” for meeting and interacting with girls and women in Austria
- Social values of different cultures
- Information about the male and female body
- Hetero- and homosexuality
- Sexuality in the media

The **third workshop day** will be conducted jointly by **the workshop leader** with whom participants are already familiar and a **female workshop leader**. In this unit

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questions collected from the participants are submitted anonymously to the female workshop leader. Questions range from everyday topics (e.g. “Why do women want to work?”, “What is it like for a woman when she rides a bicycle?”) to questions relating to the body (e.g. “Does a woman’s breasts hurt when she runs?”, “Does a period hurt?”) and sexual questions (“How do I know if a woman consents to sex?”, “Do women enjoy sex?”). Care is taken that questions and answers do not include one’s own sexuality. Additional topics of the third workshop day are:

- Contraception
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Negative aspects of sexuality

The **fourth workshop day** (here the group typically wants the female workshop leader to join again) deals with:

- Rights and statutory provisions
 - Relevant criminal law
 - Youth protection legislation
 - Equality between women and men
 - Protection against discrimination
 - Freedom of religion
 - Homosexuality
- Open questions and recap of interesting topics

d) Common theme and methods

The common “thread” or theme is individual **stages of meeting** (first contact, getting to know each other, flirting, first date, joint activities, first kiss, etc.) **to relationships** using posters. With the help of a **second level, the associated feelings and actions** (liking, falling in love, trust, sadness, talking to each other, expression, heartbreak, fun, etc.) are named. Using **various methods** (based on group work, anonymously or as discussion, depending on the topic), the participants have the **opportunity to introduce their own ideas or experiences at each step, and to speak about their own culture.** The workshop leader respectfully points out differences and **conveys non-negotiable values and boundaries of Austrian society.**