



CONSENT MATTERS!

Professional Mentoring
Program for Youth and
Community Workers

EVALUATION REPORT

Consent Matters

Author: Dr Rachel Bush

Acknowledgement of Country

Sexual Health Victoria and Women's Health in the South East acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Peoples and the Traditional Custodians of the lands, waterways and skies where we work, live and play.

We celebrate that this is the oldest continuous living culture in the world, and that sovereignty was never ceded in this country. This always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

Acknowledgements

Sexual Health Victoria and Women's Health in the South East would like to acknowledge the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and the Victorian Government for their support of the Consent Matters program.

Sexual Health Victoria and Women's Health in the South East are grateful to our program participants for their active engagement and contribution to the project design and development, and for participating in the pilot. Their feedback has been invaluable to the success of the program.

We would like to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of Samantha Read, Anne Atcheson, Dr Catherine Kirby, Natalie Cavallaro, Joanna Anagnostou, Dr Rachel Bush and Laura Riccardi for their work in developing, delivering and evaluating the program.

Executive summary

The Consent Matters Program, a collaborative initiative led by Sexual Health Victoria (SHV) and Women's Health in the South East (WHISE), was established to address the gaps in consent education for young people outside mainstream settings. The program's foundation is rooted in the Victorian Government's affirmative consent legislation, introduced in 2022, which aims to enhance protections for sexual offence survivors and promote ethical and legal frameworks for consent.

Program overview

The program involved:

- Development of two online modules: Covering legislative updates, ethical and legal aspects of consent, and educational tools.
- Three interactive pilot workshops: Conducted across Victoria in collaboration with community partners. These workshops targeted youth and community service professionals to equip them with skills and resources for educating young people about affirmative consent, healthy relationships, and sexual health.

Key findings

Surveys and interviews were conducted at baseline (pre) before completing the online modules, immediately after (post), and 12 weeks post-workshops (follow-up). Findings revealed:

1. Increased knowledge:

- Affirmative consent legislation: Knowledge of the new laws saw a 43% increase immediately following the program. Participants gained clarity on the importance of seeking active and enthusiastic consent and the legislative framework underpinning this requirement. This understanding was sustained, with two-thirds of participants reporting a 'high' level of understanding 12 weeks after the session.
- Ethical and legal aspects of consent: Understanding of ethical and legal dimensions increased by 17%, with notable shifts in participants rating their knowledge as 'very high' (from 8% pre to 30% post).
- Teaching strategies: Participants' ability to deliver effective consent education improved by 35%, with a majority feeling confident in using newly learned tools to engage young people in meaningful discussions about affirmative consent.
- Broader sexual health topics: The program strengthened knowledge in areas like healthy relationships, trauma-informed approaches, and sex-positive education, with increases ranging from 12% to 21%. This suggests a well-rounded enhancement of capacity to address complex topics.

- Sustainability of knowledge: Feedback indicated that the program equipped participants with resources and frameworks to maintain and apply their learning, with sustained high ratings across all surveyed knowledge areas at follow-up.

2. Improved confidence:

- Participants reported a 30% increase in confidence to educate about sexual consent and relationships.
- Gains were particularly notable in creating safe spaces for discussions, taking a sex-positive approach, and modelling affirmative consent practices.

3. Application of Learning:

- Educating young people: Confidence to educate on sex, relationships, and the legal aspects of consent increased by 18-30%, reflecting a stronger ability to engage with youth on these issues. This included empowering young people to navigate ethical considerations alongside legal responsibilities.
- Creating safe educational spaces: Confidence to create safe spaces for discussing consent and relationships rose by 14%, with participants praising the workshop's trauma-informed strategies that they could incorporate into their roles.
- Modelling and practicing consent: A 24% increase was observed in confidence to model affirmative consent practices, enabling professionals to demonstrate and reinforce these behaviours in educational and real-world scenarios.
- Addressing complex challenges: Participants reported improved readiness to tackle nuanced situations, such as disclosures of sexual violence and the intersection of consent with cultural and social norms. Confidence to respond appropriately to disclosures increased by 12%, signalling a critical area of growth that could benefit from additional reinforcement.
- Application to practice: Participants expressed high confidence in applying learnings directly to their work, from tailoring activities for one-on-one sessions to integrating concepts into broader organisational frameworks. Many reported success in engaging students and youth groups through interactive and relatable approaches.

Challenges identified

- Cultural and contextual adaptability: Some activities required adjustments to suit diverse cultural and individual settings.
- Need for more advanced and tailored content for different youth demographics, particularly older students and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

Recommendations

- Expand cultural and contextual sensitivity: Tailor modules for CALD youth and avoid biases in materials by addressing diverse cultural, social, and familial contexts.
- Enhance practical content for specific settings: Develop specialised strategies for one-on-one sessions and create adaptations for working with unique groups, such as young perpetrators or youth in the justice system.
- Provide additional support for complex topics: Offer follow-up resources and advanced workshops on trauma-informed approaches, responding to disclosures, and navigating complex consent scenarios.
- Improve accessibility of training materials: Make online module materials multilingual, and accessible to ensure widespread utilisation.
- Increase focus on intersectional approaches: Include discussions on how race, gender identity, and socio-economic status intersect with consent and healthy relationships, equipping practitioners with adaptable tools for diverse audiences.
- Strengthen facilitator training: Provide facilitators with advanced skills in handling sensitive topics, trauma-informed practices, and intersectional education methodologies.
- Foster peer learning and collaboration: Facilitate participant networking through workshops and post-program forums to encourage shared learning and collaboration.
- Tailor activities to time constraints: Design shorter, adaptable versions of key activities for professionals with limited session time, ensuring practical application remains feasible.
- Expand outreach and community engagement: Partner with schools, youth organisations, and community groups to embed affirmative consent principles into broader educational and community initiatives.

Contact information

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Background

In 2022, the Victorian government passed the *Justice Legislation Amendment (Sexual Offences and Other Matters) Bill*, a landmark legislation introducing an affirmative consent framework aimed at enhancing protections for victim-survivors of sexual offences. Central to these reforms is the requirement for alleged perpetrators to demonstrate that consent was actively sought and given. The amendments also criminalise 'stealthing' – the non-consensual removal or tampering of condoms – and strengthen laws against image-based sexual abuse, including the distribution of intimate images without consent or through deepfake technology.

These reforms were supported by community-based educational initiatives funded through the Victorian Budget 2022/23, including the Consent Matters project led by Sexual Health Victoria (SHV) and Women's Health in the South East (WHISE). This initiative, supported by a competitive grant, addressed gaps in relationships and sexuality education for young people outside mainstream educational settings. For these young people, youth and community services are a vital opportunity to provide information and facilitate discussions about respectful relationships and healthy sexuality.

SHV and WHISE designed the Consent Matters program in consultation with stakeholders such as Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Centre for Culture Ethnicity and Health, YSAS, the Zoe Belle Gender Collective, and young people, through the City of Greater Dandenong Youth Services. This culminated in the development of two online modules and an interactive six-hour workshop, which was piloted with three distinct groups of participants.

The online modules, which participants have access to for six months, outlined:

- The cultural changes leading to legislative change.
- The specific changes to legislation.
- Resources and instruction for three learning activities for use with young people.

Following the online modules, participants attended a six-hour interactive workshop which aimed to empower youth and community service professionals with the knowledge and confidence to educate at-risk young people on consent, sex, and relationships, and provide referrals to support services where applicable. To do this, the workshop included:

- Information regarding the new affirmative consent legislation.
- Participatory components where participants were given opportunities to trial implementation of consent-related activities and discuss applications to their respective roles and organisations, and how these principles might be embedded in their practice.

SHV and WHISE scheduled three pilot workshops, in collaboration with the City of Greater Dandenong, Women's Health Loddon Mallee, and the City of Stonnington. The sessions were held on Tuesday 15 August 2023, Thursday 2 November 2023, and Tuesday 19 March 2024. Each session covered the same core content, but variations in delivery emerged during discussions,

participant questions, and activity outcomes, reflecting the diverse professional backgrounds and varying levels of familiarity with the subject matter among attendees. The breakdown of participation is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Module and workshop participation, *n*

	Registrations	Completed two online modules	Attended the workshop
Pilot workshop #1 – South East	54*	27	35
Pilot workshop #2 – North West	47	19	35
Pilot workshop #3 – South West	58	26	–**

*Count includes one duplicate registration. ** Unknown as attendance wasn't marked off.

The pilot phase aimed to achieve short-term outcomes such as improved knowledge and confidence to talk with and educate young people about consent, sex and relationships, thus encouraging them to access resources and support. Medium and long-term goals were expected to include challenging the cultural norms which can contribute to the drivers of violence and impede help-seeking and reporting, and supporting young people to develop a better understanding of healthy, consensual sex and relationships, have the skills and confidence to seek support when needed, adhere to legal and ethical responsibilities when choosing sexual relationships, and be less likely to perpetrate or experience violence and associated trauma.

Looking ahead, the success of this pilot project is expected to pave the way for expanded program funding and adaptation for diverse community needs, underscoring its role as a preventative strategy to reduce long-term reliance on support services for youth wellbeing.

Who participated in Consent Matters?

Participants were recruited through established partnerships and networks, including the *Good Health Down South* Network led by WHISE. Additionally, the program was promoted to participants from previous SHV and WHISE initiatives, such as the three sexual health capacity-building sessions for youth and community service professionals delivered across the Southern Metropolitan Region in 2022.

Promotion efforts were broad, leveraging social media, electronic direct mail marketing, and SHV and WHISE mailing lists, as well as regular newsletters. Project leads further amplified awareness by promoting the program at various network meetings, including local Youth Network gatherings.

Each participant completed a baseline survey to assess knowledge and confidence prior to completing the two online modules. Immediately after (post) and 12 weeks (follow-up) after each workshop, participants were invited to complete a survey to measure changes in knowledge and confidence, and to understand how learnings had been applied in professional settings. Since all three workshops followed the same format and content, survey responses will be aggregated for analysis.

The pre survey was completed by 159 participants, the post survey was completed by 103 participants, and the follow-up survey was completed by 22 participants. Given the low response rate at 12 weeks follow-up, findings related to the program’s medium-term impact should be interpreted with caution. The gender identities of participants are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Participant gender identities, *n* (%)

Survey	Woman	Man	Non-binary	Prefer not to answer
Pre	141 (88.7)	16 (10.1)	1 (0.6)	1 (0.6)
Post	90 (87.4)	11 (10.7)	1 (1.0)	1 (1.0)
Follow-up	20 (90.9)	1 (4.5)	1 (4.5)	0

WHISE also conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with four participants regarding the implementation of their learnings into their professional practice and impacts on their behaviour and practices at work.

The outcomes from the surveys and interviews are presented below.

The participants’ professional roles were diverse, encompassing a wide range of fields. These fields, along with examples of roles within each, are listed below, although the actual list of roles is extensive.

- Social work and counselling: Mental Health Worker, Forensic Youth Drug and Alcohol Worker, Social Worker, and Family Services Practitioner.
- Education and youth services: Teacher, Youth Work Coordinator, Youth Community Engagement Worker, Campus Principal, and Youth Housing Support Worker.
- Community and outreach: Community Engagement Officer, Living and Life Skills Case Manager, Community Awareness Officer, and Community Primary Prevention Coordinator.
- Leadership and management: CEO, Director of Wellbeing and Community Engagement Lead.
- Nursing and health services: Nurse Practitioner- Sexual & Reproductive Health, Secondary school nurse, Adolescent Health Nurse / Sexual Health Nurse, and Aboriginal Health Practitioner.
- Specialised services: Respectful Relationships Project Lead, Public Health & Wellbeing Advisor, and Affirmative Consent Project Worker.

Of the 159 participants who completed the pre-workshop survey, 58% said that they had previously received training relating to sexual consent and/or violence. The reasons for attending the Consent Matters workshop included:

- Professional development and increasing understanding of how to support young people within the new legislation.
- The workshop was relevant to their current roles and responsibilities.
- They were interested in the topic.
- They had received a recommendation from a colleague or supervisor.

To measure the applicability of the workshop to their professional roles, participants were asked what types of information, advice or support they had provided to a young person in the past three months. As can be seen in Figure 1, most participants had at least occasionally provided information, advice or support on sex and sexual health, healthy relationships, ethical and legal aspects of sex and consent, and disclosure of sexual violence. This workshop was therefore an important capacity building session for the practitioners who attended.

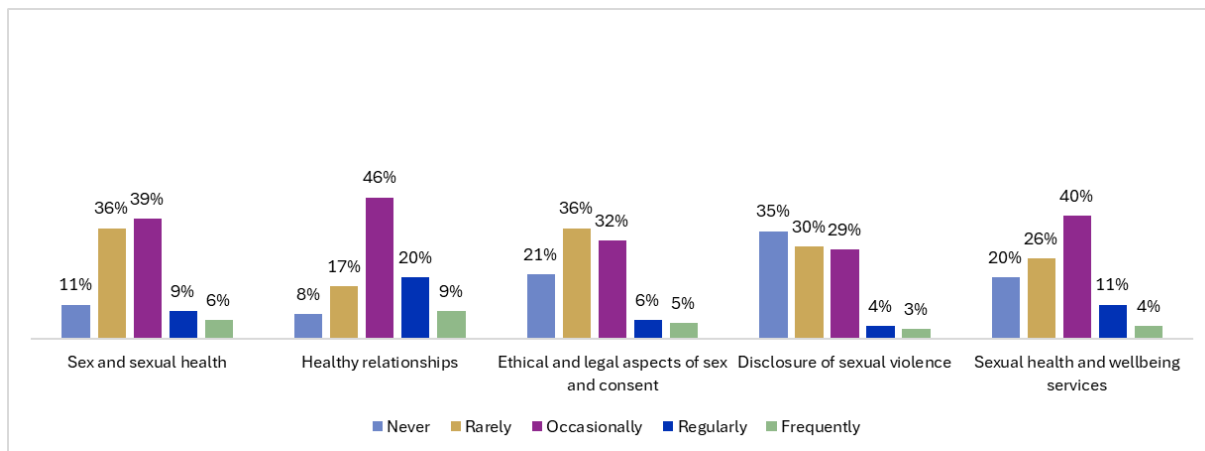


Figure 1. Proportions of participants who provided information, advice or support to a young person in the past three months on sex and sexual health, healthy relationships, ethical and legal aspects of sex and consent, disclosure of sexual violence, and/or sexual health and wellbeing services.

Changes in understanding

Figures 2 to 8 show that the program effectively enhanced the participants' professional understanding of:

- The ethical and legal aspects of sexual consent.
- The new affirmative consent legislation.
- Teaching strategies about affirmative consent.
- Healthy relationships.

- Sex positive approaches to education and support.
- Trauma-informed approaches to education and support.
- Sexual health and wellbeing services for young people.

This is evidenced by the shift towards higher ratings of post-training and the sustained high ratings during follow-up.

Understanding of the **ethical and legal aspects of sexual consent** increased on average by 17% following the program. As can be seen in Figure 2, most participants felt they had moderate or ‘high’ understanding before participating in the program. A small proportion of participants rated their understanding as ‘very low’ or ‘low’ which shifted to moderate, ‘high’ or ‘very high’ following the workshop. The increase in ‘very high’ understanding was noteworthy, from 8% of participants to 30%. Incredibly, 67% of survey respondents felt their understanding was ‘high’ 12 weeks following the program.

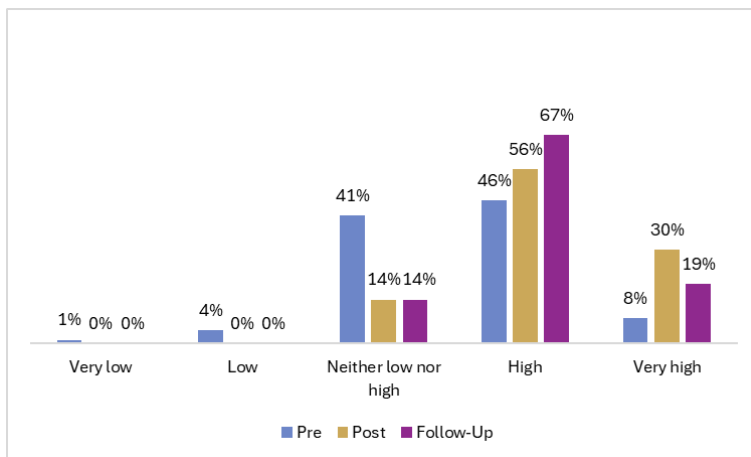


Figure 2. Pre, post, and follow-up ratings of understanding the ethical and legal aspects of sexual consent.

Understanding of the **new affirmative consent legislation** increased on average by 43% immediately following the workshop. Figure 3 illustrates that most participants rated their understanding as ‘low’ or moderate before participating in the program. Following the session, there was a notable improvement, with a majority selecting ‘high’ or ‘very high’. Although one participant still felt their understanding remained ‘low’ afterward, this perspective was not reflected in follow-up responses, where two-thirds of participants reported their understanding as ‘high’.

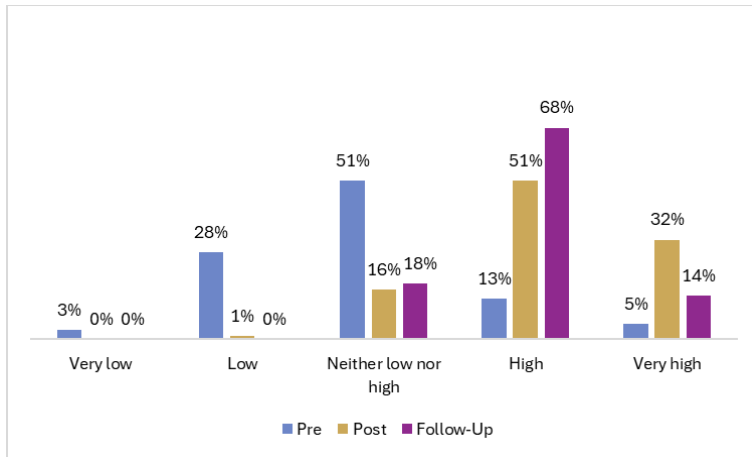


Figure 3. Pre, post, and follow-up ratings of understanding the new affirmative consent legislation.

A similar pattern is demonstrated in Figure 4. Participants were not sure of **teaching strategies about affirmative consent** before the program. Their understanding increased on average by 35% and most respondents rated their understanding as ‘high’ or ‘very high’ immediately following the session. Again, a small proportion of respondents said their understanding was ‘low’ even after the session, however, this was not the case at follow-up. The proportion of respondents who felt their understanding was ‘high’ or ‘very high’ remained stable from post-session to follow-up.

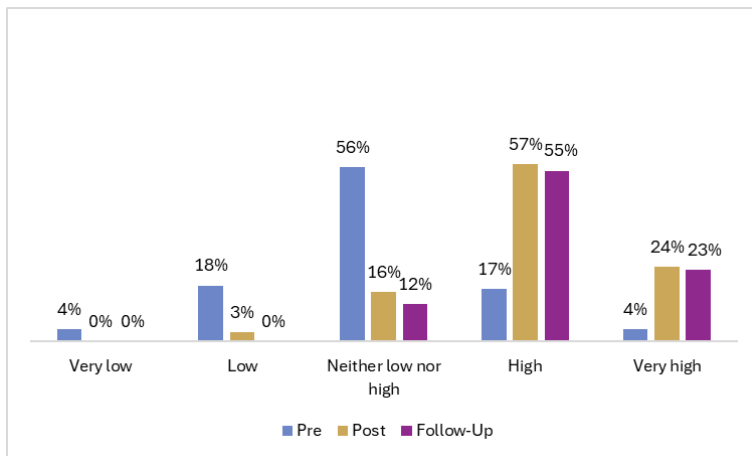


Figure 4. Pre, post, and follow-up ratings of understanding teaching strategies about affirmative consent.

Participants had a strong grasp of **healthy relationships** prior to the program, as evidenced in Figure 5, where a large proportion rated their understanding as ‘high’ or ‘very high’. Immediately following the workshop, although there was a slight decrease in the ‘high’ ratings, it would seem these participants shifted towards ‘very high’ understanding as this response category doubled. Overall, there was an on average 11% increase in understanding following the program. As

anticipated, understanding remained consistently high at follow-up, with nearly all participants continuing to rate their understanding as ‘high’ or ‘very high’.

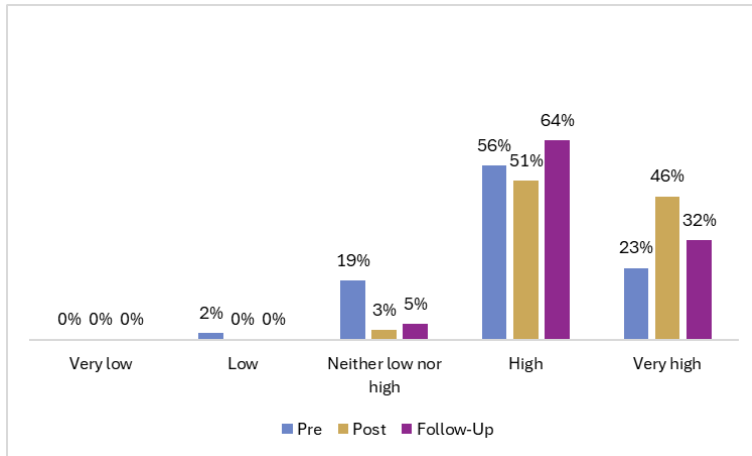


Figure 5. Pre, post, and follow-up ratings of understanding healthy relationships.

Professional understanding of **sex positive approaches to education and support** was mixed before the program with half of participants selecting ‘neither low nor high’ and over one-third rating their understanding as ‘high’ (see Figure 6). The program enhanced understanding with no one rating it as ‘very low’ or ‘low’ and most participants feeling they had ‘high’ or ‘very high’ understanding. In fact, understanding increased on average by 21% and was sustained at follow-up.

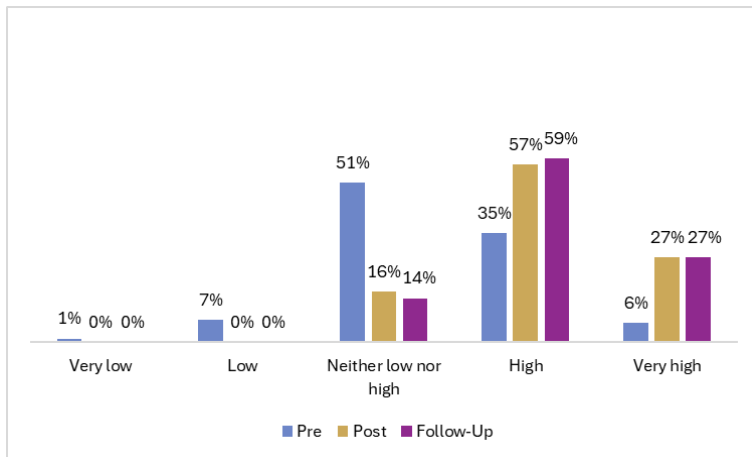


Figure 6. Pre, post, and follow-up ratings of understanding sex positive approaches to education and support.

Understanding of **trauma-informed approaches to education and support** increased by 12% on average. As can be seen in Figure 7, no participants rated their understanding as ‘very low’ or ‘low’ following the program and there was an increase in the proportion of participants who selected

'high' or 'very high'. While half of respondents felt their understanding remained 'high' at follow-up, 27% said they had a moderate level of understanding, suggesting that additional support could be helpful.

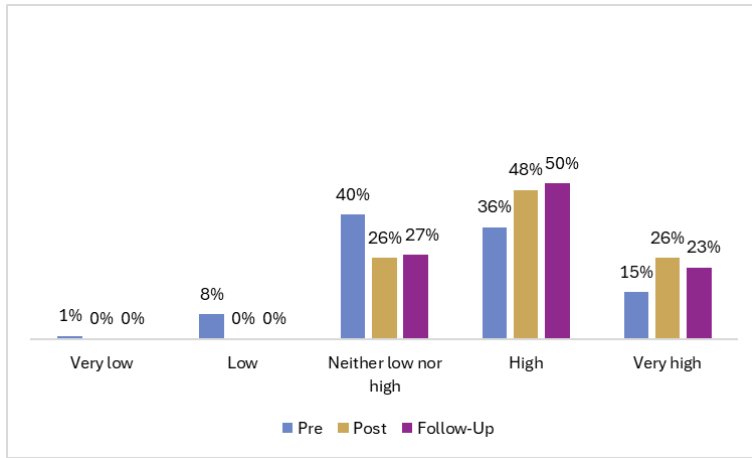


Figure 7. Pre, post, and follow-up ratings of understanding trauma-informed approaches to education and support.

Figure 8 illustrates a large increase in understanding of **sexual health and wellbeing services that are available for young people**. In fact, there was an increase of 20% on average with levels of understanding shifting from predominantly 'neither low nor high' or 'high' to being 'high' or 'very high'. All participants rated their understanding as 'high' or 'very high' at follow-up.

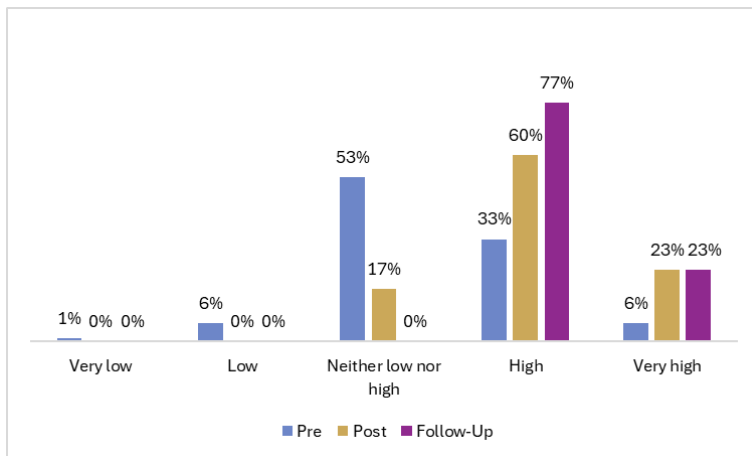


Figure 8. Pre, post, and follow-up ratings of understanding sexual health and wellbeing services for young people.

Changes in confidence

Ratings of confidence

Figures 9 to 15 illustrate increases in confidence to:

- Educate young people about sex and relationships.
- Educate young people about ethical and legal aspects of sexual consent.
- Create safe spaces for education and discussions about sex and relationships.
- Model and practice seeking and giving affirmative consent.
- Take a sex positive approach to education and support.
- Inform young people about available sexual health and wellbeing services.
- Respond appropriately to a young person’s disclosure of sexual violence.

Confidence to **educate young people about sex and relationships** was increased on average by 18% following the program. Figure 9 shows a steady increase in ‘confidence’ endorsements across the time points. The proportions of participants who rated themselves as ‘very confident’ also increased while ‘fairly confident’ ratings decreased. Two people felt ‘not so confident’ after the program, but this did not continue at follow-up perhaps due to attrition.

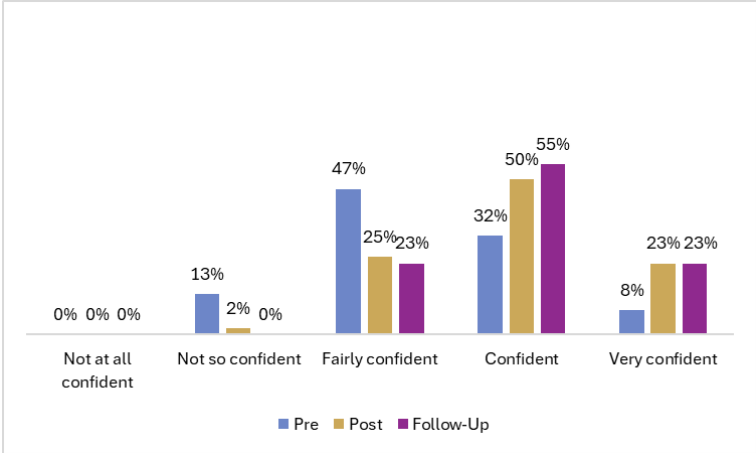


Figure 9. Pre, post, and follow-up ratings of confidence to educate young people about sex and relationships.

Confidence to **educate young people about the ethical and legal aspects of sexual consent** increased on average by 30% after participating in the program. Figure 10 shows that following the program, ‘confident’ ratings increased, and 14% felt ‘very confident’ 12 weeks later. It should be noted that only one participant felt ‘not so confident’ at follow-up. However, given the smaller response rate, it is possible that more participants share similar uncertainties about this topic.

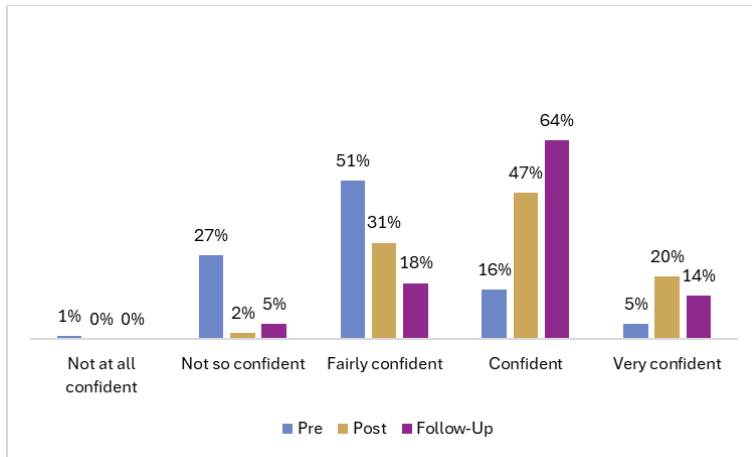


Figure 10. Pre, post, and follow-up ratings of confidence to educate young people about ethical and legal aspects of sexual consent.

Figure 11 demonstrates a greater sense of confidence to **create safe spaces for education and discussions about sex and relationships** following the program. There was, on average, a 14% increase in overall confidence following the program. The proportions of participants who felt ‘confident’ remained stable from post-program to follow-up. It is noteworthy that the proportion of ‘very confident’ participants remained high 12 weeks after attending the session.

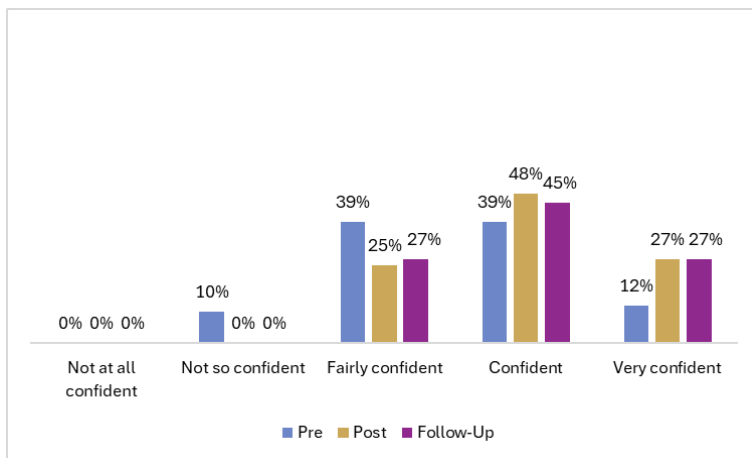


Figure 11. Pre, post, and follow-up ratings of confidence to create safe spaces for education and discussions about sex and relationships.

The program, on average, increased confidence to **model and practice seeking and giving affirmative consent** by 24%. As can be seen in Figure 12, participants mostly felt ‘fairly confident’ or ‘confident’ before the program. A small proportion of participants did not feel confident, and this decreased with only one participant feeling ‘not so confident’ following the program. Immediately

after the program, participants predominantly felt ‘confident’ or ‘very confident’ and this continued 12 weeks later.

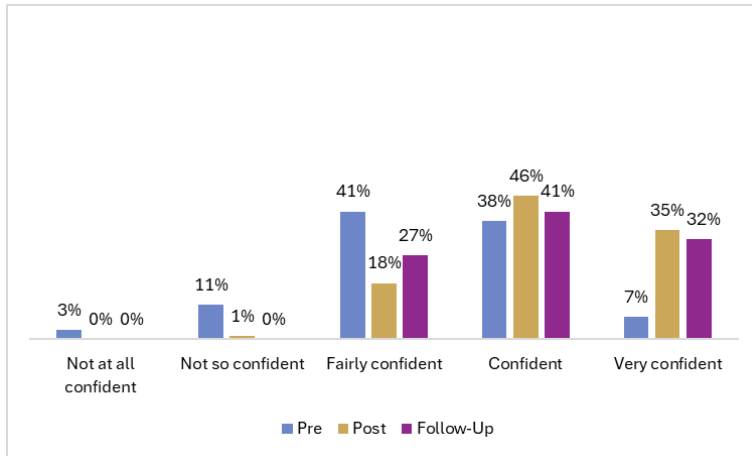


Figure 12. Pre, post, and follow-up ratings of confidence to model and practice seeking and giving affirmative consent.

The responses illustrated in Figures 13 to 15 suggest that additional support may be necessary to increase confidence in **taking a sex positive approach to education and support, informing young people about available sexual health and wellbeing services, and responding appropriately to a young person’s disclosure of sexual violence**. While confidence levels increased on average by 20%, 19%, and 12%, respectively, following the program – with ratings shifting from predominantly ‘fairly confident’ or ‘confident’ to ‘confident’ or ‘very confident’ – there were still large proportions of participants expressing ‘not so confident’ sentiments post-program and 12 weeks later. Considering that 29-40% of participants have had to provide information, advice or support to a young person on these topics in the past three months (see Figure 1), it is important that further training or resources are provided to increase confidence in their ability to effectively educate and support young people.

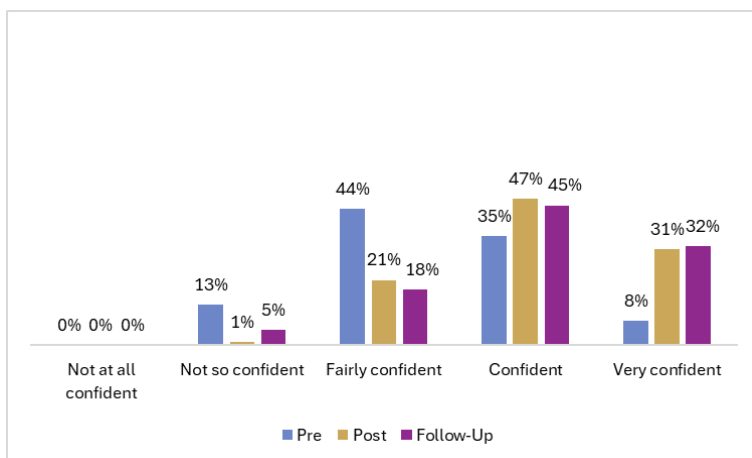


Figure 13. Pre, post, and follow-up ratings of confidence to take a sex positive approach to education and support.

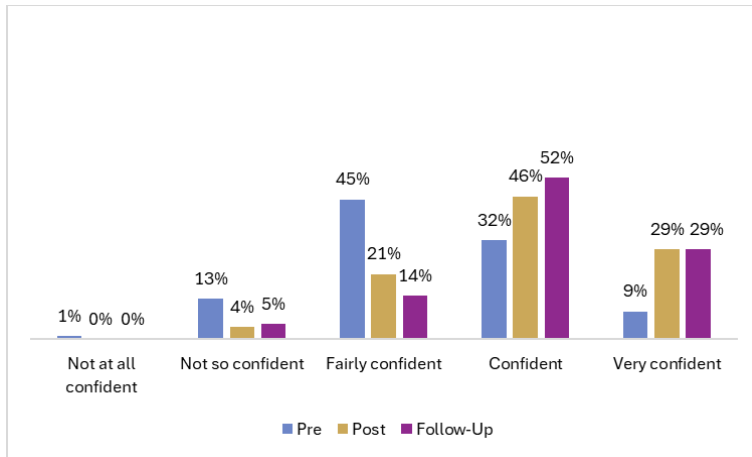


Figure 14. Pre, post, and follow-up ratings of confidence to inform young people about available sexual health and wellbeing services.

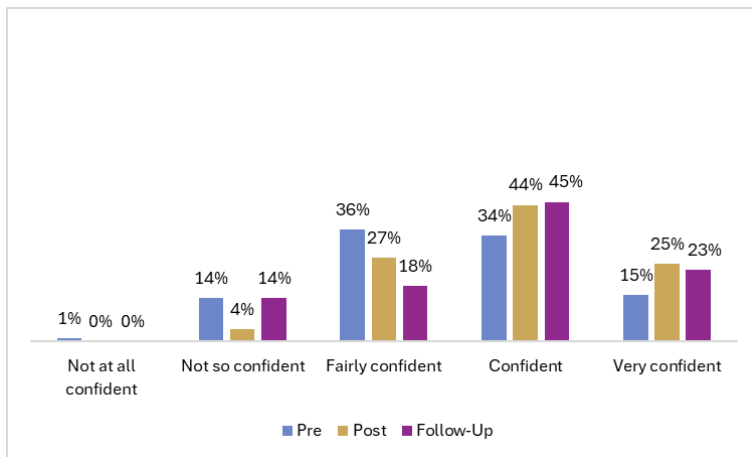


Figure 15. Pre, post, and follow-up ratings of confidence to respond appropriately to a young person's disclosure of sexual violence.

It should be noted that confidence is generally harder to boost than understanding because it requires people not only to grasp the concepts but also to feel assured in their ability to apply this knowledge in real-world situations. While understanding is about knowing the material, confidence involves a personal judgment about one's readiness to take effective action. This subjective assessment can be influenced by a range of factors, including prior experiences, self-efficacy, and the perceived complexity of applying the knowledge. Therefore, even if people understand how to support young people on topics relating to affirmative consent, they may still need additional practice, reinforcement, and support to feel confident enough to implement these strategies effectively. Ongoing training and practical exercises can help bridge this gap, ensuring that practitioners not only understand the concepts but also feel fully prepared and confident to take action.

Confidence to apply learnings at work

In the post survey, participants were asked to provide

free text responses describing how they might apply their learnings in their role. The themes discussed below illustrate a strong commitment to apply knowledge in practical and impactful ways within diverse professional settings. Participants were keen on not only personal development, but also on enhancing the support they provide to young people regarding consent and healthy relationships.

Adapting activities for one-on-one settings

Many participants expressed confidence in adapting session activities for individual interactions with young people. For example, one participant noted, “I can adapt some of the activities to 1:1 work with the y/p I meet at Court, particularly the sexual continuum activity.” Another participant also commented, “I work more one on one with YP so rather than maybe do the full activities would likely apply them as general discussions.” This indicates a practical application of session content tailored to specific contexts.

Sharing learnings and discussions

Several participants mentioned using their learnings either in schools or with community groups. One participant stated, “I will be sharing the resources and suggestions with school wellbeing staff and youth workers,” highlighting a collaborative approach to spreading knowledge. Another participant discussed working in multiple school settings and their intention to integrate evidence-based resources and tools into their sessions.

I am working in two high schools and will teach consent for each year group. This training will enable me to deliver best practice using evidence-based resources and tools developed by specialists in sexual health.

Enhancing professional practice and support skills

Participants also noted personal growth in handling sensitive topics such as consent and sexual health. For instance, one participant mentioned, “I feel more confidence reflecting on how my own personal biases and experiences may shape my professional practice.” This reflects a deeper self-awareness and its potential impact on their work.

They also discussed readiness to utilise session resources and apply broader concepts in their specific professional contexts, indicating a proactive approach to enhancing their support skills and effectiveness in their roles. For instance, one participant said, “the resources and handouts provided in the course guide would be helpful to use in my practice,” and another stated, “the broader ideas can be used in my case management role.”

Challenges and adaptations

Some participants acknowledged there may be challenges in implementing some of the program activities due to time constraints or cultural diversity among the youth they work with. However, they expressed readiness to adapt and apply relevant aspects, such as using parts of activities in different settings or contexts. For instance, it was noted by one participant that “the activities may take too long and would need adapting as we only have one hour.” Another participant similarly noted,

We work with a very culturally diverse group of young people so it would be difficult to implement some of these activities, but we could definitely take aspects especially the three colour card activity.

Key learnings

The key learnings shared by participants demonstrate that the session was well-received for its practicality, depth of content, and inclusive approach to discussing consent and health relationships. The themes that emerged illustrate that participants left with new knowledge, strategies, and a deeper understanding of how to effectively engage young people in these critical conversations.

Understanding consent

Participants valued the deep exploration of consent beyond mere legal definitions, focusing on ethical considerations and personal values. One participant noted, “Framing consent education from an ethical perspective - Personal values + legal rules = sexual respect.” Another participant further commented:

It’s not about simply depositing information about consent into the brains of young people, but about creating space and opportunities for young people to understand what consent means for them individually and collectively.

Legal updates

Participants expressed appreciation for the detailed discussions and presentations on the updated legislation on consent. Comments such as, “new legislative wording” and “details around consent laws,” demonstrate the participants’ interest in understanding how recent legal changes impact their work and interactions with young people.

Moreover, participants noted the practical relevance of learning about these legal updates, recognising the importance of aligning their practices with current legal standards.

Supportive environment

Participants valued the safe and supportive environment created during workshop discussions, particularly in relation to disclosures and sensitive topics. The facilitators created this environment

during the workshop and also modelled “how to respond and support young people through disclosures,” as one participant noted. Participants also valued learning how to sensitively and ethically handle disclosures to ensure the wellbeing of all individuals involved. For instance, one participant “found it refreshing to hear the idea of interrupting disclosures to protect people. So many practitioners ‘chase’ disclosures.”

Intersectional perspectives

The workshop effectively highlighted the importance of addressing diverse identities, experiences, and contexts when discussing consent with young people. Participants appreciated the session’s focus on tailoring activities and discussions to meet the needs of diverse communities.

During the session, there was an emphasis on adapting educational approaches to consider how different groups may perceive and navigate consent differently. For instance, activities were discussed and designed to be applicable across diverse settings, ensuring inclusivity and relevance. Participants noted the value of understanding how consent intersects with other aspects of identity, such as race, ethnicity, gender identity, and socio-economic status. For instance, a participant mentioned, “Great activities as can use and adapt for working with refugee and migrant communities.”

Complexity of consent

Participants gained insight into the nuanced nature of affirmative consent, learning about the need for specific and clear communication between parties. One participant shared, “Affirmative consent isn’t as simple as I thought it was.” There was also increased understanding that it is not always straightforward and can be difficult to navigate, highlighting the importance of thorough discussion and exploration to ensure clarity and understanding among both young people and adults. For instance, a participant commented:

Consent can be a challenging area to understand as it is not always clear how to provide it or interpret it. It can sometimes seem unrealistic or formal - for those reasons it's really important to flesh out, discuss and explore with young people and adults.

Educational strategies

Effective teaching strategies were discussed as a key learning, focusing on making consent education relevant and understandable for young people. Some of the comments included, “Teaching strategies to deliver affirmative consent education” and “Practical approaches for exploring how young people can ask and respond to requests.”

Practical activities

Participants appreciated the practical activities provided during the session. Participants highlighted, “Excellent and practical activities which can be adapted to a variety of settings” and “New activities to apply to group sessions.”

Application of learnings to their role

In the follow-up surveys and interviews, participants shared the ways that they have applied their learnings from the program in their role. Their responses demonstrated a proactive application of their learnings across diverse professional contexts. A predominant theme emerged around educational initiatives, with several participants actively developing and delivering workshops on healthy relationships and affirmative consent for young people, schools and families. For instance, initiatives to create workshops for schools and multicultural parents indicated a direct translation of program content into practical educational tools. As one participant commented, “We have been working to deliver health education sessions about affirmative consent with multicultural parents.” Another also shared that they had delivered consent education sessions to over 600 students across multiple year levels saying, “We used every resource...it was a huge success.” Please refer to [Appendix A](#) for an evaluation report, prepared by a Health Promotion student during their placement at the school, which details the success of these sessions. These initiatives not only support community outreach but also underscores participants’ commitment to fostering informed discussions on consent within diverse cultural and educational settings.

Conversations and educational interactions were another significant theme among participants. Many reported integrating insights from the program into daily interactions, discussing consent with young people, colleagues, and students. These discussions often focused on navigating relationships, identifying red flags, and promoting affirmative consent strategies. For instance, one participant recalled “Information sharing with other colleagues, conversations with individual young people,” and another said, “In counselling sessions, I have discussed healthy relationships, drawn on the core components as well as discussed individual values.” Such engagement reflects a personalised approach to applying program principles in individual counselling sessions, fostering open conversations that empower individuals to navigate relationships with clarity and respect.

Moreover, participants showcased leadership in disseminating knowledge within their professional networks. Several participants leveraged their roles to deliver professional development sessions on consent to educators as well as students, influencing broader educational environments. As one participant commented, “I have delivered professional development to the teachers in the school where I am based,” while another “delivered consent [education] to year 7, 8, and 9 students in the other school where I work.” This dissemination highlights their role not only as practitioners but also as advocates for consent education across educational institutions. Others reported engaging in discussions and implementing learned content into workshops requested by local schools and community groups. This collaborative approach ensured that insights gained from the training were disseminated effectively across various community settings, enhancing awareness and understanding of consent issues beyond the workshop participants themselves. As one participant noted, “Broadly in the team, we’ve been talking about it more... putting workshops together for [community groups].”

Participants also noted organisational impacts, indicating changes in role responsibilities and contributions to future planning. One participant reported an immediate shift in their role which meant “I have been able to share my learnings with my team.” While another participant outlined long-term plans to integrate program activities into upcoming educational sessions and lesson plans saying, “Planning for 2024-25 and will incorporate some of the excellent activities in the lesson plans.” These actions signify a strategic approach to embedding consent education into organisational frameworks, ensuring sustained impact beyond individual interactions.

Another notable theme was the adaptation of workshop activities to various educational contexts beyond sexual consent. One participant, for instance adapted activities from the training to focus on friendships and healthy relationships among adolescents. For example, in workshops with year nine students, activities such as the consent continuum and FRIES (Freely Given, Reversible, Informed, Enthusiastic, Specific) were tailored to discuss consent in general contexts, not just sexual relationships. This approach allowed engagement of students in meaningful discussions about consent, coercion, and healthy relationship dynamics. As one participant reflected, “We talked about how to make scenarios more consensual... the students were able to explain and understand healthy relationships better.”

Finally, personal and professional growth emerged as a recurring theme, reflecting deeper insights gained from the training. Participants noted enhanced abilities to address sensitive topics such as sexual health and relationships, citing increased confidence in discussing consent-related issues with clients and students alike. For instance, one participant shared that “It helps me to education them on red flags or warning signs or provide them with strategies around asking for and having consent.” Such reflections point to the transformative effect of the program on both personal awareness and professional practice, contributing to a more informed and proactive approach to promoting affirmative consent within their respective roles.

Overall, the participants demonstrated a robust integration of affirmative consent principles into their professional practices and organisational frameworks. Their initiatives in education, advocacy, and personal growth collectively contribute to fostering a culture of respect, understanding, and informed consent across diverse community and educational settings.

Impact of the program on behaviour or practices at work

In the follow-up surveys and interviews, participants shared the ways that the program had impacted their behaviour or practices at work. Participants noted that the program enhanced their confidence and approach in discussing consent-related topics with their students and colleagues. Many participants noted feeling more empowered and assertive in their roles. For example, one participant mentioned, “being more confident to discuss [consent] with participants,” highlighting a direct impact on their communication abilities within their professional engagements. This newfound confidence was echoed by another participant who stated, “I feel so much more confident delivering this training.”

A recurring theme among participants was the reinforcement of the importance of continuous conversations with young people about consent and healthy relationships. Participants emphasised the program's role in reaffirming these crucial conversations. As one participant articulated, the program "further emphasised the importance of having these conversations with young people." This sentiment was echoed by another participant who felt that the program "affirmed the importance of continuing conversations with young people and supporting them to understand how the changes to legislation are relevant to them."

Participants also highlighted the program's role in expanding their knowledge base and providing practical insights for their roles. This included gaining new approaches to discussions on consent and healthy sexual relationships. For instance, one participant noted, "New ways to approach discussions with young people around consent and healthy sexual relationships," indicating a tangible shift in their approach towards educating their audience. Another participant similarly discussed integrating training insights into their existing educational programs, stating, "I brought two of the actual activities into the wellbeing section that we're running tonight...intending to have homeroom teachers deliver a wellbeing program to year 10, 11, and 12s." This proactive integration illustrates a direct application of workshop activities to enhance educational content and engage students in discussions around consent and healthy relationships.

The program facilitated a refinement of communication strategies surrounding consent education. For instance, participants mentioned adopting inclusive language and effective communication techniques learned during the training. One participant, for example, reflected on the impact of the training on their language choices, stating, "We felt that there were better ways to say things that we learned from the training... just to make sure we're on the right messaging." Other participants discussed the integration of case studies and real-life examples from the training into their educational practices. These examples served to contextualise legal concepts and highlight the relevance of affirmative consent laws in contemporary contexts. For example, one participant shared insights gained from a case study presented during the training, which underscored the importance of teaching affirmative consent principles.

Moreover, the program fostered a deeper understanding of affirmative consent principles and their application in professional settings. Participants expressed increased clarity about the legislation and its implications for their work. This understanding was crucial in their ability to advocate for broader psychoeducation on sexual health and wellbeing, as noted by one participant who remarked, "It has increased my awareness of consent issues in my work as well as broader psychoeducation on sexual health and wellbeing." This increased awareness also extended beyond professional settings, as participants shared their knowledge with friends and family to promote broader awareness. As one participant articulated, "I've been telling my friends and family about it... just about how we have to teach kids about getting that affirmative consent." This dissemination of knowledge underscores participants' roles as advocates for informed consent practices within their communities, contributing to a more informed public discourse on consent-related issues.

Furthermore, the program served as a catalyst for personal growth and development among participants. Many reported feeling more prepared to address sensitive topics and navigate challenging conversations, particularly with individuals experiencing shame or difficulty expressing their needs. As one participant reflected, “The training, and also having spaces where you talk about things openly, helped me to gain confidence and feel more comfortable approaching these topics.”

These comments demonstrate the transformative impact of the affirmative consent training on participants’ behaviours, practices, and professional growth. The program enhanced their confidence, expanded their knowledge, and renewed their commitment to fostering informed discussions on consent and healthy relationships within their respective roles. These insights collectively contribute to a more proactive and supportive approach to promoting consent awareness.

Feedback from participants

The participants valued the informative content and engaging delivery. They also discussed opportunities for improvement in session logistics, inclusivity, and facilitator coordination to enhance overall participant experience and learning outcomes.

Educational content and delivery

Participants appreciated the informative content and delivery style. They felt that the workshop was well-paced, comprehensive, and provided practical information. For instance, one participant noted, “very comprehensive and well-detailed background context,” and another similarly shared, “amazingly delivered, great information, and really helped me gain more knowledge for me to take back.”

Facilitator skills and interaction

Facilitator competence and interaction style were mostly praised. Positive feedback focused on the engaging facilitators who were knowledgeable and skilled in handling complex topics. For instance, participants commented, “very engaging and supportive training” and “truly skilled presenters.”

Content specificity and inclusivity

There was a call for more specific content tailored to diverse groups, including culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) youth, and young perpetrators. Participants desired nuanced approaches that avoid homogenisation and respect different backgrounds. One participant highlighted this need saying, “Be great to see more modules and activities for culturally diverse young people.” Another participant also stated, “I work with young people involved with youth justice... some of the activities can be tailored and used for young perpetrators.” There was also a request for “More focus / altered activities for individual sessions rather than group settings.”

Reflections from workshop co-facilitators

The Consent Matters program primarily aimed to bridge gaps in consent education for young people outside mainstream settings by equipping youth and community service professionals with the skills and resources needed to teach affirmative consent, healthy relationships, and sexual health. Recognising that this program was the first of its kind, the experiences and learnings of the co-facilitators were also evaluated through a survey conducted at its conclusion.

Key learnings from designing and developing the overall program

The facilitators shared insights into addressing critical gaps in community services and ethical discussions surrounding consent and safety. Reflections on the designing and development of the program included the importance of leveraging existing relationships and collaboration. It was noted that the program benefited significantly from pre-existing organisational relationships between SHV and WHISE, which facilitated a smoother grant application process and program development.

Facilitators recognised there was a substantial gap in how youth and community services address respectful relationships and sexuality in a “systematic and values-based way.” This underlined the necessity for the program and guided the content development.

The facilitators also observed that there was low community understanding of affirmative consent, particularly within the youth and community sectors. The program therefore needed to increase confidence in discussing these topics as well as provide a safe space for learning. One facilitator noted, “The program offered an opportunity to increase worker confidence and permission to discuss complex subjects in an open-minded environment.”

While the legal consent framework was a basis for the grant program, discussions within the program emphasised broader ethical considerations around safety, ethics, and personal biases. One facilitator highlighted,

Legal frameworks provided a platform to discuss ethical considerations like inclusion, defining risks, and personal biases, which were crucial beyond just the legal requirements.

Key learnings gained from trialling the program’s content and/or delivery with youth and community service professionals

The trial phase of the program with youth and community service professionals provided valuable insights into content adaptation, role flexibility, trauma-informed approaches, and practical learning experiences regarding consent and healthy relationships. These insights underscore the program’s effectiveness in addressing diverse needs within the sector while fostering a supportive learning environment.

The facilitators found trialling the program content with youth and community service professionals to be highly beneficial, especially the online modules. This allowed them to gather feedback and make necessary adjustments before launching the pilots. One facilitator noted, for instance, “Trialling the content with professionals before launch enabled us to tweak based on their feedback.”

There was recognition of the diverse roles and responsibilities within the youth and community services sector. The program was designed to be adaptable, emphasising the need for participants to proactively integrate the content into their specific roles. One facilitator highlighted, “It’s important for participants to take a proactive approach to how they engage with this content, adapting it to fit their roles, whether facilitating groups or doing one-on-one casework.”

The facilitators expressed that the program content provided a vital opportunity for youth and community workers to learn about consent and process their own attitudes and values around sexuality and healthy relationships. This approach contributes to a trauma-informed delivery for youth services. A facilitator mentioned, “The program offers a way for workers to learn about consent on their own terms and contribute to a trauma-informed approach for youth delivery.”

There was appreciation for the program’s approach in integrating discussions on both legal and ethical consent. This integration was seen as crucial for participants to engage with complex consent scenarios practically, moving beyond theoretical understanding to embodied learning experiences. As one facilitator observed, “Combining legal and ethical consent discussions enabled participants to grapple with complex situations, turning activities into embodied learning experiences.”

Key learnings gained from trialling the program’s content and/or delivery with young people

SHV and WHISE tested the program content, including participatory activities, with youth and community service professionals from organisations such as the Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Centre for Culture Ethnicity and Health, YSAS, and the Zoe Belle Gender Collective. They also engaged directly with young people through the City of Greater Dandenong Youth Services.

This testing process involved trialling the online module content and workshop elements with professionals during meetings, and conducting a workshop with young people in Dandenong. During the workshop, project leads outlined the pilot’s purpose, discussed legislative changes that informed its development, and facilitated the activities. They gathered feedback from participants and collected observational data to refine the program further.

Trialling the program with young people revealed their readiness to engage with challenging content about sex and consent. These reflections from the facilitators underscores the critical role of relationships, cultural sensitivity, and trauma-informed approaches in effectively addressing the complexities of consent education among youth.

The facilitators noted that young people found grappling with the sexual consent continuum challenging yet beneficial. The program, trialled with engaged young people, highlighted their eagerness to engage in difficult conversations about sex and wellbeing. One facilitator commented, “It was interesting to see young people grapple with the sexual consent continuum; this proved to be a challenging exercise for them.”

There was a strong emphasis on the role of existing relationships in delivering program content effectively. The facilitators highlighted that trusted relationships with facilitators were crucial for reinforcing critical messaging. As one facilitator noted, “It showed the benefit of this work, as they were eager to engage in challenging conversations about sex and wellbeing.”

The facilitators underscored the need for cultural and contextual sensitivity in discussing consent with young people. They emphasised the importance of avoiding framing discussions solely from cisnormative, heteronormative, or Anglo perspectives. As one facilitator mentioned, “Young people form interpretations of consent not only through their peer context but also through their social, cultural, and familial environments.”

The discussions also highlighted the necessity of a trauma-informed approach in delivering the program. Facilitators need to be mindful of young people who may have experienced violations of consent in various settings, including at home or school. As one facilitator pointed out, “[A] ‘trauma informed lens’ when teaching this program cannot be a blanket approach.”

Key learnings about the program content and/or delivery gained from the pilot workshops

The facilitators’ feedback regarding the pilot workshops emphasised two main themes. First, the facilitators highlighted a significant gap in how youth and community services address respectful relationships and sexuality in a systematic and values-based manner. This gap was perceived to be growing due to external influences.

Second, the workshops provided a valuable opportunity for professionals to learn from each other. The facilitators appreciated the diverse range of skills and experiences among attendees, which enriched the learning environment. As one facilitator shared, “Opportunity for professionals to learn from each other in the group was great. There was a broad range of skills and experiences within the attendees.”

Success or strengths of the Consent Matters program

The facilitators highlighted the program’s success in reaching a substantial number of practitioners, who reported increased knowledge and confidence in addressing young people’s wellbeing. The program’s multi-layered approach – combining online learning, in-person workshops, and activities – was also recognised as a strength. It was felt that this approach enabled them to engage with the content in diverse ways, enhancing their understanding. One facilitator noted that this approach was effective in “solidifying their understanding.”

Providing online learning materials ahead of time was seen as beneficial, even for participants who did not immediately engage with them. Participants expressed the benefit of having continued access to these resources after the session, as it supported ongoing professional development and facilitated the application of the learnings and activities within their professional roles. This approach allowed for flexible learning and ensured easy access to resources and activities, enhancing the overall learning experience.

The success of the program was also attributed to effective recruitment strategies that ensured high attendance, including utilising existing partnerships and networks. This contributed significantly to fruitful discussions and participant engagement during the activities and was a testament to the collaborative relationships between SHV and WHISE.

Recommendations to further strengthen the Consent Matters program

The following recommendations for further strengthen the Consent Matters program have been written using the insights from participants and co-facilitators.

Expand cultural and contextual sensitivity:

- Develop additional modules or content tailored to CALD youth, ensuring inclusivity and relevance.
- Incorporate materials and examples that avoid cisnormative and heteronormative biases, emphasising diverse cultural, social, and familial contexts.

Enhance practical content for specific settings:

- Create activities and strategies specifically designed for one-on-one sessions as well as group settings.
- Develop adaptations for working with unique groups, such as young perpetrators or those in the youth justice system.

Provide additional support for complex topics:

- Offer follow-up resources or advanced workshops focusing on trauma-informed approaches, responding to disclosures, and navigating complex consent scenarios.
- Provide participants with more opportunities for practice and reinforcement to build confidence in applying knowledge to real-world situations.

Improve accessibility of training materials:

- Emphasise the importance of the online modules to encourage completion.
- Offer multilingual resources to reach non-English speaking practitioners and communities.

Increase focus on intersectional approaches:

- Incorporate more discussions and activities addressing intersectionality, including the impact of race, gender identity, and socio-economic status on consent and healthy relationships.
- Provide tools to help practitioners adapt content for diverse audiences.

Strengthen facilitator training:

- Equip facilitators with advanced skills in handling sensitive topics and diverse audiences, including trauma-informed and intersectional methodologies.
- Provide continuous professional development opportunities to facilitators.

Foster peer learning and collaboration:

- Create spaces for participants to share experiences and strategies with peers during and after workshops.
- Establish a network or forum where past participants can continue discussions and collaborate on consent education initiatives.

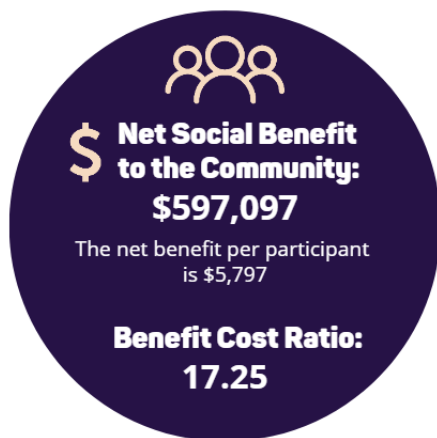
Tailor activities to time constraints:

- Develop shorter, adaptable versions of activities for professionals with limited time for workshops or sessions.
- Provide guidance on prioritising core activities when time is constrained.

Expand outreach and community engagement:

- Partner with schools, youth organisations, and community groups to deliver targeted workshops on affirmative consent and healthy relationships.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to embed the program’s principles into broader community education efforts.

Social value of the Consent Matters program



The Australian Social Value Bank was used to measure the social value of the Consent Matters Program. Therefore, in addition to demonstrating changes in knowledge and confidence, we can show the economic value for the improvement in confidence.

The net benefits of the Consent Matters program were therefore \$597,097. This represents a benefit cost ratio of 17.25. The net benefit per participant was \$5,797.

Appendix A

Consent Session Evaluation Report 2024

1. Introduction

Mandatory consent education sessions were implemented in Elisabeth Murdoch College (EMC) as part of the Respectful Relationships program for Year 7, 8, and 9 students. This took place in Term 3, 2024. To gauge the effectiveness of these sessions, data on students' perceptions of the consent education sessions were gathered upon completion of the workshop. This evaluation report provides a comprehensive overview of the consent sessions, detailing the background and description of the consent sessions, including the aims and objectives of the program. It also outlines the evaluation's goals, followed by the methodologies used for data collection and analysis. The report concludes with a discussion of the findings and provides recommendations for improving future consent education sessions.

1.1. Background and evidence review

It is mandatory for all government schools to provide age-appropriate consent education. Consent education should include information regarding sexual activity, all types of intimate contact, and the legal implications of sexual assault, focusing on areas such as relationships, sexuality, and safety. The Health and Physical Education curriculum requires comprehensive sexuality education to be provided as it equips students with the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure their health and safety, as well as to respect the rights and safety of others.

1.2. Program description

The program's primary objectives are to educate Year 7, 8, and 9 students on the importance and meaning of consent, inform them about Victorian laws related to consent, and discuss their rights and responsibilities. The initiative seeks to empower students with knowledge about boundaries and the attributes of healthy relationships, while offering guidance on available support services within EMC and external resources.

The program was delivered through 12 interactive workshops across the Year 7, 8, and 9 subgroups, facilitated by the Secondary School Nurse, during Term 3 of 2024. Approximately 75 students participated in each subgroup. The Year 7 and 8 sessions featured identical content, while the Year 9 sessions were slightly modified to ensure age-appropriate content.

The teaching and learning materials provided by Building Respectful Relationships and Resilience, Rights, and Respectful Relationships supported the content development for the sessions.

2. About the evaluation

2.1. Aims and objectives of the evaluation

The primary aim of this evaluation is to measure the impact of the consent education workshops on students' knowledge and attitudes toward consent. Specifically, the objectives are to:

- 1) Evaluate students' understanding of consent and related concepts after the workshops.
- 2) Gather feedback on students' perceptions of the workshops' effectiveness and relevance.
- 3) Identify any gaps in the content or delivery of the workshops that may hinder understanding or engagement.
- 4) Analyse differences in understanding and perceptions between Year 7, 8, and 9 students to tailor future workshops more effectively.
- 5) Provide recommendations for enhancing the content, delivery, and overall impact of future consent education workshops.

By achieving these objectives, the evaluation will offer valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the current workshops and guide the development of more effective educational strategies. This will ensure that students receive the most beneficial and comprehensive education on consent, ultimately fostering a safer and more respectful school environment. This aligns with broader efforts to implement the Respectful Relationships initiative as a whole-school approach.

2.2. Methods and approach

Each year level consists of approximately 300 students who participated in the consent education workshops. Following the workshops, a total of 296 students completed the feedback survey, which forms the evaluation sample. Specifically, 97 Year 7 students, 138 Year 8 students, and 61 Year 9 students responded to the survey.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the consent education workshops, a feedback survey was distributed to students via email following the sessions. Homegroup teachers were instructed to encourage students to complete the survey during homegroup sessions to maximise participation. The survey collected data on several key areas to assess the workshops effectiveness.

The data collected from the surveys were analysed using quantitative methods to assess overall effectiveness and understanding levels. The numerical ratings provided insights into students' perceptions of the workshops. The qualitative feedback was reviewed to identify common themes and suggestions for improvement.

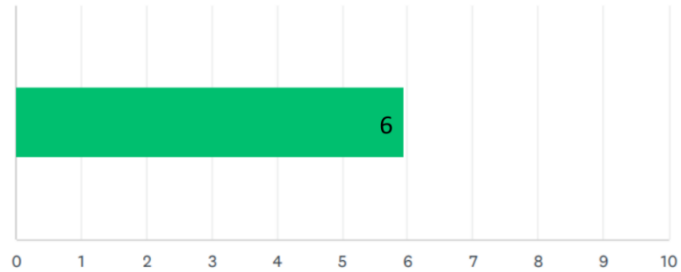
While the survey provided valuable insights, there are some limitations to consider. The response rates varied across year levels, affecting the representativeness of the sample. In Year 7, the response rate for the survey was 32.33%. This indicates moderate levels of participation suggesting that different engagement strategies can be used to increase the participation of students. Year 8 had strong response rates with 46% of the participants responding. The method used to encourage responses from Year 8 students have been more effective compared to the other year levels as this is the highest response rate achieved. The response rate for Year 9 was 20.33%, which is a relatively low level of participation from the students, suggesting potential challenges in reaching this group. As the response rates across all three year levels were lower than 70%, efforts may be needed to identify and address the barriers to participation. Additionally, self-reported data may be subject to bias, as students might overestimate or underestimate their understanding or the sessions' impact. Regardless, the findings offer a significant basis for evaluating and refining future consent education sessions.

3. Results and Discussion

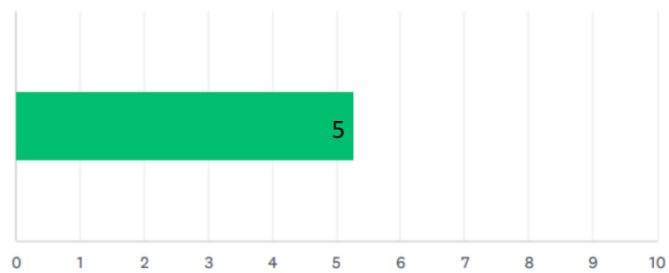
3.1.

Q3 Please rank how helpful you found this session on a scale of 1-10. (1=not helpful at all, 10=extremely helpful)

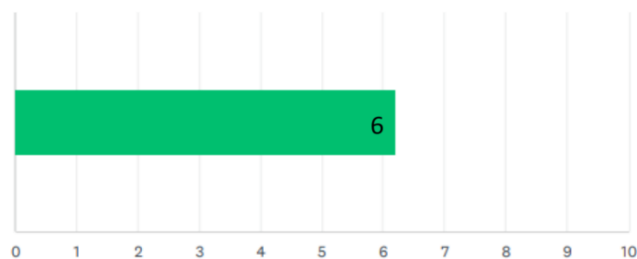
Year 7



Year 8



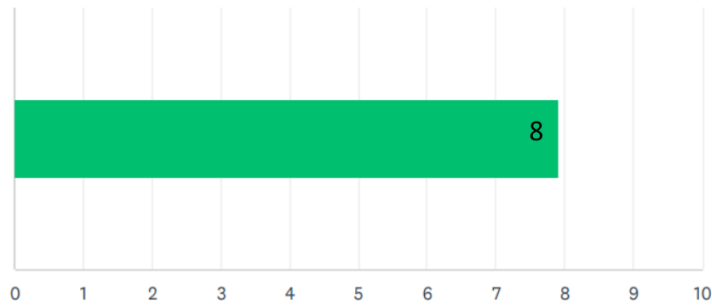
Year 9



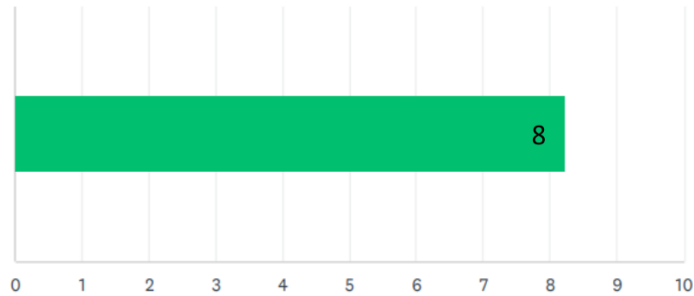
3.2.

**Q4 Please rank your understanding of consent on a scale of 1-10.
(1=I don't know what it is, 5=I kind of know what it is, 8=I understand completely, 10=I could explain what consent is to someone else)**

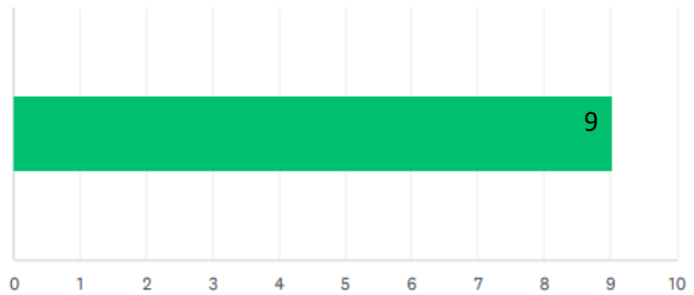
Year 7



Year 8



Year 9



3.3. Is there any further information about consent that the students would like to learn?
Year 7

- Most students (around 85%) felt that the sessions covered the topic well and did not express a desire for additional information. Responses like "no," and "not really" were common. The overall lack of demand for more information suggests that the session was effective in covering the basics of consent for Year 7 students.
- A small number of students expressed interest in learning more about specific topics, including how to properly ask someone out, understanding when you're in love, the importance of saying no. Although these responses do not relate to consent, it suggests a curiosity about relationship dynamics beyond just consent.
- A few students were unsure about whether they needed more information, with responses such as "not sure" and "I don't know."

Year 8

- Most students (over 90%) indicated that they did not need further information, with many responses simply stating "no" or "not really."
- A few students expressed interest in learning more about specific topics, including "what happens if someone lies about their real age". The responses suggest that Year 8 students feel relatively confident in their understanding of consent. However, the interest in more reinforcement and specific topics like coercion highlights areas where additional education could be beneficial.
- Some students were unsure or expressed no strong preference, with responses like "maybe," and "I can't think of anything."

Year 9

- The majority of respondents indicated that they did not require additional information on the topic. Common responses included "no" and "not really," with several students expressing confidence in their understanding of the material.
- A few students expressed interest in further exploring specific topics, including consent when both parties are under the influence of alcohol ("drunk consent"), the responsibilities and consequences if both individuals are intoxicated and consent is involved, situations where someone seems to consent but later regrets it, questioning the responsibility in such cases, and more information about sexuality. Year 9 students presented with more nuanced questions about consent, which suggests a need for more advanced discussions and scenarios in future sessions. Addressing topics like consent under the influence could enhance their understanding and preparedness for real-life situations.
- Several students noted that the session was comprehensive, stating that it "explained a lot" and that they had a "great understanding" of the topic.

3.4. Students' feedback on the session

Year 7:

- Many participants described the session as "good" or "very good," indicating a high level of satisfaction. Specific praise included comments like "it was helpful" and "wonderful and very informative."
- A few participants suggested improvements, such as adding more breaks or "brain breaks" to the session.
- 65 responses were neutral or indicated no additional feedback, with comments like "no," and "not really"

Year 8:

- Many participants described the session as "good" or "helpful." Specific comments included "It taught me a lot about consent."
- Some appreciated the teaching style and the content, noting it was informative and easy to understand.
- Several participants felt the session was "good to refresh" their knowledge
- Some responses indicated that the participants already knew most of the content, with comments like "knew everything already." Some felt the session was "boring" or could benefit from additional activities.
- A few participants suggested improvements, including providing chairs instead of having everyone sit on the floor, with comments like "It was uncomfortable sitting on the floor."

Year 9:

- The session was generally well-received, with comments highlighting that it was "informative," and "helpful." Several participants praised the presenter, noting that they were "clear in explaining 'consent'." The small group format was appreciated, with one participant noting it was better than being in a large group.
- Some participants found the seating arrangement uncomfortable, suggesting that chairs should be provided instead of sitting on the floor.
- There were requests for more interactive elements and opportunities to get involved, as well as suggestions to make the session more engaging.
- Several responses indicated that the session met expectations or did not require additional feedback. Comments included "It was what I expected" and "No feedback."
- A few students suggested discussing topics in more depth, possibly indicating that the content was too basic for some students who might already be familiar with the topics covered.

4. Recommendations

The consent education workshops conducted at EMC received favourable feedback from students, who demonstrated a strong understanding of consent by the end of the sessions. However, a few adjustments could enhance the program's effectiveness:

- **Alternate personnel to deliver program**

Currently, the school nurse is unavailable to lead future consent sessions. Therefore, the school should consider onboarding a new nurse for this role, or training health and physical education (HPE) teachers to deliver the program themselves would be a practical alternative.

- **Expand content delivered for Year 9 content**

While the existing content of the consent sessions has proven effective, expanding the curriculum for Year 9 students to include scenarios involving consent under the influence of alcohol would be beneficial. Additionally, future sessions could delve deeper into the material to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

- **Considerations around when to implement sessions**

Ensure sessions are implemented in line with when curriculum is delivered, to build on prior classroom learning. As part of the HPE curriculum, middle school students receive education on healthy relationships:

- Year 7: Students are taught about healthy relationships during HPE in term 1, though the topic of consent is not heavily emphasised on in this stage.
- Year 8: In term 3 lesson 7, an explicit session on consent and sexuality is delivered to Year 8 in HPE. To avoid content overlap, careful consideration of the timing of consent education workshops is essential.
- Year 9 students do not receive education regarding consent and healthy relationships during HPE, therefore should be more in-depth compared to those for younger students.

- **Expanding consent education to senior school students:**

Senior school students who do not choose HPE as an elective miss out on consent education. Since it is mandated that all year levels be educated on this topic, age-appropriate consent education sessions should be delivered annually to all senior school students

- **Improving response rates**

To address the low response rates for feedback, students should be reminded to bring their laptops to sessions. They should also be given time to complete feedback forms at the end of the workshop to boost participation. Moreover, paper feedback forms can be provided to the students at the end of the workshop to complete in order to increase response rates. Teachers should oversee the completion of these forms and consider sending email reminders to students to ensure the majority provide their feedback.

- **Changes in seating arrangements**

To address the discomfort and poor behaviour of Year 8 and 9 students when sitting on the floor, chairs should be provided for all students during sessions. This improvement in comfort will enhance students' attentiveness and engagement, and ensure they are all sitting in rows at the front of the class.