



Position Statement

Sexuality and sexual health

Sexual and Reproductive Health Western Australia (SRHWA) endorses the World Health Organisation's¹ working definitions of sexual health and sexuality which find:

"Sexual health is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being related to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled.

Sexuality is a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors."

SRHWA is against all types of abuse and violence and advocates for public awareness and prevention of sexual violence and abuse and appropriate affordable services.

SRHWA will promote, where possible at political, national and state levels, a high priority for development of research programs and gathering of data in the areas of sexual health.

SRHWA will also seek to draw attention to the current lack of up-to-date Australian data, which precludes the accurate objective assessment of sexual health needs, and inhibits SRHWA's ability to lobby and promote services.

¹ World Health Organisation (2002). Defining sexual health: report of a technical consultation on sexual health 28–31 January 2002, Geneva