**TITLE: Good practice in domestic violence prevention education**

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**Objectives**

The aim of the research was to explore the views of young people towards a domestic violence prevention education programme called Relationships without Fear.

**Design**

Semi-structured focus groups were conducted with young people who had received the programme in their school.

**Method**

Five focus groups were conducted; two with primary school pupils (aged 10-14 years) and three with secondary school pupils (aged 13-14 years). Pupils were invited to discuss their opinions, including what they liked and disliked about the programme. These discussions were analysed using thematic analysis.

**Results**

In addition to identifying what pupils liked and disliked about the programme, several themes emerged and highlighted areas for improvement. In particular, boys were more likely to become disengaged with the programme because they thought it was ‘sexist’ and the teaching methods used were ‘boring’. All pupils struggled to understand the role of power and control in domestic violence, and from this misconceptions emerged. The programme encouraged pupils to express their opinions; however teachers’ lack of confidence was highlighted when teachers sought to reprimand opinions they deemed insensitive, which then inadvertently hindered pupil participation.

**Conclusion**

Education programmes that seek to prevent domestic violence need to be responsive to the experiences of young people (through the content) and young people’s learning preferences (through the teaching methods used). These types of programmes need to be responsive to the tension between gender based violence and gender equality. Furthermore teachers need training to build their expertise and confidence.