

Building Respectful Relationships

Stepping out against gender-based violence





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Contents

Introduction and overview	4
What is gender-based violence?	4
What is the <i>Building respectful relationships</i> resource?	4
Why do we need the <i>Building Respectful Relationships</i> resource?	5
What is the extent of gender-based violence?	5
Listening to young people	6
An effective approach for schools	7
The Australian curriculum and Victorian curriculum	8
Other resources	8
The Units:	8
Unit 1: Gender, respect and relationships	9
Unit 2: The power connection	9
Unit 3: Gender, power and media	9
Setting up a safe space	10
Protective interrupting	10
Content advice	10
Sample exit slip	11
PROTECT guidance	12
Gender groupings	12
Koorie education: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education policy	12
Specific issues with boys and gender-based violence	13
Disclosure	14
Disclosure of abuse	14
Disclosure of gender and sexual diversity	15

Unit 1: Gender, respect and relationships

16

Introduction	17
Session 1: Respect and relationships	18
Session 2: Gender, respect and relationships	29
Session 3: The power of expectations	82
Session 4: Gender positioning	91
Session 5: Introducing gender-based violence	101
Session 6: Understanding sexual harassment	106
Session 7: Developing respectful practises	113
Session 8: How to help a friend	116

Unit 2: The power connection

126

Introduction	127
Session 1: Getting a position on gender, sex and relationships	129
Session 2: If respect is free, why is it so difficult to get?	141
Session 3: Sexual intimacy, respect and relationships	145
Session 4: Building an awareness of gender-based violence	157
Session 5: Consent and the law	167
Session 6: Barriers and enablers to consent	178
Session 7: The implications of gender-based violence	191
Session 8: It all comes down to respectful communication	215

Unit 3: Gender, power and media

219

Introduction	220
Session 1: Setting the context and boundaries	222
Session 2: Getting a picture on sexualisation	229
Session 3: A deeper look at sexualisation	236
Session 4: Developing a common understanding of explicit sexual imagery	248
Session 5: Real-life strategies	262
Session 6: Idealworld	269
Session 7: Developing skills to build respectful relationships	272

Endnotes	286
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Introduction and overview

Violence prevention and respectful relationships education has been and still is an important focus of both the Victorian Government's action plan to prevent violence against women and their children, and the Federal Government's *National plan to end violence against women and their children 2022–2032*. *Free from violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women* is Victoria's plan to break the cycle of family violence. It's *Second action plan 2022–2025* marks the midpoint of Victoria's 10-year plan to break the cycle of family violence and violence against women in the places where Victorians live, work, learn and play.

What is gender-based violence?

Gender-based violence is any form of violence targeting a person on the basis of their gender or gender presentation. It includes any act that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological, financial, cultural or spiritual harm or suffering to someone. Studies show that those who experience bullying, racism or gender-based violence are more likely to be anxious, depressed, tired, or feel worthless, and they can find it difficult to participate fully at school.

Gender-based violence includes family violence, sexual harassment and sexual assault, both face-to-face and online. It is recognised that gender-based violence disproportionately affects women and girls, and LGBTIQ+ people.



What is the Building respectful relationships resource?

Building respectful relationships: stepping out against gender-based violence (BRR) is a set of sequential teaching activities to educate secondary school students about gender, violence, consent and respectful relationships. It is one part of a larger strategy to assist schools in meeting state and federal initiatives to create a culture of gender equality and respect, and prevent violence against women. The resource is designed to provide curriculum advice as part of a whole-school approach to preventing gender-based violence and building respectful relationships.¹

BRR was originally developed in 2010 to meet the recommendations of the VicHealth research report *Respectful relationships education: violence prevention and respectful relationships education in Victorian secondary schools*, commissioned by the former Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The original trial materials consisted of 2 units designed for students in years 8 to 10. The first unit – *Unit 1: Gender, respect and relationships* – was designed to explore issues of gender construction and identity with students, making connections to gendered experiences in everyday life and in relationships. Issues related to sexual harassment in schools were used as an age-appropriate example to connect gender relations to the experience of gender-based violence. The second unit – *Unit 2: The power connection* – explored power and gender inequality more explicitly related to all areas of gender-based violence. Both units had a clear focus on providing students with learning experiences that explored and developed understandings and skills in respectful relationships.

The BRR resource was embedded in whole-school strategies to ensure that teaching and learning was supported by the school ethos, culture, leadership, community and professional

learning. This was trialled more extensively in 2015 in 19 schools across Victoria. The trial found that BRR improved student knowledge of gender and gender-based violence, improved student behaviour and empowered students, particularly girls. Students enjoyed the interactive nature of the teaching activities and the relationships they built with teachers. The trial also found that the implementation of the curriculum was the entry point for most schools, and schools acknowledged that more time was needed to implement whole-school strategies.^{1,2} A third unit – *Unit 3: Gender, power and the media* – was added in 2012 to address teacher feedback that harassment online and pornography needed to be included. The unit was designed to develop media literacy skills to examine the online environment characteristic of young people's relationships.

Why do we need the Building respectful relationships resource?

The VicHealth report *Respectful relationships education: violence prevention and respectful relationships education in Victorian schools* recommends educating school students about violence, on the basis that 'schools may be sites of violence perpetration and victimisation',³ and asserts that schools are high-risk locations for gender-based violence because of peer influence and a climate and culture of acceptability.

Victoria's Royal Commission into Family Violence identified the critical role that schools and early childhood settings have in creating a culture of respect and equality to change the story of family violence for future generations. It recommended that respectful relationships education be delivered through a whole-school approach in every Victorian government school from Foundation to Year 12 by 2021.

The report identifies five powerful reasons to focus efforts on young people:

- Adolescence is a crucial period in terms of the formation of respectful, non-violent relationships.
- Many children and young people experience violence in their homes.
- Young people are already being subjected to violence, and perpetrating violence themselves.
- There is already a degree of tolerance for violence against girls and women.
- Violence prevention among children and youth has been shown to work.

What is the extent of gender-based violence?

Family and gender-based violence continues to have an impact across all Australian communities. It is often perpetrated by someone known to the victim. Evidence shows that:

- most violence in Australia is perpetrated by men, including family and sexual violence⁴
- 2 in 5 Australian women have experienced physical violence¹¹
- 87 per cent of women knew the male perpetrator of violence⁵
- 1 in 4 Australian women had experienced violence by an intimate partner⁶
- 1 in 5 Australian women had experienced sexual violence⁷
- Australian women are most likely to experience physical and sexual violence in their home, at the hands of a male current or ex-partner⁸
- victim-survivors experience higher rates of violence from a perpetrator after the relationship has ended⁹
- of women who had children in their care when they experienced violence from an ex-partner, 68 per cent reported that the children had seen or heard the violence¹⁰
- on average, one woman is killed every week by a current or former partner¹¹
- 1 in 4 women has experienced violence, emotional abuse or economic abuse by a cohabitating partner since the age of 15¹²
- family violence in Victoria is increasing¹³
- on average, police attend a family violence incident every six minutes in Victoria¹⁴
- children are present in 30 per cent of family violence incidents attended by police¹⁵
- temporary visa holders face barriers to accessing safety and support when they experience family violence in Australia, which have been intensified by COVID-19¹⁶
- women were more likely to be victims than men across all types of perpetrator relationships. Prevalence of sexual violence against women was highest for women in the 18–24 age group (5.9 per cent), with prevalence decreasing as age increased¹⁷
- more than 1 in 2 (53 per cent or 5 million) women and 1 in 4 (25 per cent or 2.2 million) men had experienced sexual harassment (indecent phone calls, text messages, emails or social media posts, indecent exposure, inappropriate comments or unwanted sexual touching) in their lifetime¹⁸
- intimate partner violence is the leading contributor to major health and welfare

issues in Australia, occurring across all socio-economic and demographic groups, but predominantly affecting women and children¹⁹

- in 2020–21, 3 in 10 assault hospitalisations (33 per cent or 7,600) were due to family violence²⁰
- the cost of violence against women and children in Australia is estimated to have been \$22 billion in 2015–16²¹
- 57.6 per cent of gender and sexually diverse young people reported they had been verbally assaulted, 15 per cent reported they had been physically assaulted and 29 per cent reported they had been sexually abused. 28 per cent of assaults of gender and sexually diverse young people were reported to have happened at an educational institution or school.²² When this is broken down by gender, the level of verbal, physical and sexual harassment is highest for trans women, followed by trans men and non-binary young people²³
- although there has been some encouraging attitudinal change towards violence against women, there are still key community attitudes that indicate a level of acceptance
- there continues to be a decline in the number of Australians who understand that men are more likely than women to perpetrate family violence
- a concerning proportion of Australians believe that gender inequality is exaggerated or no longer a problem
- among attitudes condoning violence against women, the highest level of agreement was with the idea that women use claims of violence to gain tactical advantage in their relationships with men
- 1 in 5 Australians would not be bothered if a male friend told a sexist joke about women.²⁴

Listening to young people

The last decade has seen significant change in how young people identify their gender and sexuality, and what support and education they need and expect from their communities, including schools. The intersection of these changes is seen most clearly around respectful relationships and consent education. Activism by young people has been a strong catalyst for the update of the BRR. For example, the student-led 'Teach Us Consent' campaign for consent education in Australia saw 37,000 young people sign a petition in response to sexual assault in schools or related to school-based activities. Chanel Contos, a former student, initiated the petition and elicited nearly 6,700 stories of sexual assault from young women across Australia (December 2022). This resulted in Victoria mandating age-appropriate consent education in all Victorian government schools, and the Australian Curriculum (version 9.0) being updated to include comprehensive consent education.

Australian and Victorian research has also found that young people want more information about violence in relationships, gender and sexuality, love, pornography, how to start and end relationships and staying safe online²⁵.

The young people consulted during the update of this resource were clear that it needed to be more inclusive of all LGBTIQ+ young people²⁶ and that issues relating to their experiences needed to be explicitly addressed. When asked what they wished they could learn, common responses included:

- what to do if you are in a disrespectful relationship
- understanding the subtle signs of an abusive relationship
- understanding more about different genders
- more knowledge about ways to report people breaking the law around harassment
- understanding how a relationship may not be respectful
- what consent is and what it means to give and withdraw consent.

Consent

In 2022 Victorian Parliament passed new consent laws as part of the Justice Legislation Amendment (Sexual Offences and Other Matters) Bill 2022. The Bill and amended legislation adopt an affirmative consent model and provide better protections for victim-survivors of sexual offences, shifting the focus from victim-survivors onto their perpetrators. This model makes it clear that everyone has a responsibility to obtain consent before engaging in sexual activity.

According to the law, for their belief in consent to be considered 'reasonable', a person must have taken steps – by saying or doing something – to find out if the other person consents. Put more simply, consent must be a clear and enthusiastic go-ahead. This can include but isn't limited to verbally asking and getting a 'yes', a physical gesture like a nod, or reciprocating an action like removing clothes.

The reforms also clarify additional circumstances where a lack of consent constitutes a crime, for example, removing, not using or tampering with a condom – commonly referred to as 'stealthing'.

The reforms also include stronger laws to target image-based sexual abuse, which includes taking intimate videos of someone without their consent and distributing, or threatening to distribute, intimate images, including deepfake porn. For more information see <https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/affirmative-consent-model-now-law-victoria>.

An effective approach for schools

The key to preventing gender-based violence is the development of a whole-school approach that provides schools with:

- a common framework for understanding and responding to respectful relationships
- effective curriculum delivery
- relevant, inclusive and culturally sensitive practise and reflection
- evaluation of the impact of strategies on the whole-school community²⁷.

Figure 1 represents the elements of a whole-school approach.

These elements are not new. Schools have been developing and working successfully within whole-school approaches and health-promoting frameworks for decades.

The model represented by Figure 1 is based on the recommendations of the report *Respectful relationships education: violence prevention and respectful relationships education in Victorian secondary schools*.²⁸

The whole-school approach was trialled in four secondary colleges during 2010 and again in 2015,²⁹ with an emphasis on schools addressing gender-based violence in the context of local needs and circumstances. Victoria's Respectful Relationships initiative was a recommendation of the Royal Commission into Family Violence and draws on this model to support schools to implement a whole-school approach to respectful relationships to create a culture of gender equality and respect. *Respectful relationships: a resource kit for Victorian schools* provides a guide for schools to support implementation of the whole-school approach.



Figure 1: A whole-school approach to preventing gender-based violence and building respectful relationship

The Australian curriculum and Victorian curriculum

Issues related to gender and violence primarily fall within health and sexuality education, a component of the Health and Physical Education (HPE) learning area.

Both the Australian and Victorian curriculums provide an explicit focus on respectful relationships and consent education. For example, the HPE curriculum objectives are as follows:

- The **Australian Curriculum** (version 9) aims for students to learn the importance of treating others with integrity, fairness and compassion, value and respect diversity and equality, examine ethical concepts and codes of practice appropriate to different contexts such as at school, at home, in the community and in relationships, explore empathy, consent and respect in relationships and learn to make ethical decisions and understand the consequences of their actions. <https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/teacher-resources/understand-this-general-capability/ethical-understanding#accordion-c348e1b1a6-item-03762ea978>
- The **Victorian Curriculum** has a strong focus on respectful relationships throughout the HPE content descriptions. Of relevance is also the Ethical Capability curriculum, which requires students to explore 'concepts such as right, wrong, fairness, equality and respect. Students discuss the meaning of these concepts and use their understanding to help them reach a position on ethical significance in a range of contexts, that is, what matters ethically, why it matters and how strongly it matters. <https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/ethical-capability/introduction/rationale-and-aims>

If schools are to assist in developing citizens who are respectful and can take action to address gender-based violence, students need to be equipped with the capacity to 'manage themselves and their relations with others; understand the world and act effectively in the world to prepare for success in education, work and life.'³⁰

Other resources

There are a number of excellent resources that have a focus on gender-based violence.³¹ In many ways, Victoria has led the way in resource development and school-based programs in the area, and key Victorian academics and writers have been involved in developing both state-based and national resources. Some activities in this resource are new and others have been modified, adapted or reproduced (with permission) in line with recognised best practise.³² Teachers can use these additional materials as resources to support their current programs.

In particular, the Department of Education's complementary *Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships* and sexuality education resources cover current sexuality and relationship issues in a sequential way.

The units

Units 1 and 2 of the BRR comprise eight sessions, and Unit 3 comprises seven sessions. It takes from 45 to 115 minutes to complete each session. How the sessions are implemented will depend on the school's needs, the length of classes and the context in which the units are used. In some schools it may only be possible to select one activity per session. In others, it may be possible to complete the activities of two sessions. Experience from the demonstration schools shows that schools adapt the materials in line with their needs.

Feedback from teacher consultations to inform the update of the BRR resource raised the issue of time constraints. Suggestions to support the delivery of this resource included:

- extending the time for some lessons, to allow students to explore sensitive topics in depth and have time for closure. This could involve acknowledging the sensitive nature of the topics explored in the lesson, reinforcing the importance of a respectful classroom space, responding to questions or concerns, addressing misunderstandings and reinforcing wellbeing supports.
- providing teachers with time to collaborate and plan according to the needs of their students
- auditing and updating curriculum mapping against current Victorian Curriculum requirements to ensure time is allowed for respectful relationships education.

Unit 1: Gender, respect and relationships

Unit 1 is designed to provide Year 8 students with the grounding necessary to look at issues of gender-based violence such as sexual assault, family violence, homophobia and transphobia. In this unit students explore and develop a common understanding of the concepts of gender, relationships and respect. They examine the implications on relationships of assumptions made around the binaries of masculinities, femininities and sexualities. They begin to develop skills in communication, negotiation, deconstruction, reconstruction, reflection and media literacy.

The eight sessions within Unit 1 are:

- Respect and relationships
- Gender, respect and relationships
- The power of expectations
- Gender positioning
- Introducing gender-based violence
- Understanding sexual harassment
- Developing respectful practises
- How to help a friend

Unit 2: The power connection

Unit 2 is designed for Year 9 students. It builds on the material covered in Year 8 and explores the nature of gender-based violence and the implications for respectful practise. It explores family violence and sexual assault in the context of power, social and institutional structures, and young people's lives. It takes a broad view of violence, covering the physical aspects as well as the emotional, social and economic implications of gender-based violence, including homophobia, transphobia and biphobia.

The unit helps students to understand the nature of consent and respect, and to develop skills to take individual and collective action and responsibility for self and others. Unit 2 has been designed around the critical understandings

and skills developed in Year 8 (Unit 1). If Unit 1 was not delivered to students, it is essential that teachers read the unit and complete sessions 1 and 2 before delivering Unit 2.

The eight sessions within Unit 2 are:

- Getting a position on gender, respect and relationships
- If respect is free, why is it so difficult to get?
- Sexual intimacy, respect and relationships
- Building an awareness of gender-based violence
- Consent and the law
- Barriers and enablers to consent in relationships
- The implications of gender-based violence
- Learning respectful communication

Unit 3: Gender, power and media

Unit 3 is designed for Year 10 students. It is designed to address the link between sexualisation, pornography, gender and respectful relationships. Due to the pace of technological change and increasing access to the internet, it is possible that many students in years 8 and 9 have already been exposed to sexualised images, including sexually explicit or pornographic materials. This can occur accidentally or intentionally, with little or no chance for students to make sense of the messages and content contained within these images.

This unit builds on the material covered in *Unit 1: Gender, respect and relationships* and *Unit 2: The power connection*. It assumes that students have covered key issues on gender and power and looked extensively at building respectful relationships. It has a strong

emphasis on building media and health literacy in line with the recommendations of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority report *National report on schooling in Australia 2022*.

The seven sessions within Unit 3 are:

- Setting the context and Boundaries
- Getting a picture on sexualisation
- Looking deeper into the culture of sexualisation
- Developing a common understanding of explicit sexual imagery
- Real-life strategies
- 'Idealworld'
- Developing skills to build respectful relationships

Setting up a safe space

Setting up a safe and trauma-informed space is essential for delivery of this curriculum. This means that students and teachers can share their ideas and opinions and ask questions without fear of judgement or silencing. Focus is maintained on learning and education (rather than managing disclosures or comforting students who have experienced gender-based violence) and students can express their views on gender, consent, relationships and sexuality without being stigmatised or shut down.

A critical element in setting up a safe classroom space is maintaining a clear stance against the use of violence in any circumstances.

Many students undertaking the units may already have been working together to develop classroom rules or agreements to ensure their learning environment is safe and that respectful behaviours, such as listening and allowing no disrespectful behaviour, are adhered to.

However, some classes may be coming together for the first time. For these classes, it is essential to establish ground rules that provide a structure to improve classroom management, keep students and staff safe and supported, and ensure the class works effectively. Students will be dealing with potentially sensitive issues focusing on relationships, violence and sexuality, so a structure that allows discussion of differing opinions is essential to the success of the curriculum.

The first two activities in both units 1 and 2 – ‘Setting the context and boundaries’ and ‘A respectful partner is ...’ – help students to develop and practise a set of ground rules or agreements while they gain a sense of the focus of the units of work.

Protective interrupting

In classes covering sensitive content, there is always the chance that students may disclose private information. For example, they might refer to a family member who has experienced violence or to their own experience. It is not always possible to interrupt students before they disclose personal or sensitive information about themselves or others, but if you think that they might be about to do so, protective interrupting using the phrases below can help avoid this. Always follow up with students afterwards and reassure them they haven’t done anything inappropriate. Ask them if there is anything they would like to talk about, and let them know that if they tell you something that suggests they might be unsafe, you are required to report it.

‘Thanks for contributing, but I think we need to stop there and I’ll follow up with you later.’

‘Before you go on, can I remind everyone that this isn’t a space for disclosing personal information.’

‘I’ll just stop you there. Remember, we need to avoid talking in the first person.’

‘I’m going to have to stop you from saying any more. I think it would be safer to talk about this in private after class.’

‘Can I ask you to stop? It sounds as though you are about to share something that isn’t appropriate for the class.’

Content advice

Some students may have direct experience of the sensitive issues being addressed in this resource. Content advice should be provided to support the wellbeing of those students prior to and within lessons identified with these icons. Parents and carers should also be informed in advance that students will be exploring sensitive content, and contacted where appropriate if their child has sought wellbeing support.



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

Teachers should advise students that in an upcoming session they will focus on sensitive content. Be specific about what that means, for example, ‘This means considering, discussing and exploring gendered violence.’ Remind students about class ground rules or agreements about respectful behaviour.

It is important to take a trauma-informed approach. This means that students need to be told in advance that they will be covering issues about violence to allow them to withdraw if they find these issues personally confronting. Students also need to be protected from making harmful disclosures. Every student has the right not to offer an opinion.

Let students know that it’s ok to feel uncomfortable. If they think they’ll find any of the content distressing, they can read the lesson materials in advance, choose not to participate in activities or leave the room as appropriate.

Be proactive about having conversations with students prior to the class, and facilitate student choices in an inconspicuous manner. Support students to make choices about their participation during the lesson, even if a plan was

not made in advance. Consider using a 'Talk to a teacher' slip for classes with sensitive content. These enable students to signal their preference before a class begins. If used, care should be taken to ensure that the slips are protected from misuse, loss and unauthorised disclosure.

When considering alternative participation arrangements for students, teachers should be aware of and follow their school's yard duty policy and the Department of Education policies *Supervision of students* and *Duty of care*. See the Department of Education's website for more information:

- Supervision of Students: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/supervision-students/policy>
- Duty of Care: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/duty-of-care/policy>

Students who exit the classroom must be referred to school wellbeing support and should

be provided with alternative opportunities to engage with key curriculum content. Once the lesson has concluded, follow your school's wellbeing processes to check in with students who have modified their participation to ensure they have access to support if required.

For further information on Department of Education policies relating to the care, health, safety and wellbeing of students visit the Department of Education's duty of care resource listed above.

Sample 'Talk to the teacher' slip

Talk to a teacher

Name
Date

My preference for the class today is:

Continue attending class as normal
☐

Prefer to be in a support space with a wellbeing teacher
☐

Prefer to be in a private study space to do some alternative tasks
☐

Have the option to relocate to an agreed supervised space during the class if I need to
☐

I would like to make a suggestion
☐

I have a question I'd like to ask
☐

I'd like to talk to you about this
☐

Not sure
☐



PROTECT guidance

The Department of Education's PROTECT guidance includes strategies for managing a disclosure. School staff must follow the Four Critical Actions if they witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has, or is at risk of being abused.

The Four Critical Actions outline who an incident, disclosure or suspicion should be reported to.

When dealing with an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse, staff should ensure that the principal and school leadership team is made aware of the concern and are involved in providing appropriate ongoing support.

PROTECT guidance: <https://www.schools.vic.gov.au/child-protection-and-child-safe-standards-protect>

Four Critical Actions: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/report.aspx>

Gender groupings

Schools have different approaches to providing single-gender environments for students to engage in sexuality and relationships education. In one school, it was argued that an all-boy environment made it possible to challenge the students' attitudes and explore unhealthy expressions of masculinity. In another school, some girls argued that the discussion about sex and sexuality would have been very restricted if boys had been part of the class. Conversely, two schools reported that using a co-educational approach enabled a sharing of ideas and understandings.

However, consistent with current research³³, students who were consulted to inform updates to the BRR clearly maintained that they did not want to be separated into gender groupings for the following reasons:

- Students' gender identities sit across a spectrum, and separating into two groups according to the boy–girl binary doesn't work for everyone.
- Students need to learn about the emotional aspect of relationships, and it's easier to do that in mixed-gender groups.
- Students can't learn how to support a partner if they're only learning things that relate to their own gender.
- The content of respectful relationships education shouldn't be 'secretive'. For example, consent laws are the same for all students.

- It's important that students learn about each other's bodies, and that feelings of shame around bodies be diminished.
- If a student has a partner who is intersex, they need to learn about things that are relevant to them.

Being inclusive of gender and sexual diversity can be challenging for schools because of concerns about resistance or backlash. However, current research³⁴ funded by the Australian Research Council found that over 80 per cent of Australian parents of public school students (K–12) want gender and sexual diversity included in the curriculum. The majority wanted this inclusion to occur in stages 3 or 4 (when students are roughly 11 to 14 years of age). Over 60 per cent of parents reported wanting gender and sexual diversity to be included as part of a whole-school approach.

Despite this, the cultural context of every classroom must be considered. For example, teachers working with Aboriginal students were very clear that they must teach in binary gender groups of boys and girls even if students would like some mixed groupings. This arrangement may also be required in other contexts. For example, schools may need to be aware of sensitive cultural and faith-based issues in relation to sexuality education that may require all-girl classes. The key is doing the research and consulting with your local communities on any sensitivities, to consider how best to ensure students have access to sexuality and relationships education.

Regardless of the approach taken, students need the opportunity to explore issues in a safe and supportive environment. If the school has been developing respectful approaches to learning and students are accustomed to working together, a co-educational environment can be very productive.

Koorie education: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education policy

Consistent with the principle of self-determination, Marrung: Aboriginal education plan 2016–2026 (Marrung) was developed in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated. Strong partnerships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community will be the foundation for achieving outcomes for Aboriginal students in Victoria. Being able to express culture makes Aboriginal children stronger and safer. Aboriginal children and young people who don't feel safe being themselves and expressing their individuality may be less willing to contribute or report abuse. Providing safe environments for children has positive, lifelong impacts that cannot be underestimated, and cultural safety is

a key dimension of safety for Aboriginal children.

Some actions teachers can take to establish a safe cultural space include:

- beginning classes by acknowledging Traditional Owners
- supporting Aboriginal students to feel comfortable expressing their culture, including their spiritual and belief systems (being aware that some Aboriginal students may still be learning about their Aboriginal family, culture or Country)
- ensuring that Aboriginal support services are available to students
- establishing a relationship with your school's Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO)
- addressing any racism within the classroom directly and with appropriate consequences
- using the many resources that the Department of Education provides.

For more information visit <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/koorie-education/policy>.

It's important to remember that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and families are diverse. Students may come to Victoria from other parts of Australia for a variety of reasons. They may board or be billeted. Families may comprise parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, brothers and sisters who are connected by strong family or community ties. Elders are held in high regard and are the key decision-makers, models and storytellers in extended family networks and communities.

Kinship relationships in Aboriginal families may have different meanings and names from those in non-Aboriginal families. For example, when an Aboriginal child talks about an 'Aunty' they may be talking about an older woman within their community who they respect and have connections with, rather than their parent's sister. Talking with Aboriginal families and children about their kinship connections is the best way to find out about their importance and meaning.

In addition, there may be cultural protocols about who and under what circumstances young people interact with Elders in the community. This may enhance or restrict students' engagement with homework-related activities like asking questions of Elders.

It's important not to make assumptions about Aboriginal families and communities. As with other cultural contexts, parents may find talking to their children about sexuality issues difficult and you will need to ensure your approaches are inclusive. If you want information or would like to learn more about being inclusive, ask students' families. Building relationships based on consultation is the best way to ensure education fits the needs of Aboriginal families.

Specific issues with boys and gender-based violence

Addressing issues of gender-based violence can at times be met with a sense of unease from staff who are concerned that the focus on men's and boys' violence against women and girls 'blames the boys'. However, all staff and students can be supported to understand the connection between the construction of gender and violence, and that gender-based violence is not just an individual issue, but rather a collective and institutional problem.

It is important that boys have the opportunity to explore the construction of masculinities on expectations around gender and violence and understand the historical and institutional nature of violence against women. This can assist in alleviating feelings of individual responsibility and work towards helping boys challenge rigid gender stereotypes and condoning of gender-based violence.³⁵

Research indicates that pornography has had an impact on some boys' unrealistic view of sex, sexuality and what girls need, want and are happy to participate in sexually. This is obviously very personal and sensitive, and boys need to be able to explore these issues without developing feelings of inadequacy and blame.³⁶

Students consulted on the updates to this resource, regardless of gender, felt that young people need to:

- understand people's rights in a close or romantic relationship and learn how to be respectful about intimate activity
- learn that consent means understanding the laws and rights of people in a relationship
- learn how to ask for consent
- understand what it means to give and withdraw consent
- discuss boundaries and emphasise listening
- know when to give their partner space and when they are overstepping boundaries
- know how ask permission in many ways, for example, asking about someone's problem or a personal issue.

Disclosure

In any program that focuses on human relationships and sexuality, there is the possibility that students may disclose personal issues. As this program focuses on issues of gender-based violence, there is a risk that students may disclose their own abuse or abuse that might be occurring in their family. To minimise public disclosures, teachers need to make very clear to students prior to the activities that, although they may explore personal values and attitudes around issues of sexuality, relationships and violence, they do not require students to disclose their own experiences.

If teachers feel a student may disclose sensitive personal experiences, a useful strategy to prevent this is 'protective interruption'. This means interrupting students before they disclose, while at the same time informing them they can talk privately with the teacher after class.

In the event that students do disclose personal issues, it is crucial that teachers are aware of school and legal procedures for dealing with disclosures.

Disclosure of abuse

School staff have a vital role in protecting children from harm, and are well-placed to observe signs or behaviours that may indicate risks of child abuse.

All adults must report to Victoria Police when they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16.

Principals or school leadership staff who become aware that an adult associated with the school (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of committing sexual abuse (including grooming) to a child under the care of the school must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk.

Principals must notify the Employee Conduct Branch at the Department of Education as soon as possible after becoming aware of an allegation of reportable conduct against a current or former staff member, contractor or volunteer from the Department of Education or school council. This applies regardless of whether the alleged victim is or was a student at the school.

In Victoria, teachers are mandated to make a report to the Victorian Child Protection Service if they form a reasonable belief that:

- a child has suffered or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical or sexual abuse
- the child's parents or carers have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from harm.

Teachers should refer to the Department of Education policy *Protecting children – reporting and other legal obligations*, which is available at <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/protecting-children/policy>.

School staff must follow the Four Critical Actions, which is available at <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/report.aspx>, as soon as they witness an incident, receive a disclosure, or form a reasonable belief that a child has been abused or is at risk of being abused.

It is important to not overstate something that is not a problem for the student. It's difficult for young people to talk about these issues, and although teachers, wellbeing leaders and other school staff cannot promise to keep information confidential because of their duty of care and other legal obligations, they can offer to manage conversations with a respect for privacy.

Inform students that only those who need to know will be informed, and that information will be passed on in a way that respects the rights of the affected parties.

As with any disclosure of a personal issue, teachers must ensure that they:

- validate the young person's experience
- listen patiently and carefully to what the young person is saying
- do not press the student for information.

In addition, teachers need to:

- display a positive attitude, affirming the student's experience
- explain that they are pleased to be told and are prepared to help if they can
- help the young person to look at the options open to them
- put the student in touch with school-based or external support services, where appropriate.

Disclosure of gender and sexual diversity

As these materials cover issues of sexuality, gender identity and homophobic, biphobic and transphobic violence, there is a chance that if students feel safe and secure they may also disclose concerns about their own or a family member's gender and sexual diversity. Specifically, students may disclose that they or a family member are gender and sexually diverse or perhaps in the process of affirming their gender.

Most importantly, teachers and student wellbeing staff need to be aware that if a student discloses their sexuality or gender identity, then that information must remain confidential unless the student has given consent for staff to share that information. If a student is at risk of harm, then the information regarding the risk of harm would need to be shared with relevant people, however, the student's gender or sexuality should still remain confidential.

Teachers need to know how to support these students. They should clarify their own response to the issue of gender and sexual diversity and identify appropriate procedures, including the use of community resources, to help students in this situation. Teachers are also encouraged to gain support for the student as appropriate and for themselves (if needed) from student wellbeing staff. The Department of Education provides a comprehensive online suite of resources on sexuality and relationships education to support schools in the delivery of sexuality, consent and respectful relationships education, available at <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/phised/Pages/sexualityed.aspx>.

The Department of Education also provides resources and guidance to support schools to be inclusive of LGBTIQ+ students. For more information visit <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/policy>.



Building Respectful Relationships

Stepping out against gender based violence

Unit 1: Gender, respect and relationships

Unit 1

Session 1: Respect and relationships

Session 2: Gender, respect and relationships

Session 3: The power of expectations

Session 4: Gender positioning

Session 5: Introducing gender-based violence

Session 6: Understanding sexual harassment

Session 7: Developing respectful practises

Session 8: How to help a friend

Introduction

Unit 1: Gender, respect and relationships provides the context and background necessary to look more specifically at issues of gender-based violence like sexual harassment and assault, and family and dating violence. An analysis of gender is often missing in sexuality education, but it is essential as the background to exploring and understanding the power dynamics of sexual relationships that can lead to violence. Students need to understand that gender is not fixed, and that, as young people, they can resist traditional notions of gender, which have been shown to be one of the drivers of gender-based violence.³⁷

In this unit, students will explore and develop a common understanding of the concepts of 'gender', 'relationships', 'consent' and 'respect'. They will examine the implications of gendered assumptions around gender diversity, masculinities, femininities and sexualities, for themselves and others, and in intimate relationships. Students will begin to develop skills in communication, negotiation, deconstruction, reconstruction, reflection and media literacy that can help to build respectful relationships.

This unit is made up of 8 sessions and each session has several activities. For example, in 'Session 1: Respect and relationships' there are 4 activities:

- Setting the context and boundaries
- A respectful partner is ...
- Balancing rights and responsibilities
- Building a respectful relationship

Timing activities

As with any activity, timing is only a guide and will depend on the students, their level of maturity, prior learning and interest. Research carried out during the trial, implementation and update of these resources found that students really enjoyed the activity-based experiences when they were able to move around (for example, role-play, working in groups or playing games), and discussing their ideas. Students maintained that they learnt more by doing these activities. Many of the teachers commented that it was difficult to keep activities to the suggested time because student interest and discussion led the class in valuable directions.³⁸

Respect and relationships



Learning outcomes

- Students will clarify what they value about partners and relationships.
- Students will identify their own expectations of relationships.
- Students will identify behaviours that show respect in relationships.
- Students will explore the concept of building a respectful relationship.



Activities

- Setting the context and boundaries
- A respectful partner is ...
- Balancing rights and responsibilities
- Building a respectful relationship



Time Required

- 115 minutes



Handouts

- **H1** A partner is ...
- **H2** Looking for partners
- **H3** Personal partnerships
- **H4** Quality activity cards

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this session contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. See the Introduction on page 10 of this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

Activity 1: Setting the context and boundaries

Group: The whole class

Time: 25 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Use butcher's paper to note down ground rules. The paper can be placed on the wall at the end of the class. You might also want to record the rules in your class's online space if available.
- Provide pens for writing.
- Construct 4 continuum cards on A4 paper with the following positions:
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
- A piece of rope or string, or chalk to draw a line are optional.

Background

This activity introduces students to the issues covered in the unit and helps them develop an understanding of their own and other people's views and positions regarding gender, respect, consent and relationships.

The activity also involves co-creating classroom agreements to ensure a safe learning environment. With the agreements as a framework, students can explore differing ideas about and attitudes to gender, respect and relationships. For experienced health and sexuality education teachers, this activity will be very familiar, and you may already have developed a set of classroom expectations to ensure that the environment is safe and you are engaging in trauma-informed practice. If so, you may like to do the second part of this activity or move on to 'Activity 2: A respectful partner is ...'

By selecting or developing statements that reflect a difference of opinion and create a lively debate, you can remind students of the class agreements they have developed and demonstrate what they mean, for example, to listen, show respect and so on.



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Procedure

1. Begin by providing content advice and explain to students that this unit of work looks at issues around gender, consent, sexuality and relationships. This means that people are likely to hold opinions and views that not everyone may agree with. However, it is important that the class be safe for everyone and that everyone feels they can contribute freely without fear or embarrassment. A way to ensure this is to set some ground rules or agreements about how the class runs.
2. Ask the students what they think the class needs to make sure it is a safe space for everyone. List these suggestions on the board or a piece of butcher's paper. You will need to transcribe these onto permanent posters or display them as a visible reminder to students. If students have difficulty coming up with ideas, you may like to start with some of the following suggestions for discussion:
 - Listen to different ideas without 'put-downs'.
 - Everyone has the right to speak.
 - Each person is responsible for their own behaviour.
 - What other people say in class is confidential.
 - Show respect to one another.
3. Be careful not to make assumptions that everyone understands phrases like 'showing respect'. Ask students to focus on the word and give examples of what respect would look like in practise.
4. As this may be the first time that some students have come across non-binary identities, the definition below will be useful to read to students.

A gender binary

Something that is 'binary' consists of 2 things, or it can refer to one of a pair of things. Binary genders are male/female, and non-binary genders are any genders that are not just male or female, or aren't male or female at all.³⁹

5. Ask students if they are happy with the list and if there is anything they would like to add.
6. Place the 4 continuum cards on the ground using a 2, 3 or 4-point continuum ('Strongly agree', 'Agree', 'Disagree', 'Strongly disagree'). Explain to students that you're going to read out a list of statements and they need to move to the card that most accurately reflects their view.
7. Select 3 or 4 statements from the following list or develop your own:
 - Year 8 boys are more mature than other Year 8 students.
 - One person always needs to take control of things in a friendship or intimate relationship.
 - Girls have a harder time in relationships than boys.
 - Schools sometimes find it difficult to be inclusive of students who identify as non-binary.
 - Consent is not very well understood by Year 8 students.
 - Violence in relationships only happens in adult relationships.
 - Sexual harassment is often ignored if it happens between students.
 - Respect is the only thing that matters in relationships.
 - If one person in a relationship does not say 'no' to holding hands, kissing, sexual touching or watching porn, then they are consenting to these activities.
8. Read out one statement at a time and ask students to physically move to the position that best reflects their view. If necessary, use a piece of rope or string, or draw a chalk line across the room and ask students to stand on that line. This can also be set up as 4 corners, depending on the space you have available.
9. Ask for volunteers from the different points on the continuum to share their reasons for choosing their position. Alternatively, each student can discuss their choice of position with another student who has chosen a different position on the continuum. It is important to inform participants that there are no right or wrong answers in this exercise. The purpose of the activity is to allow students the opportunity to appreciate that people hold different views.
10. Inform participants that they may move at any time if they find that a reason given by another person changes the way they think about the statement. The following questions provide a useful focus to encourage students to think about the range of positions people hold towards gender and relationships. They can be used either at the end of the activity or after each of the following statements:
 - How do you think you developed your position on this statement?
 - If you asked your parents or carers to do the same activity, where do you think they would position themselves?
 - What differences do you think there would be if this activity was done with different groups of students, for example, younger students, girls or boys or non-binary students? Can you think of other groups of students?
 - Do you think there would be any differences if everyone doing the activity was sexually diverse?
 - What else do you think might affect where we would position ourselves?

Activity 1 Homework

Ask students to pick 3 statements from the list above at step 7. Inform them that, if they feel comfortable doing so and it is culturally appropriate, their task is to ask a parent, carer, elder or adult where they would position themselves on the continuum and why.

Be mindful that students have diverse living arrangements and may not live with parents. They may board, live in foster families or have other arrangements. In addition, for cultural reasons including cultural protocols, it may not be as easy or appropriate for students to ask adults in their lives about matters relating to gender. To ensure students have the opportunity to discuss lesson content, check in sensitively with all students, and provide access to trusted teachers or adults in the school to talk to students in place of families or communities.

Activity 2: A respectful partner is ...

Group: In pairs and the whole class

Time: 40 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handouts:
 - **H1** A partner is ...
 - **H2** Looking for partners.

Background

This activity is designed to get students to:

- think about the characteristics of an intimate relationship
- identify how expectations in intimate relationships can differ from other types of relationships
- begin a broad dialogue about respect and relationships.

Procedure

1. Remind students about the agreements set up in the last activity. The purpose of these agreements is to ensure all students feel safe and supported to contribute without fear of being ridiculed.
2. Ask students to think about a person they really like, with whom they have some sort of ongoing relationship. It can be a friend, intimate partner (such as a boyfriend or girlfriend), family member, adult friend, sports coach, music teacher and so on. Ask them to identify what they really like about this person.

3. Ask students to turn to the person on their right and spend a couple of minutes talking about the reasons they like this person. Then ask each student to share one of the reasons with the class.
4. On the board, write the headings from the table below. Students' responses should be listed under the headings (examples of responses are provided in the table). Students can write their responses directly on the board, on a sticky note stuck to the board, or in a digital space that students can contribute to anonymously.

Someone I really like and why

What they do	I would describe the person as ...	How they treat me and others
Take me places	Fun	Help
Share	Good at sport	Listen
Make my lunch	Friendly	There when I need them

5. As a class, discuss students' responses using the following questions as a guide:
 - Which category has the longest list?
 - Why do you think this is the case?
 - What do the lists tell us about what is important to young people in relationships?
 - Do you think the lists would be different if parents or carers or older people did the activity? How? Why? You may like to get students to ask their parents and carers and compare the differences.

6. Ask students to think of a person they have an ongoing relationship with, who they don't like. Remind students about the ground rules or behaviour agreements to ensure respect is shown. Following the same procedure, list the person's negative characteristics, attributes and behaviours.

Someone I don't like and why

What they do	I would describe the person as ...	How they treat me and others
Don't notice I'm there	Always grumpy	Put people down
Never do what they say they will do	Always swearing	Don't listen
Speak to me rudely	Someone who whinges about everything	Always try to get the biggest and best

7. As a class, discuss the following questions:
 - Which list is the longest?
 - Is there a difference in the characteristics, attributes and behaviours we like in a person?
 - What does this tell us about what young people do not like in relationships?
8. Distribute copies of the handout 'H1 A partner is ...' to students. Briefly discuss the use of the word 'partner'. Discuss other words that students might use, for example, 'relationship partner', 'girlfriend', 'boyfriend', 'lover', 'husband', 'wife' or 'spouse'. Ask students to fill in the handout and then shuffle their sheets. Hand out the sheets and ask students to work in pairs with the sheets they receive. Ask them to discuss the following questions for each of the behaviours:
 - Would this be okay in your partner?
 - Do you think this behaviour would make a relationship better?
 - How would you change this behaviour?
 - How does a relationship with a partner differ from a relationship with a friend, parent or carer or another person?
 - Which behaviours indicate respect? Which behaviours could indicate disrespect?
9. Ask students to form the same pairs and examine the personal ads in 'H2 Looking for partners' and discuss the following questions. You will need to explain some of the abbreviations or get students to work out what they could mean.
 - What are older people looking for in a relationship?

- Does what is important in a relationship change as people age?
- Does it change for gender and sexually diverse relationships?
- What other considerations seem important to people?
- Does what people are looking for in a relationship change for cultural reasons?
- Does it change in the context of disability?
- Does it change for religious or spiritual reasons?
- Does it change because of where people live?
- When we are young, how do we learn about what to expect in relationships?
- Could there be any limitations or disadvantages to learning about relationships from these sources of information?

10. As a class, discuss whether it is possible to come up with universal characteristics that people expect in a relationship. Brainstorm what these might be.
11. Ask students to write their own personal ad for the perfect partner. This could also be done as a homework or assessment task using the H2 template provided.

Extension activity: Matching pairs

If time permits, ask students to move around the room trying to match up the partners from H2. Alternatively, the ads could be collected, and sets made so that students could complete the task in small groups.

It may also be appropriate for students to introduce 2 characters from the handout they think would match to each other via an app or in an online space.

Ask students to think about what they need to consider if they introduce friends via an app or online.

- How do we ensure that people can consent to being introduced?
- What safeguards are there if people do not want to participate?
- What are the online unwritten social rules for young people chatting online?
- What are the online and legal rules for young people aged 13 to 16?

Finish by discussing the qualities, attributes or characteristics that made it easy or difficult to match people. Consider the following in the discussion:

- Can one person have more power in a relationship?
- Which of these behaviours would indicate a respectful relationship? Why?

You may or may not be in an intimate relationship with someone now. Think into the future. If you were in an intimate relationship, what would your (hoped-for) partner be like? Tick the columns that apply to you.

A partner is a person who ...	Always	Sometimes	Never	Don't know
... gives me what I want.				
... I look after.				
... shares everything with me.				
... talks all the time.				
... tells me I'm great.				
... gets jealous when I get close to other people.				
... gives me pleasure.				
... doesn't listen to me.				
... I trust.				
... makes the decisions.				
... takes care of me.				
... won't tell me their feelings.				
... I can tell anything to.				
... I enjoy sexual activity with, like intimate touching (caressing, massage and cuddling).				
... fights with me.				
... is a friend when I need one.				
... has other partners.				

Instructions

Read the personal advertisements provided below and discuss the following questions:

- What are older people looking for in a relationship?
- Does what is important in a relationship change as people age?
- Does it change for gender and sexually diverse relationships?
- What other considerations seem important to people?
- Does what people are looking for in a relationship change for cultural reasons?
- Does it change in the context of disability?
- Does it change for religious or spiritual reasons?
- Does it change because of where people live?
- When we are young, how do we learn about what to expect in relationships?
- Could there be any limitations in, or disadvantages to, learning about relationships from these sources of information?

PERSONAL ADVERTISEMENTS

Australian-born 32-year-old, 170 cm tall with a slim build, looking for a sincere guy with a good sense of humour who knows how to communicate.

35-year-old ex-Paralympic athlete with a thirst for life and fun. Looking for a caring partner who doesn't take themselves too seriously.

Wurundjeri man looking for Tidda girl. Interested in Aboriginal culture, football, swimming and fishing.

30-year-old blonde party girl looking for casual hook-ups. Can you keep up? People 25–35 years should apply.

Euro-Australian gent, 161 cm, early 60s, honest and caring, would like to meet sincere, caring 50–55 lady approx. 60 kgs. I like fishing, camping and music.

18-year-old person who is guided by strong spiritual teachings looking for like-minded person to hang out and grow indoor plants with. Hoping for a long-term relationship.

Aquarian who is into politics looking for others with the same interests, 27–37 years old, 176 cm or over, into friendship leading to permanent relationship.

58-year-old intellectual, cultured, light drinker, smoker, retired. Likes music, Chinese movies and European culture. Seeks European man with compatible tastes and a kind heart.

Hot gay gal 19 years old seeks outgoing fem 18–25 years old, into nature, sport and nightlife, for friendship and relationship.

30-year-old single mother seeks understanding man for romantic relationship and possible marriage.

Country lad, late 20s, non-scene, shy, fun, down to earth, good sense of humour, seeks mate to hang out with. Lives 100 km from a big city.

Lusty, sexually generous, funny and (sometimes) shy person, looking for good banter and no drama. Seeking women with similar ideas about sex and relationships.

Slim, dark-skinned older guy, youthful and fit, seeks guy 25–40 who is interested in love and affection, kissing etc.

Gender-diverse 20-year-old looking for similar gender-diverse person to share late night drives vibing to our favourite artists, and lazing around watching crime series. Looking for friendship and an intimate partner.

Super open and easygoing 21-year-old guy searching for soul mate who likes tennis, cafés, clubbing, movies and travel.

Kind-hearted Aussie bloke, very romantic, 31, seeks lady 25–35. I am a forklift driver and social drinker, social smoker, 180 cm, 87 kg.

45-year-old professional woman originally from Delhi, India, seeking friendship with similar aged man. Interested in cooking, family and Bollywood movies.

Attractive, 18-year-old female seeks the friendship of 18 to 25-year-old male looking for a partner who shares love and religious faith.

PARTNERS

Name / Age: _____

Description: _____



Activity 3: Balancing rights and responsibilities

Group: Small groups

Time: 20 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handout:
 - **H3** Personal Partnerships

Background

The purpose of this activity is to start looking at rights and responsibilities in a partnership, rather than just expectations and wants. Recap the positive aspects of relationships identified by the class in the previous activity. Briefly discuss why the term 'partner' is used rather than boyfriend/girlfriend. The discussion should be inclusive of LGBTIQA+ partnerships and emphasise the rights and responsibilities relevant for all personal partnerships. Responsibilities are the actions we take that demonstrate respect for rights. Fulfilling responsibilities helps to protect rights.

Procedure

1. Divide the class into small groups and distribute a copy of 'H3 Personal partnerships' to each student.
2. Ask each group to develop ideas for a charter of personal partnership rights and report these back to the class. Write the responses on the board. Discuss variations and common themes. Each group then reviews their list in light of the class discussion.
3. Remind students that power imbalances can be supportive. If we think of rights as having complementary responsibilities for each person. For example, parents and carers have different power from children because they are responsible for their children's wellbeing. Work through the following statements to determine the complementary responsibility:
 - Each person has the right to be treated with respect as an individual by their partner. What would the complementary responsibility be?
 - Each person has the responsibility to respect their partner as an individual. What would the complementary responsibility be?
4. Ask students to move back into groups and establish responsibilities that complement each right they have listed. As a whole class, ask each group to share some answers and develop a collated list of rights and responsibilities.
5. Ask each student to highlight the rights and responsibilities they feel are important.
6. As a group, list and discuss some suggested responsibilities for a sexual relationship. What would a respectful relationship look like? How can we care for self, care for others and make sure we negotiate and reflect on our own actions?

Discuss in the group reasons for any different answers.



Proposed Charter of Rights and Responsibilities for Partners

Rights	Responsibilities
To be treated with respect	To treat the partner with respect
To raise issues for discussion	To listen
To say 'no'	To believe the person when they say 'no' and respect that decision
To be safe	To respect the right of the other person to be safe and take action to support their safety

Activity 4: Building a respectful relationship

Group: The whole class or small groups

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Distribute the 'H4 Qualities activity cards' to stick onto foam or paper bricks. If possible, the cards should be laminated for use. Ensure at least 3 blank bricks are provided so students can add their own qualities to the list.
- If you have time and resources, make a set of bricks out of foam. This provides a very powerful experience for students, as they can see what happens to the wall if they add or remove a brick (an important quality). You can also use cardboard boxes of various sizes for this activity, which are easier to store.
- This activity is more effective visually if you can use boxes or foam instead of paper for bricks. If not, just use the activity cards to build a paper wall.
- Blu Tack or magnets work well to display the activity cards in the classroom.
- Whether you focus on friendships or intimate relationships will depend on the maturity and context of your students. Depending on how many students there are, you may want to complete this activity in small groups. An example is shown in the illustration below.

Background

If you have time, this optional extension activity can provide a fun and visual way of thinking about how we build relationships. Using the metaphor of 'building blocks' and the qualities that are needed to build a respectful relationship helps students to see that a relationship is something dynamic that can be impacted by a range of factors.

The activity examines the key elements or building blocks of a respectful relationship and is designed to give students the opportunity to examine what makes a relationship strong, sustainable and equitable, prior to exploring more contested and potentially negative aspects of gender, power and violence in sexual relationships. In any sexuality and relationships education, it is important to begin by creating a positive environment for students where they feel safe to engage in learning. This will enable students to feel comfortable to finish the activity by exploring strategies and skills that can build positive, respectful and enjoyable relationships.

Procedure

1. Inform students they are going to be thinking about the qualities required in friendships and relationships.
2. Show students the 'H4 Qualities activity cards'. Discuss these qualities with students, leaving time to debate these in case there is disagreement, and to add qualities the students suggest.
3. Ask students to order the cards or blocks from the most to the least important in a relationship. Draw attention to the qualities that provide the foundation of the wall, allowing others to be built upon them.
4. If you have a set of foam bricks, ask students to build a wall with the bricks, sticking each of the cards onto them and placing the most important qualities on the bottom and the least important qualities on the top. The wall could be made up of 4 rows of 5 qualities.
5. Discuss with students how each brick plays a part in holding the wall up. Liken this to friendships and relationships.
6. Take away one of the least important qualities. Ask students what difference this would make to the friendship or relationship. Why or why not?
7. Take away one of the most important qualities. Ask students what difference this would make to the friendship or relationship. Why or why not?
8. Ask students to discuss what would happen to the wall if:
 - a partner cheated, or a friend was disloyal
 - a friend or partner lied
 - a friend or partner did something that affected you without your consent, for example, if they used something that was important to you or kissed you without consent
 - a friend or partner gossiped or told others a secret that had been shared with them
 - a friend or partner put you down on social media
 - a friend or partner posted a video of you in your underwear on social media without your consent
 - a friend or partner uploaded a picture of you on social media without your consent
 - a friend or partner supported you
 - a friend or partner helped in a difficult situation
 - a partner never broke their promises.



Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson



Safe

Humour

Love

Honesty

Equality

Trust

Freedom

Sharing

Consent

Acceptance

Negotiation

Comfortable

Independence

Loyal

Difference

Support

Confidence

Individuality

Forgiveness

Growth

Protect

Gender, respect and relationships



Learning outcomes

- Students will define and explore the terms 'sex', 'sexuality' and 'gender'.
- Students will identify the implications of narrow understandings of gender and sexuality.
- Students will identify behaviours that show respect in relationships.
- Students will begin to examine the role of the internet on gender, sexuality and consent.



Activities

What's a definition got to do with respectful relationships?

- If the category fits, wear it
- Gender expectations – I just can't win!



Time Required

- 100 minutes



Handouts

- **H5** Sex, sexuality and gender cards
- **H6** Useful terms and definitions cards
- **H7** Gender cards/ Floor cards
- **H8** I just can't win!

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this session contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. [See the Introduction on page 10](#) of this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

About this session

Provide content advice and explain to students that this session explores how we understand, sex, sexuality and gender. Remind students about class guidelines and the importance of maintaining a respectful and safe classroom space for all students.

The session is designed to enable students to gain a common understanding of the concepts of sex, sexuality and gender. It is also designed to assist students to broaden traditional and normative ideas, notions, categories and expectations of gender. Often these concepts can be confused and used in a variety of ways that exclude gender and sexually diverse students.

Students have reported that focusing on heteronormative ideas about gender does not reflect the reality of their lives and that inclusive practises are critical when learning about respectful relationships.⁴⁰

Understanding these concepts and their interrelationships is necessary to build an effective and inclusive framework for respectful relationships education and the primary prevention of gender-based violence.

Some useful definitions

The following definitions have been adapted from a variety of recent resources.⁴¹

Sex and gender

- For the purposes of this resource, 'sex' refers to a person's biological sex characteristics. This includes their sex chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs.
- The term 'intersex' refers to people who are born with a natural variation to physical or biological sex characteristics including chromosomes, hormones or anatomy that are not typically male or female. There are many different intersex variations that can be identified prenatally, at birth, in puberty or in adulthood.
- 'Gender' is part of a person's personal and social identity. It refers to a way a person feels and sees themselves. It can be about differences in identity, expression and experience as a woman, man or gender diverse person.
- Although sex and gender are conceptually distinct, these terms are commonly used interchangeably, including in legislation.

- A person's sex and gender may not necessarily be the same. Some people may identify as a different gender to their birth sex and some people may identify as neither exclusively male or female.
- Sex reassignment surgery and/or hormone therapy are not prerequisites for the recognition of a change of gender in Australian Government records.

Gender and gender identity

Gender is part of a person's personal and social identity. It refers to each person's deeply felt internal and individual identity and the way a person feels, presents and is recognised within the community. A person's gender may be reflected in outward social markers, including in their name, outward appearance, mannerisms and dress. It can be about differences in identity, expression and experience as a woman, man or gender-diverse person. Gender can be binary – either a man or a woman – or non-binary, including people who have no gender at all and people who have some relationship to binary gender(s).

Gender refers to socially or culturally defined ideas about the binary of masculinity (male roles, attributes and behaviours) and femininity (female roles, attributes and behaviours). Gender is not the same as sex. Research has shown that:

- In every society, gender norms and gender roles influence people's lives, including their sexual lives, through expectations, assumptions, sanctions and rewards.
- Gender roles are socially constructed and learnt. They are not innate or 'natural'.
- There are more similarities than differences between men and women. For example, good communication is a skill all people can develop, yet it tends to be stereotypically associated with women. During puberty the changes that occur to height, weight, strength, testosterone production and sexual feelings happen to all genders, but tend to be associated with boys.
- Within any culture or society, people have varying attitudes about gender roles and gender equality. Beliefs about gender also vary from one culture or society to another.
- Gender roles and expectations can change over time. In many settings, people, especially young people, are embracing greater gender diversity and equality.
- Greater equality and acknowledgment of gender diversity gives everyone more opportunities to develop to their full capacity as human beings. In contrast, restrictive binaries and gendered expectations can limit opportunities.⁴

Sex

'Sex' is a classification often made at birth. A sex of either 'male' or 'female' is determined based on a person's external anatomical characteristics. However, sex is not always straightforward, as some people may be born with an intersex variation, and anatomical and hormonal characteristics can change over a life span.

Sexuality

'Sexuality' is how people experience and express themselves as sexual beings. Many factors contribute to people's sexual behaviours, relationships, feelings, identity, desires and attitudes. One of these factors is biology, especially sex hormones. Another factor is individual personality and experience. Yet another factor is culture, which influences people's attitudes, expectations and experiences related to sexuality. Cultural norms also affect laws and policies about sexuality. All of these factors interact throughout life.⁴²

Sexuality is an integral part of life, and it influences personality. It involves more than just being anatomically and genetically female, male or a variation of one or both, and it is not defined just by one's sexual acts. It is a process that starts at birth and ends only when we die. It influences our perceptions, attitudes and behaviours in relation to other individuals and to society. From the beginning of our life, sexuality affects all aspects of our life – the way we think, the way we feel, what we do and who we are.⁴³

Sexuality is not about who people have sex with, or how often they have it. Sexuality is about sexual feelings, thoughts, attractions and behaviours towards other people. It can be finding other people physically, sexually or emotionally attractive, and all those things are a part of sexuality.

Sexuality is diverse and personal and it is an important part of who we are. Discovering your sexuality can be a very liberating, exciting and positive experience.

'H5 Sex, sexuality and gender cards' will support understanding of the complex and changing area of gender and sexual diversity.

Activity 1: What's a definition got to do with respectful relationships?

Group: Large or small groups

Time: 40 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide sticky notepads or whiteboard markers in 3 different colours. Ensure there are plenty available for students, for example, if there are 25 students, provide 9 notepads or markers in each colour.
- Print double-sided copies of H5 Sex, Sexuality and Gender cards (1 for the class or 1 for each table group. Optional).
- Print the double-sided cards from H6 with the following terms: sex, intersex, gender, gender binary, cisgender, transgender/trans, gender fluidity, non-binary, genderqueer, gender questioning, sistergirl, brotherboy, sexuality, bisexual (bi), aromantic (aro), asexual, pansexual, queer, queer and trans people of colour (QTPOC).
- You will need enough sets of the cards for pairs or table groups, depending on how you run the activity.
- The H6 cards need to be double-sided with terms on one side and definitions on the other. This is critical for the lesson to work.
- If you have the resources, you can purchase a set of stick-on magnets from an office supplies store to stick the definitions to the whiteboard.
- Adhesive for attaching cards to a whiteboard or wall.



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Background

There is no aspect of respectful relationships education that does not require some analysis of sex, sexuality gender and relationships. This resource is very explicit in its attempt to foreground issues of gender and sexual diversity, consent and power. It is designed to scaffold teaching and learning to assist students to see that gender and sexual relationships always sit within the context of social, cultural and power relations. Sex, sexuality and gender are often confused and highly contested. Young people demand that adults and broader society acknowledge, validate and support their sex, gender and sexualities.

There can be confusion and misuse of these terms. For example, sexuality can be used to refer to sexual preference and/or orientation and identity. Sexuality is about sexual feelings, thoughts, attractions and behaviours towards

other people. It can be about finding other people physically, sexually or emotionally attractive, and all those things are a part of sexuality. Sexuality is an important part of who we are, and it is diverse and personal.

Sex is often used to describe the sexual activity otherwise known as 'sexual intercourse', but it can be used to refer to biological and chromosomal differences between people. There are at least 40 known naturally occurring variations of sex that can be referred to as intersex.

Gender has been used to describe what it means to be female or male in a particular society or community. However, gender is not binary or static, and there is a range of gender identities related to our sexual self. For example, 'non-binary' refers to people who do not identify as male or female, who may use the pronouns 'them' and 'they' instead of 'she' and 'he'.

Gender has been used to describe the sexual differences between men and women, yet may also be used inaccurately to refer to a person's sex.

This activity is designed to clarify and explore key terms and definitions. Refer to the handout 'H5 Sex, sexuality and gender cards' for more information.

Teacher check-in

Be mindful of the gender and sexual diversity of students. It is easy to reinforce stereotypes if your knowledge and understanding have not been updated through experience or professional development. For example, it is important to remember that sexuality is not a choice and gender is not binary. Check the handout 'H5 Sex, sexuality and gender glossary' for help. Following the Victorian Government's LGBTIQA+ inclusive language guide will ensure your language is consistent and inclusive.⁴⁴ Consult the LGBTIQA+ Student Support policy for guidance and resources if a student makes a disclosure about their gender or sexuality or requires support during classes on gender and sexuality.

- <https://www.vic.gov.au/inclusive-language-guide>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/policy>

Procedure

1. Provide content advice and inform students that you will be exploring issues related to diverse genders and sexualities.
2. Read through the activity and decide whether to do the activity in large or small groups. If you decide on small groups, you will need additional resources for each group.
3. Display or write the terms 'sex' 'gender and 'sexuality' from the 'H5 Sex, Sexuality and Gender cards' on the whiteboard, or provide a copy of the three cards to each table group with the definitions face-down.

4. Give each student 3 sticky notes of different colours or provide whiteboard markers for them to write on the board. Ask students to write a word or phrase about what they think 'sex', 'sexuality' and 'gender' is. Examples of possible responses are in the table below. These examples are in the correct column. In the event students put terms in the incorrect column, use the definitions from H5 to help you develop student understanding. Remind students that gender and sexual diversity are not a choice, but a normal part of a person's identity.
5. Bring each group to the front and ask for 3 volunteers to summarise what the group thinks is meant by 'sex', 'sexuality' and 'gender'. They can do this in small groups.
6. Now flip the cards over and talk through the definitions of 'sex, sexuality and gender' on H5. Examine the keywords that emerge. If students have access to computers, put the text that has emerged under each category into a word cloud generator to generate a visual representation of student thinking.
7. Arrange students in pairs, give them the H6 cards, and ask them to decide where they fit in the 3 categories. Or, give each group a set at their tables and ask them to complete the task as a group. Instruct students not to turn their cards over, or alternatively you can let them use the definitions on the back to help them.
8. Ask students to add their work on the board when they finish by placing the cards under the category 'sex, sexuality or gender'.
9. Turn each card over and go through the definitions. Discuss:
 - Were there any identities, sexualities or aspects of sex that were new to you?
 - Did any surprise you? Why or why not?
 - Where do we get our knowledge and ideas about sex, sexuality and gender?
 - What do you think this activity is trying to get you to think about?

Terms relating to sex, sexuality and gender

Sex	Sexuality	Gender
• Male, female • Intercourse • Reproductive • Fun • Porn • Intimacy • Important • Penetrative • Consent • Relationships • Intimacy • Consensual • Pleasure • Cool • Experimental • Pleasure • Biology • Chromosomes • Hormones	• Progressive • Constructed • Expression • Continuum • Orientation • Fluid • Broad • Preference • Diverse • Variety • Broad • Attractions (emotional and physical) • Heterosexual • Pansexual • Bisexual • Asexual • Aromantic • Personal preference • Preference • Gay, lesbian, straight • Identity	• Man, woman • Fluid • Identity • Wide range of 'genders' • Changing • Unique • Representation • Personal identity • Unique • Roles • Advantages and disadvantages • Stereotypes • Male or female • Gender does not equal sex • Binary • Non-binary • Gender diverse • Trans • Constructed • Sistergirl • Brotherboy

10. Finish the activity by asking students if they can think of any positives and negatives to the range of identities included. Students are likely to give responses like the following:
- Young people can feel positive about their identities.
 - People treat other people with respect.
 - There are so many to remember.
 - Not knowing what they mean can be confusing.
 - They could change over time.
11. Inform students that in the 1990s the first research on the lives of LGBTIQ+ young people was undertaken in Australia.⁴⁵ This research used the term 'same-sex attracted' to define young people who were not exclusively heterosexual. The research found that the use of this terms enabled young people to be more fluid and not define themselves in a way that could never change. More recently, researchers at Sydney University have used the term 'gender and sexually diverse' as an umbrella term for the range of ways people define themselves, such as those we have just examined. This provides another way of avoiding fixed categories that young people must be boxed into. Ask students what they think of using this term.

Consult the LGBTIQ+ Student Support policy for guidance and resources if a student makes a disclosure about their gender or sexuality or requires support during classes about gender and sexuality.

- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/policy>



Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

Sex

Sexuality

Gender

Sex refers to a person's biological sex characteristics. This includes their sex chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs.

The term **intersex** refers to people who are born with a variation to physical or biological sex characteristics including chromosomes, hormones or anatomy that are not typically 'male' or 'female'. There are many different intersex variations that can be identified prenatally, at birth, puberty or adulthood.

Sexuality is not about who you have sex with, or how often you have it. It is about sexual feelings, thoughts, attractions and behaviours towards other people. It can be about finding other people physically, sexually or emotionally attractive; all those things are a part of sexuality. Sexuality is an important part of who we are, and it is diverse and personal.

Gender is part of a person's personal and social identity. It refers to each person's deeply felt internal and individual identity and the way a person feels, presents and is recognised within the community. A person's gender may be reflected in outward social markers, including their name, outward appearance, mannerisms and dress.

Although sex and gender are conceptually distinct, these terms are commonly used interchangeably, including in legislation.

A person's sex and gender may not necessarily be the same. Some people may identify as a different gender to their birth sex and some people may identify as neither exclusively male nor female.

Sex reassignment surgery and/or hormone therapy are not prerequisites for the recognition of a change of gender in Australian Government records.¹

Gender and gender identity

Gender binary

Cisgender (cis)

Gender and gender identity: Gender is part of a person's personal and social identity. It refers to each person's deeply felt internal and individual identity, the way a person feels and presents, and how they are recognised within the community. A person's gender may be reflected in outward social markers like their name, outward appearance, mannerisms and dress. It can be about differences in identity, expression and experience as a woman, man or a gender-diverse person. Gender can be binary – either a man or a woman – or non-binary, including people who do not have a binary gender and people who have some relationship to binary gender(s).

Gender binary: A binary consists of 2 things or can refer to one in a pair of things. Binary genders are male and female, and non-binary genders are any genders that are not just male or female, or aren't male or female at all. <?>

Cisgender (cis): This term describes a person whose gender is the same as their sex recorded at birth. Not all cisgender people are aware of this term or use it to describe themselves.

Transgender (trans)

Gender fluidity

Non-binary

Transgender (trans): This term describes a person whose gender does not align exclusively with their sex recorded at birth. Not all trans people use this term to describe themselves. Trans people may choose to live their lives with or without modifying their body, dress or legal status, and with or without medical treatment and surgery. Trans people may use a variety of terms to describe themselves including but not limited to 'man', 'woman', 'trans woman', 'trans man', 'non-binary', 'agender', 'genderqueer', 'gender fluid', 'trans guy', 'trans masculine', 'trans masc', 'trans feminine' or 'trans femme'.

Trans people have the same range of sexual orientations as the rest of the population. Trans people's sexual orientation is referred to in reference to their gender identity, rather than their sex. For example, a woman may identify as lesbian whether she was assigned female or male at birth.

Trans people may use a variety of different pronouns. Using incorrect pronouns to refer to or describe trans people is disrespectful and can be harmful. See 'Societal attitudes and issues' below for more information. A description of pronouns and misgendering is in the Australian Institute of Family Studies resource sheet *LGBTIQA+ glossary of common terms*, available at:
<https://aifs.gov.au/resources/resource-sheets/lgbtiqa-glossary-common-terms>.

Gender fluidity: This term describes someone who does not identify with a single, fixed gender.

Non-binary: This term describes people whose gender sits outside of the spectrum of 'man/woman' or 'male/female'. A non-binary person might feel like they have a mix of genders or no gender at all. A person might identify solely as non-binary or relate to non-binary as an umbrella term. They might consider themselves as gender fluid, genderqueer, trans masculine, trans feminine, agender or bigender.

Gender affirmation

Gender euphoria

Gender expression

Gender affirmation: This term describes the personal process that a trans person determines is right for them, to enable them to live as their identified gender, and for society to recognise their gender. This may involve social, medical or legal steps that affirm their gender. A trans person who hasn't medically or legally affirmed their gender is no less the man, woman or non-binary person they've always been. A person's circumstances may inhibit their access to the steps they take to affirm their gender.⁴⁷

Gender euphoria: This term describes a trans person's experience of comfort, connection and celebration with regard to their internal sense of self and gender, and their pride of feeling and being affirmed as who they are.

Gender expression: This term refers to how a person chooses to publicly express or present their gender through their behaviour and outward appearance, including clothing, hair, make-up, body language and voice. Western expectations of gender expression are based on a binary of men as masculine and women as feminine, but many people do not fit into binary gender expressions. Failing to adhere to the norms associated with one's gender can result in ridicule, intimidation and violence.⁴⁶

Gender pronouns

Genderqueer

Gender questioning

Gender pronouns: People publicly express their gender identity through the use of gender pronouns. Pronouns can be gender specific or gender neutral. They can include the traditional 'he' or 'she', as well as gender-neutral pronouns like 'they', 'their', 'ze' and 'hir'.⁴⁸

Genderqueer: This gender identity does not conform to traditional gender norms and may be expressed as other than woman or man or both man and woman, including being gender neutral and androgynous.

Gender questioning: This is not necessarily an identity but is sometimes used in reference to a person who is unsure which gender, if any, they identify with.

**Sistergirl and
Brotherboy**

Sex

Sex characteristics

Sistergirl and Brotherboy: These terms used in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to describe transgender people. Using these terms can validate and strengthen people's gender identities and relationships. Sistergirls and Brotherboys might be non-binary, female or male. 'Sistergirl' describes gender-diverse people who have a female spirit and take on female roles in the community like looking after children and family. 'Brotherboy' describes gender-diverse people who have a male spirit and take on male roles within the community. In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities more broadly, the terms 'sistagirl' and 'brothaboy' are used as terms of endearment for women and men with no reference to gender diversity.

Sex: 'Sex' refers to a person's biological sex characteristics, including their sex chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs. Some people are born with variations in physical or biological sex characteristics like chromosomes, hormones or anatomy. These are often called 'intersex' variations. There are many different intersex variations, and they can be identified prenatally, at birth, in puberty or in adulthood.

Sex characteristics: This term refers to physical parts of the body that are related to body development, regulation and reproductive systems. Primary sex characteristics are gonads, chromosomes, genitals and hormones. Secondary sex characteristics emerge at puberty and include the development of breast tissue, voice pitch, and facial and pubic hair.

AFAB

AMAB

Intersex

AFAB: This acronym means 'assigned or presumed female at birth'.

AMAB: This acronym means 'assigned or presumed male at birth'.

Intersex: This term describes people who are born with variations in physical or biological sex characteristics including chromosomes, hormones or anatomy that are not typically 'male' or 'female'. There are many different intersex variations, and they can be identified prenatally, at birth, in puberty or in adulthood. Intersex people have a diversity of bodies and identities.

Indeterminate

Endosex

Dead name

Indeterminate: A person of 'indeterminate' sex or gender is either someone whose biological sex cannot be unambiguously determined or someone who identifies as neither male nor female. Many terms are used to recognise people who do not fall within the traditional binary notions of sex and gender (male–female), including non-binary, gender diverse, genderqueer, pangendered, androgynous and intergender. Some cultures may have their own terms for gender identities outside male and female, for example, 'sistergirl' and 'brotherboy' are used by some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Endosex: This term refers to people whose sex characteristics meet medical and social norms for typically 'male' or 'female' bodies. Not all endosex people are aware of this term or use it to describe themselves.⁴⁹

Dead name: This term describes a name a person no longer uses because it does not align with their gender or current experience in the world. Some people may experience distress when this name is used.

Dysphoria

**Sexuality or sexual
orientation**

Heterosexual

Dysphoria: This term describes the distress or unease some people experience when they are misgendered, or when their gender and body personally don't feel connected or congruent. Many trans people do not experience gender dysphoria at all, or it may cease with access to gender-affirming healthcare and peer support. Being trans is not a mental illness, regardless of whether gender dysphoria is present, and gender dysphoria does not equal being trans.⁵⁰

Sexuality or sexual orientation: These terms describe a person's intimate, romantic or sexual attraction to others. It can include sexual identity, which is how a person thinks of their sexuality and the terms they identify with. It can also include attraction, which is a romantic or sexual interest in another person, and behaviour or relationships. Attraction may be towards people of the same gender or sex, another gender, all genders, no gender or a combination. There are many different ways to describe sexuality. Some people may choose to describe their sexuality in terms of feelings, behaviours or experiences, for example, 'same-sex' or 'gender attracted'. Others may choose to use no term at all. Sexuality may be fluid for some people and change over time. For others it can be the same throughout their life

Sexuality is not about who you have sex with, or how often you have it. Sexuality is about sexual feelings, thoughts, attractions and behaviours towards other people. It can be finding other people physically, sexually or emotionally attractive, and all those things are a part of sexuality. Sexuality is an important part of who we are and it is diverse and personal. Discovering your sexuality can be a very liberating, exciting and positive experience.

Some people experience discrimination due to their sexuality. If someone gives you a hard time about your sexuality, it's good to talk to someone about it.

A list of resources for LGBTIQ+ students can be found on the Department of Education webpage *LGBTIQ+ Student Support* at <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/resources>.

Heterosexual: This is another word for 'straight'. It generally refers to men who are attracted to women, or women who are attracted to men.

LGBTIQA+

Gay

Lesbian

LGBTIQA+: This is a shortened form of 'lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer and asexual'. This is an inclusive, umbrella term for diverse sexualities, genders and sex characteristics. Communities included within this term have distinct experiences and needs, and different histories of identity and organisation. The plus sign indicates that there are many different terms used to describe identity, which are not all covered by the letters 'LGBTIQA'.

Gay: This term describes an individual who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of the same sex or gender as themselves. It is often used to describe men who are attracted to other men, but some women and gender-diverse people may also describe themselves as gay.

Lesbian: This term refers to a woman (cis or trans) or gender-diverse person who is romantically or sexually attracted to women.

Bisexual (bi)

Aromantic (aro)

Asexual (ace)

Bisexual (bi): This term refers to someone who is romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of their own gender and other genders. The terms 'bi+' and 'multi-gender attracted (MGA)' are sometimes used to describe communities of people who are attracted to multiple genders.

Aromantic (aro): This term refers to individuals who do not experience romantic attraction. Aromantic individuals may or may not identify as asexual.

Asexual (ace): This term refers to people who do not experience sexual attraction but may or may not experience romantic attraction towards others. Asexual people can be any gender or sexual orientation. While asexual people do not experience sexual attraction, this does not necessarily imply a lack of libido or sex drive.

Pansexual

Queer

QTPOC

Pansexual: This term describes a person who is romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of all genders or regardless of gender.

Queer: This term is often used as an umbrella term for diverse genders or sexualities. Some people use 'queer' to describe their own gender or sexuality, as an identity that does not correspond to heterosexual norms. For some people, especially older people, 'queer' has negative connotations, because in the past it was used as a discriminatory term.

QTPOC: This is a shortened form of 'queer and trans people of colour'.

Cisgenderism

Cisnormativity

Heteronormativity

Cisgenderism: This term describes a discriminatory social or structural view that positions (either intentionally or otherwise) the trans experience as either not existing or as something to be pathologised. Cisgenderism posits that gender identity is determined at birth, is a fixed and innate identity based on sex characteristics (or biology) and that only male and female identities are valid and real.⁵¹

Cisnormativity: This term describes an assumption that everyone is cisgender and that all people will continue to identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. Cisnormativity erases the existence of trans people.

Heteronormativity: This view posits that heterosexual relationships are the natural and normal expression of sexual orientation and relationships. It is an extension of cisgenderism, which is a discriminatory social structure that positions cis and binary genders as the only real or valid experiences of gender.

Heterosexism

Homophobia

Transphobia

Heterosexism: This describes a social system that privileges heteronormative beliefs, values and practice. Heterosexism provides the social backdrop for homophobic and transphobic prejudices, violence and discrimination against people with non-heteronormative sexualities, gender identities and intersex varieties.⁵²

Homophobia: This term refers to negative beliefs, prejudices, stereotypes and fears that exist towards same-gender attracted people. It can range from the use of offensive language to bullying, abuse and physical violence. It can include systemic barriers like a person being denied housing or being fired due to their sexual orientation.

Transphobia: This term refers to the harmful, unfair or discriminatory treatment of people who are transgender or gender diverse.

Transmisogyny

Misgendering

Biphobia

Transmisogyny: This term is a combination of misogyny and transphobia, which manifests as discrimination against trans women and trans and gender non-conforming people on the feminine end of the gender spectrum.

Misgendering: This is when a person is described or addressed using language that does not match their gender identity (Rainbow Health Australia, 2016). This can include incorrect use of pronouns ('she', 'he' and 'they'), family relationship terms ('dad', 'sister', 'uncle', 'niece' and so on) and, at times, other words that traditionally have gendered applications ('pretty', 'handsome', and so on).

Biphobia: This term refers to negative beliefs, prejudice and discrimination against bisexual people. It can include a dismissal of bisexuality, questioning whether bisexual identities are authentic, or a focus on the sexual desires and practices of bisexual people.⁵³

Homonormativity

Homonormativity: This term describes the privileging of certain people or relationships within the queer community (usually cisgender, white and gay men). The term also encompasses the assumption that LGBTIQ+ people will conform to mainstream, heterosexual culture, for example, by adopting the idea that monogamy, marriage and having children is a natural and normal relationship progression.

Activity 2: If the category fits, wear it

Group: Small groups and the whole class

Time: 30–45 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Print out one complete set of 'H7 Gender cards/ Floor cards'.
- Cut up the gender cards.
- Provide a large space so students can move around.



Background

Building on earlier activities, in this activity students explore the similarities and differences between men and women and masculinities and femininities. Students will identify biological, behavioural, cultural, constructed and social differences. The activity aims to help students see that there are more similarities than differences between people and that many differences result from social practises and expectations. They will also explore the limitations of gender binaries.

This is one of the first activities that aims to examine not only traditional gendered expectations but the limitations of the binary categories of gender. Sexuality and relationships education – including respectful relationships has examined gender expectations in the context of male and female binaries, as is the case with much curriculum. Although it is important to examine normative ideas about gender as female and male identifying, it is also important that non-binary students and gender and sexually diverse ideas are incorporated into lessons.

Ensure you have read 'H7 Gender cards' and have a clear idea of key terms and ideas if the issues arise. This year you will be familiar with content and be able to respond to any clarifying questions from students.

Teacher check-in: note on possible cultural sensitivities

Students consulted on the update to this resource clearly maintained that they did not want to be separated into single-sex groupings, which is consistent with current research. However, the cultural context of every classroom must be considered. This is part of a trauma-informed approach. As a teacher, it is crucial that you are aware of possible cultural sensitivities.

For example, advice from consultations with Aboriginal stakeholders was that some

Aboriginal students must be taught in single-sex groups of male and female, even if students would like some mixed groupings. This may also be required in other contexts. The key to effective and culturally safe delivery is doing the research and consulting with your local communities to consider how best to ensure students have access to sexuality and relationships education.

Procedure

1. Provide content advice and explain to students that this unit of work will involve exploring notions of gender and diversity.
2. As a class, do a quick brainstorm on what students see as the differences between men and women. Write ideas up on the board.
3. Place the first 4 floor cards (girl, boy, both girl and boy, not boy or girl) on the ground, allowing enough space for students to be able to move around the room.
4. Give each student one of the gender cards. If you have more than 25 students, you will need to add extra cards to ensure each student has at least one. Ask students to place their card into the category where they think it fits. Once the cards have been placed, discuss using the following questions:
 - Are there any cards you would move. Why?
 - Which category is the largest? Why?
 - What differences are biological? Which are behavioural or social differences, and which are expectations or stereotypes?
5. Go back to the list of differences on the board (which are likely to relate to gendered expectations) and ask students:
 - What is different about the lists?
 - Where do we develop our understanding of the differences?
6. Collect the gender cards, shuffle them and give them out again. Using the next set of floor cards, (masculine, feminine, both masculine and feminine, not masculine or feminine) switch the gender cards that are on the floor and ask students to redo the exercise.
7. Examine the list and discuss the differences between what is considered masculine and feminine. As a class, discuss the following questions:
 - What do we mean by masculine and feminine?
 - Can there be more than one masculinity and one femininity? What are they? Where do they come from?
 - Are there other gender categories? How do these differ?
 - What expectations and stereotypes are associated with them?

- What are the limitations of these categories?
- How does gender differ from biological sex?
- In what other ways is the term 'sex' used?
- How does this differ from sexuality? Are there binary ideas about sexuality? What are they?
- Why do you think that adults find it difficult to think beyond binary notions of male and female?

Consult the LGBTIQA+ Student Support policy for guidance and resources if a student makes a disclosure about their gender or requires support during classes on gender and sexuality.

- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/policy>



Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson



**They need
to sleep**

**They are
expected to
have children**

**They watch
porn**

**They are
expected
to work**

**They use
social media**

**They are
strong**

**They get
their hair cut**

**Their bodies
change as
they grow**



**They like
to dance**

**They are
emotional**

**They can wear
what they want**

**They like
to study**

They don't cry

**They like
to talk**

**They sometimes
fight with
friends**

**They like
to read**

**They like
to garden**

**They have
pubic hair**

**They need
to feel valued**

**They have
a range of
eye colours**

**Their bodies
are used to
sell products**

**They like to
hang out
with friends**

**They are
expected to
like having sex**

**They have
strong muscles**



**They use
mobile phones**

**They are
protected by
their family**

**They use
make-up**

They cry

They eat

**They play
sport**

**They save
their money**

**They can go
out alone**

1
r
i
G

Key

**Both Boy
and Girl**

**Not Girl
or boy**

not

**Masculine
and
feminine**

Masculine

Feminine

**Not Masculine
or Feminine**

Activity 3: Gender expectations – I just can't win!

Group: Small groups

Time: 15 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handout:
 - **H8** I just can't win!
- Provide butcher's paper and felt-tip pens to record responses.



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Background

In this activity students use the information from the previous activities to begin looking at the implications of gendered notions on expectations about gender and sexuality.

There are 2 case studies that look at expectations about gender and sexuality, one from the perspective of a young woman, and one from a non-binary perspective. Depending on the sex, gender and sexuality mix of your class, and the time you have available, you may like to select just the Tay and Billie case study from H8. The non-binary case study of Tay and Billie enables aspects of gendered expectations to be examined in a more inclusive way. In addition to exploring gender expectations more generally, the Finn case study also provides a good opportunity to begin a dialogue with students about the internet and the impact of pornography on their understanding of sex and gender.

Procedure

1. Provide content advice and explain to students this lesson will explore notions of gender, sexuality and relationships.
2. Put students in groups of 4 or 5 and give each group a copy of the handout 'H8 I just can't win!'
3. In each group, appoint a reader, a person to record and a person to report back.
4. Ask the groups to read the stories and discuss the questions on the handout. Each group reports back on one question.



Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

Tay and Billie (15)

Billie and I have been going out for over a year. We really like each other and have talked a lot about whether to have sex. We've done basically everything except penetrating each other with our fingers or other parts of our bodies. We spend a lot of time lying together kissing, cuddling, watching stuff and chilling. I'm worried that if I do anything else sexually with Billie they'll tell people, and I couldn't bear it. Mum and I are close, I talk to her about everything. I know she's really proud of me because I haven't had what she considers 'sex'. Most of my friends also say I should wait. Two really bad things happened this week that made me glad I hadn't had sex with Billie. I found out that they have been telling other people about the other things we do together. Then my friend posted on social media, 'Billie is going to get some sex from Tay for their birthday.' I was so embarrassed. I know some of my friends' mums are on social media and they'll think badly of me. One of the worst things about the whole situation is that Billie's sibling Ash is my best friend, and Ash was really annoyed with me for being angry at Billie and some of their other friends. I just can't win!

Finn (16)

I've gone out with heaps of girls. Some of them I've really liked, and we've kissed, hugged, held hands and talked on the phone rather than just messaging. One girl I saw for ages, and we used to lie together on her bed kissing and touching. But that was all. Dad always calls me the hero of the family and I can tell he's proud of me because he thinks I'm having sex with all these girls. But my older brother gets heaps from Dad because he's 22 and hasn't had a girlfriend and only goes out with his mates. I'm a virgin, but I wouldn't tell anyone that. My friends mouth off about hooking up all the time and I feel like an idiot because I haven't done it yet. I just pretend that I have. I don't know why I keep pretending or what the big deal about 'going all the way' is. I don't think about sex all the time, there are stacks of other things in my life like football, school and basketball. I haven't really met anyone yet that I love enough to want to have sex with.

Questions

- What is Tay most worried about? Do you think this is a common concern?
- What gender do you think Tay and Billie identify as? Why?
- If Tay identifies as a girl and Billie as a boy, would the concerns change? Why? Why not?
- What does this tell us about sex and gendered expectations?
- If Tay and Billie identified as non-binary would the gendered expectations and assumptions differ?
- Do you think boys have the same concerns as girls in heterosexual relationships?
- Why do you think Billie told the others about the relationship with Tay?
- If Tay is a girl, what messages is Tay's mum giving her about being a girl and having sex?
- What other issues in the case study make Tay think they should be worried?
- Did Tay consent to their friend posting information on social media? What implications could arise from posting something without consent?
- Would you call Billie and Tay's relationship respectful? Why or why not?

Questions

- What does Finn's pretending to have sex say to other people about his sexuality and what he thinks a man should be?
- If his friends knew Finn was a virgin, do you think it would change what they think of him?
- Would you say that Finn's current approach to being intimate with girls (kissing, touching and so on) is consensual? Why or why not?
- What does Finn's dad think is important about Finn's sexuality and being a man? Where else might Finn learn these kinds of messages about boys and sex?
- What if Finn was 'Fiona' and was having sex with lots of boys? How would people see Fiona?
- Are the expectations about sexuality the same for boys and girls?
- What if Finn was gay or bisexual? Would his expectations of sexuality and gender be different? What would other people's expectations be?
- What if Finn was non-binary and didn't identify as a boy or girl? Would their expectations of sexuality and gender be different? What would other people's expectations be?
- What if Finn was transgender? Would his expectations of sexuality and gender be different? What would other people's expectations be?
- Do you think Finn acts respectfully? Why or why not?

The power of expectations



Learning outcomes

- Students will identify their own expectations in relation to gender.
- Students will identify implications of narrow understandings of gender.



Activities

- A question of gender (gender stems)
- On becoming ...



Time Required

- 100minutes



Handouts

- **H9** Graffiti sheet
- **H10** Gender stem statements
- **H11** Alex and Charlie's stories
- **H12** On becoming a woman
- **H13** How to be between

Additional Resources

The Minus18 YouTube channel at:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWFCCrMMLzmXcZj7yJkiM08g>

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this session contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. See the Introduction on page 10 of this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

About this session

This session enables young people to explore the impact of gender on expectations about being male or female. It provides a background for the other activities in this resource. The session has been designed to enable students to explore the concept of gender and the associated notions and expectations that have an impact on sexuality. It also provides them with the opportunity to connect issues of gender to different positions of power central to adolescent sexual behaviour. The activity also aims to extend students' understanding of gender by exploring traditional notions of gender in a case study that examines the experience of 2 young transgender people.

Activity 1: A question of gender – gender stems

Group: Individuals and small groups

Time: 60 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handouts:
 - **H9** Graffiti sheet
 - **H10** Gender stem statements
 - **H11** Alex and Charlie's stories

The following materials are optional:

Trans 101 – The Basics, produced by Minus 18, available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3ZzpTxjgRw>

Australian Children's Television Foundation series *First Day*, available at:
<https://actf.com.au/shows/id/267/>.



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Background

In this activity students build on previous sessions to look at the implications of gendered notions based on expectations about gender and sexuality. It is important to revisit the ground rules and practises to keep students safe, as the activities are starting to look at case studies that will help students to explore their own and other students' perceptions, attitudes and understanding in relation to gender and aspects of sexuality.

Procedure

1. Provide content advice and inform students that this activity will involve exploring notions of gender, sexuality and relationships. Tell students that the aim of the activity is to examine their understanding of gender as a social construction.

2. Ask students to complete the handout 'H10 Gender stem statements', allowing 5 to 10 minutes.

On the board write the following heading: 'Because of their gender people would be expected to ...' Ask students to choose any gender to brainstorm ideas for and to write a response in their books. Give them a sticky note they can stick to the board or invite them to use the handout 'H9 Graffiti sheet'. Alternatively, you could use an online collaboration tool for student responses that provides anonymity for students who may not feel comfortable disclosing their gender. It is very important that students feel safe and supported and that the classroom environment is inclusive.

3. With a show of hands, go through each one, asking students if they think the expectation is most relevant for boys, girls, neither or both. Note this next to the expectation.

4. Divide students into small groups. Appoint a recorder and someone to report back to class. Ask each group to discuss the following questions:

- Do the expectations advantage one gender over another? How?
- Does one gender have more power than another? How and in what circumstances?
- Are there any expectations you would like to see changed? Why?
- Are there any expectations you would like to see remain? Why?
- What are the implications of such expectations?
- What can happen if people don't adhere to stereotypical expectations and gender norms?
- Does thinking about gender expectations and norms without the categories of man and woman make any difference? How? Why?

5. Ask the nominated students to report back to the whole group.

6. Read the class 'H11 Alex and Charlie's stories'.

7. With students back in small groups, give each group a copy of the handout. In small or large groups, discuss the following questions:

- What do you think Alex and Charlie's friends did to make them feel supported?
 - How did Alex and Charlie's school support them?
 - Think about a time when a friend stood up for you. How did that feel?
 - What stereotypes have you experienced?
 - Can you think of a time when you felt excluded from a group? How did that make you feel?
 - What helped to make Alex and Charlie's experiences positive?
 - What would a world that was supportive and inclusive of gender diversity for young people look like?
8. In pairs, students should identify which of the attitudes expressed in the extract are still common today, and which no longer exist.
 9. Ask students where they get their ideas about 'appropriate' behaviour for men and women. List these on the board. Discuss:
 - Which sources can be trusted? Why or why not?
 - Do these sources have positive or negative impacts on young people?
 - Think about Tay, Billie, Finn, Alex and Charlie. Where did they get their information about 'appropriate' behaviour?
 - Where can young people get information that shows the diversity of gender, masculine, and feminine behaviour in a positive way?

10. If time permits, view *Trans 101 – the basics* produced by Minus 18 or the Australian Children's Television Foundation series *First Day*, which explores how a young person navigates the challenges that come with starting high school as a transgender student. Discuss with students how your school compares to what these young people are experiencing and suggesting.



Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson



**Because of my
gender, I am
expected to...**

Complete the following sentence stems.

One of the things I enjoy most about my gender (girl, boy or non-binary) is ...

.....

.....

My family would describe me as ...

.....

.....

My friends would say that I was ...

.....

.....

I act powerfully when ...

.....

.....

Because I am a boy/girl/non-binary I am expected to ...

.....

.....

If I identified differently, I would probably enjoy ...

.....

.....

As a person who is non-binary/girl/boy, I strongly challenge the expectation that I should ...

.....

.....

The most important things in my life are ...

.....

.....

.....

Case Study One: Alex's story

When I was young, I always knew I was a boy, even though some people saw me as a girl. I had lots of friends, and loved drawing, climbing trees and playing football in the backyard with my older sister. I was a happy kid and my family encouraged me to do the things I loved and be who I wanted to be.

By the time I was in grade 2, it felt too hard having to go to school every day pretending to be a girl. I wanted people to know I was a boy and thankfully I had a good group of friends and family who I could talk to about how I was feeling. My best mate Darcy was especially great, as he would always stand up for me and would always know how to cheer me up.

My parents made a time for us to meet with my classroom teacher and the Assistant Principal. We discussed how the teachers would talk to the other kids in my class to make sure everyone used language that made me feel comfortable, including using 'he' and 'him' as my pronouns and talked about how the teachers would respond to

inappropriate comments. We also chatted about some of the questions other kids might ask. The teacher reassured me that the teachers would encourage the other students to come to them with their questions and respect my privacy. Things went really well for me after that meeting.

I am now in Year 12 at my secondary school and life is pretty good at the moment. I was elected as a school captain and was chosen because the other kids said they admired that I'd been brave to be myself and do some really cool things like creating a standout group when I was in year 10. Not to say there haven't been some tough times. Some people still don't get it, and they ask me really inappropriate questions, especially about my body. And when someone new starts at our school, someone always tells them I'm transgender. They don't seem to understand that's my private information to share.

Because I've had so much support from my my family, friends and school, I've been able to cope pretty well when things have been hard. I'm still working out what I'm going to do when I finish school next year, but I do know who I am right now, and I'm happy and loved.

Case Study Two: Charlie's Story

The term 'non-binary' can mean different things to different people. For me, I realised I was non-binary because sometimes I felt like a girl and a boy and sometimes I felt like neither.

My parents have always supported me to be who I am. They support me with how I wear my hair and whatever clothes I choose to wear. When I first spoke to them about being non-binary, they didn't know much about what that meant, and it took time for them to understand that this was just a part of me.

At school, sometimes I don't know what I'm supposed to do when activities are grouped into boys and girls. When I was young, my teacher would always divide the class in different ways, like surnames, height, or favourite food. She would also greet us in the morning by saying "Hello super learners" or "Good morning everyone". She didn't know I was non-binary and she will probably never know how good she made me feel.

I'm in year 9 now, and my high school has been great. Before I started at the school, my parents and I met with the teachers and talked about ways to make me feel supported at school, like using my 'they' and 'them' pronouns and how I was going to participate in activities like sport. I like that my school has a list of clothes everyone can wear instead of a 'girls' uniform' and 'boys' uniform'.

I love spending time with my friends and most weekends we play basketball or catch a movie. My favourite subject is technology, and just last month I made an awesome wooden cabinet. I used to play volleyball, but I found it hard because some of the kids kept asking if I was a girl or a boy. It became exhausting to have to keep telling them I was non-binary. It's great that my basketball team has never bothered asking me questions like this.

It can be hard being seen as different, so I'm glad to have supportive friends, especially when they stick up for me and remind people to use my pronouns.. I'm also working hard at school because I want to be a physiotherapist. Non-binary people like me are just like everyone else.

Activity 2: On becoming ...

Group: Individuals and pairs

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handouts:
 - **H12** On becoming a woman
 - **H13** How to be between
- Provide a highlighter for each student



Background

Explain to students that this unit of work covers issues that may be sensitive for some people. The lesson explores notions of gender, sexuality and relationships and how views and understandings about gender and gendered behaviour have changed over time. One extract used in the activity comes from a book written in the 1950s. The other, more recent extract is from the memoir of a young person who is non-binary and has physiological characteristics that have been traditionally associated with both sexes. The extracts are used as a basis for exploring changing and current community attitudes to expected gendered behaviours and stereotypes. This activity also raises issues about the kinds of media that young people are expected to access and use, like social media, porn and so on. Depending on the maturity of your group, this activity can provide an opportunity to look at expectations set up by the media.

Ensure that you have read both case studies thoroughly. *How to be between*, a memoir by Bastian Fox Phelan, explores the experience of a young person who identified as female until puberty when she started to grow hair on her face.

The short podcast *The dark stranger* from ABC Radio National Life Matters, will give you a very good grounding on the issue as you lead this activity. It is available at: <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/lifematters/a-dark-stranger-bastian-fox-phelan-on-how-to/13875524>.

Depending on students' maturity and literacy levels and the time available, you may like to play the 14-minute podcast for them. This activity was trialled with students who provided the following feedback:

- It will be useful for giving cisgender and heteronormative students an insight into what it's like to be non-binary.
- The content is highly relevant and will help LGBTIQA+ students to feel like they are

represented and 'seen'.

- The case study should be shown to all kids to help LGBTIQA+ students feel more comfortable and to help others understand their experience.
- It's important to learn about this at school because students may not have the opportunity to learn about it at home.
- A school environment encourages change and can help to challenge homophobia.⁵⁴

Students also talked about the potential difficulties for teachers in covering matters like non-binary identities for the first time. They were very clear that teachers need to set very firm boundaries, for example, not tolerating hate speech and removing students who used it. Students also reported that although teachers need to be clear about language that is not appropriate, they also felt that not creating a scene in front of the class was important and suggested that teachers follow up after the class with students who expressed discriminatory attitudes⁵⁵.

Procedure

1. Ask students to read the handout 'H12 On becoming a woman' and highlight the attitudes expressed about gendered behaviours. For example, girls are 'domestic by nature' whereas boys are 'rough and ready'.
2. In pairs, students should identify which of the attitudes expressed in the extract are still common today. Which attitudes no longer exist? Which have been contested and by whom?

Ask students to read H13, the extract from *how to be between* or you could read it to the class. How does this differ to how gender and gender expectations are expressed in the case study in the handout 'H12 On becoming a woman'?

3. Ask students where they get their ideas about 'appropriate' gendered behaviour. List these on the board. Ask students to discuss the following:
 - Which sources can be trusted? Why or why not?
 - Do these sources have positive or negative impacts on young people? Why? How?
 - Thinking about Tay, Billie, Finn, Alex and Charlie – where did they get their information about 'appropriate' gendered behaviour?
 - Where can young people get information that shows the diversity of gendered behaviour in a positive way?

Homework – research and assessment task

Ask students (if they are comfortable) to ask 2 adults in their lives to read the 2 extracts in the handouts and answer the follow questions. Appropriate people could be friends, family, carers, grandmothers, grandfathers, elders, aunts, uncles and cousins. They should be at least 15 years older than the student.

- What do they think of the 2 experiences 70 years apart?
- Which is closer to their experience?
- Which of the attitudes prevailed when they were teenagers?
- Which attitudes did not exist?
- What sources of information about gender and being an adult were they exposed to, for example, books, television or social media?

The data could be developed into a writing assessment task like a report, a letter written to a friend about gender expectations in a particular time period, a short story about changes, an analysis of media representation or a presentation.

Teacher check-in: being mindful of students' living arrangements

Be mindful that students have diverse living arrangements, for example, they may not live with parents. They may board, live in foster families or have another arrangements. In addition, for cultural reasons including cultural protocols, it may not be as easy or appropriate for student to ask adults about gender issues. To avoid exclusion, check with all students and have a couple of teachers or an adult in the school who would be willing to talk to these students. To ensure students have the opportunity to discuss lesson content, check in sensitively with all students, and provide access to trusted teachers or adults in the school to talk to students in place of families or communities.

Consult the LGBTIQA+ Student Support policy for guidance and resources if a student makes a disclosure about their gender or requires support during classes on gender and sexuality.

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/policy>



'Children are surprisingly alike. There is not much very real difference even between boys and girls. Yes, there is minor anatomical difference, but as far as external appearances go, the obvious difference is that girls have long hair and wear dresses. Boys and girls have voices of both the same pitch. They have the same physical strength and same interests. The truth is that little girls play with their dollies and boys with their trains. But there are many times when both boys and girls play house and play ball and consider kindred interest perfectly natural. But when the teens are approached girls develop different attitudes towards boys, and boys towards girls...

The changes that have come about to make you a young woman have consisted of much more than the development of external curves. This development, plus the changes in attitudes which you have experienced, now causes you to think differently. You have put away children's things and have become concerned with feminine interests. You have begun to think and dream about love and about a time when you will have a home of your own...

Also, a girl thinks feminine thoughts, is domestic in her inclinations and is fundamentally gentle in her relations to others. A teenage boy is masculine in his attitudes and somewhat rough and ready in his relation to the outside world. These differences, when traced back to their fundamental cause, result from the fact that a young woman's body is designed to enable her to become a wife and mother, where as a young man's body is designed so that he may become a husband and father.'

H. SHRYOCK (1951)

Picture me at 26. It's 2014 and my hair is short and fawn-coloured – I'm growing it out from when I shaved it. I wear glasses. I have a light beard and moustache. I wear my clothes loose over a small frame. I'm more boyish than I've ever been, although I don't care about that as much these days. I've grown tired of thinking about how to put together an outfit that will pass, how to speak low, how to walk manly, how to accentuate the hairs that have grown, unaided, across my lower face for half my life. I refer to the small bumps beneath my t-shirt as 'my chest'. If you peered inside me with an ultrasonic frequency, you'd see that my ovaries are adorned with dark circles, like a string of black pearls, but this doesn't bother me. My period comes once a month now, like it never used to, and I don't mind. I'm beginning to see how it's possible for many things to be true at once. I live with the kind of body that ovulates, with breasts and the rest, and facial hair that some say shouldn't be there, and a slippery kind of gender identity that I haven't quite pinned down yet. I've been living in Sydney for almost 4 years. Over time, it seems that the closer I look at my body, and my gender, the blurrier the edges become. At first, I was one thing, a girl-thing. Then at 22 I announced to the world that I was, in fact, a boy-thing. Lately, though, I have not been so sure.⁵⁶

How To Be Between by Bastian Fox Phelan (2022)

Gender positioning



Learning outcomes

- Students will be able to describe some traditional notions of gender.
- Students will be able to discuss some impacts of gendered expectations on young people and their relationships.



Activities

- Changing attitudes
- Changing positions



Time Required

- 100 minutes



Handouts

- **H14** Sex and gender cards / Floor cards

About this session

This session explores gendered expectations about relationships, sexuality and sexual activity. It examines some of the traditional notions about gender and sexuality that can lead to assumptions and behaviours often used to excuse disrespectful practises. The assumptions presented in this activity are based on research that explored, the way young people perceive relationships and sexuality⁵⁷ and the views of experts working in the field of Respectful Relationships Education.⁵⁸ Assumptions about masculine and feminine behaviour in sexual situations disadvantage young people, and the assumptions generated by the discussion need to be challenged. This session provides the background to begin to look at consent, power, gender and violence.

Although research shows young people are very inclusive in terms of gender and sexuality,⁵⁹ students in consultations still drew heavily on very long held and traditional gendered and heterosexual notions of gender and sexual activity.

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this session contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. See the Introduction on page 10 of this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

Activity 1: Changing attitudes

Group: Small groups and the whole class

Time: 10 minutes

Preparation and materials

None

Background

In the last session, students were asked to conduct research on attitudes to gender with significant adults like parents, carers and grandparents. This type of activity is a wonderful way to open dialogue with parents and carers and other adults and often results in improved communication. Students are often surprised at their parents and carers' attitudes and experiences.

However, as outlined in the previous activity. Be mindful that students have diverse living arrangements, they may not live with parents. They may board or live in foster families or have other arrangements. In addition, it may not be as easy or appropriate for cultural reasons for student to ask adults about gender issues. To ensure students have the opportunity discuss lesson content, check in sensitively with all students, and provide access to trusted teachers or adults in the school to talk to students in place of families or communities.

Procedure

Provide content advice and inform students that this lesson will explore notions of gender, sexuality and relationships. Ask students to report back on the research conducted for homework. This can be done in small groups or as a whole class. Use the following questions to focus discussion:

- What did the adults think of the 2 different experiences?
- Which of the attitudes prevailed when the older people were teenagers?
- Were there any attitudes that did not exist?
- Historically, where did young people get their information about gender?
- Were you surprised at any of their answers?

Activity 2: Changing positions

Group: Small groups

Time: 45 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Prepare 5 copies of 'H14 Sex and gender cards' – one set per group of 6 students.
- Print one copy of the large floor cards (provided in the handout 'H14 Sex and gender cards') on A4 paper, or print floor cards with the words 'Boys', 'Girls', 'Non-binary', 'Respectful' and 'Disrespectful' written on them.
- Provide a set of blank cards for students to write on.



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Background

This activity explores assumptions about gender and sexuality. If you are working in mixed groups, it is likely to create some lively discussion, so ensure you remind students about ground rules and respect. It is also important to help students challenge the assumptions made and see them as restrictive stereotypes that can be harmful for young people, and to bring the discussion back to a common understanding about respectful behaviours in relationships.

Procedure

1. Provide content advice and inform students that this lesson will focus on exploring notions of gender, sexuality and relationships. Form students into groups of 5 or 6 and ask for a volunteer from each group to report back at the end of the activity. Inform students that they are going to be looking at some statements about sexuality.
2. Ask the groups to place the 'H14 Sex and gender cards' into 2 lists, based on whether they think the statement is referring to a boy, girl or non-binary person. Students must reach agreement as a group and be able to give a reason for their decision. Allow 10 minutes for the task.
3. Ask the reporters to report back on only 4 statements: one that they placed in each pile. The following questions can help to focus the discussion:
 - Why did you place the statement in this list?
 - What assumption is your statement making about young people and sexuality, girls and sexuality, boys and sexuality, non-binary young people and sexuality? What does it say about gender?
 - Did everyone in the group agree?
4. As a whole class, discuss the following questions:
 - Were the assumptions made realistic?
 - What are the implications of these assumptions for relationships between young people or for any intimate relationship?
 - Why were there differences in opinions?
 - Where do we develop these opinions?
 - Are any of these assumptions? How and why?
5. Give students the floor cards and ask them to redo the sex and gender cards under the headings 'Respectful' and 'Disrespectful'. Ask students:
 - Are any of the statements respectful? Why?
 - Are any groups presented as equal and having equal power?
 - Groups should rewrite the statement so that young people are equal and behaviours are respectful.



Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson



**See sex connected
to romance and
being wanted**

**See sex for
its own sake**

**Don't talk about
sexual pleasure
and bodies**

**Pleasure often
mentioned and
located in the body**

**Are seen to be
sexually passive**

**Are seen to be
sexually aggressive**

**Are seen as keepers
of safe sex
(and responsible for
contraception)**

**Are not seen
as being responsible
for safe sex**

**Are expected to
control sexual
urges/feelings**

**Are not expected
to control themselves
– it's their sex drive**



Boys

girl's

Non-binary

Respectful

Disrespectful

Introducing gender-based violence



Learning outcomes

- Students will be able to identify potentially safe and unsafe spaces in the school environment.
- Students will be able to identify the nature of violence and harassment.



Activities

- Safe spaces in our school



Time Required

- 60-80 minutes



Handouts

- **H15** Gendered spaces in our school
- **H16** Sexual harassment and violence in schools

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this session contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. [See the Introduction on page 10](#) of this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

About this session

This session focuses on gendered assumptions in schools. It is designed to get students to think about the gendered way that space is used in school and how this has an impact on safety and violence. In this session students start to look at the gendered nature of violence by exploring sex-based harassment in the school and the implications for respectful relationships.

Activity 1: Safe spaces in our school

Group: Pairs

Time: 60 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide one copy of the school map to each pair of students, plus a large copy for group work if needed. Refer to step 2 below. Alternatively, ask students to make their own map.
- Provide students with a copy of the following handouts:
 - **H15** Gendered spaces in our school
 - **H16** Sexual harassment and violence in schools
- Provide butcher's paper, felt-tip pens and highlighters of different colours.



[Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson](#)

Procedure

1. Provide content advice and inform students that this activity will be looking at a series of case studies that explore violence and sexual harassment at school.
2. In pairs, students will map spaces in their schools they perceive as gendered. Hand each pair a map of the school that shows both indoor and outdoor spaces.
3. Ask students to mark on the map areas they think are safe and unsafe. Using the handout 'H15 Gendered spaces in our school', ask them to write down the safe and unsafe things that happen in that space. Colour-code the areas that girls, boys and non-binary students use and record any differences experienced using those spaces.

4. Ask students to identify spaces that cut across school, home and the community that can be unsafe for students, for example, the internet, and why or how they are unsafe.
5. As a whole class, brainstorm a list of acts at school that are perceived as violent by students. Why are they violent? Students are likely to come up with physical illustrations of violence, so help them to think more broadly about emotional and social forms of violence. If you have access to computers, get students to Google definitions of violence. If you are concerned about inappropriate content coming up through the search, provide a range of links that you have researched for students to use instead.
6. Select a few examples that students have found and draw out the key words to ensure students have a clear understanding of the content. Alternatively, present them with a broad definition like 'any hurtful or unwanted behaviour perpetrated upon an individual by another person or persons. Includes physical, psychological, sexual, social, financial, spiritual and emotional'.⁶⁰

Ask each pair to record these acts on the board/butcher's paper according to location (e.g. classroom, sporting field, schoolyard, toilets, online, to and from school). Ask students to explain why they consider these to be violent acts. For each behaviour ask the following:

- What impact might this have on the victim and the perpetrator?
 - What impact might this have on the people around them?
 - What would be the short- and long-term consequences of this behaviour?
7. Give each student a copy of the handout 'H16 Sexual harassment and violence in schools'. Students will need to place each scenario on the map of their school in accordance with where they think this behaviour might occur. If you would like this activity to be more energising, you can draw a larger map of the school on the board, blow up a copy and project it onto a wall or even recreate the school map in the classroom (using tables and chairs to divide spaces) and get students to move around the room and place their scenario cards on the larger map. If this is not possible, students can simply work in pairs and do the mapping exercise on the maps they were given at the start of the activity.

This information will need to be collected at the end of this session, as students will continue working on it in the first activity of Session 6.



You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction page 12.



Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

Let students know the next session is going to be looking at a range of scenarios related to sexual and gender harassment and violence that can take place in the school. It is important to make wellbeing staff and leaders aware of the content you will be covering to ensure they can follow up with students that may be vulnerable or require support.

Teacher check-in

This is one of the first activities in the BRR resource to refer to 'pornography'. Jesse's case study looks at the distribution of pornography via mobile phone. Depending on the students, this might be an appropriate time to discuss the meaning of 'pornography'. Most definitions include something like 'printed or visual material containing the explicit description or display of sexual organs or activity, intended to stimulate sexual excitement'⁶¹ or 'explicit depiction, in pictures, writing, or other material, of sexual subjects or activity in a manner intended to arouse'.⁶²

Although we know students accidentally and intentionally come across pornography⁶³, we cannot assume Year 8 students are familiar with it. This issue therefore needs to be handled sensitively. It should not be presented in any way as a request or encouragement for students to go home and see what they can find online. It is best to deal with pornography in a matter-of-fact way so students know what the word means. This is where the ground rules will be crucial to the running of the class and ensuring that inappropriate comments are not made. You should be prepared and ready to answer student questions prior to undertaking this activity.

Who plays where and occupies what spaces in the school ground?

Who is using sports equipment, and what equipment are they using?

Who is physically active and who isn't?

Who occupies most space in the school ground?

Who is using the library?

Who is using the café?

Who uses most sports equipment?

What forms of bullying/violence/harassment do you observe being used to exclude some groups of people from certain spaces and equipment?

- A. Dainton, a Year 9 boy, has been making sexual jokes about a new girl Jarrah, to a mixed group of students in his class. Jarrah feels humiliated and scared and wishes she could go back to her old school.
- B. Since Kym broke up with her boyfriend Thomas, her friends don't ask her to hang out anymore. They say she has broken up the friendship group, but she didn't feel close to Thomas anymore. Her friends still hang out with Thomas. She received an anonymous message that said she should die. She feels, scared, sad and confused.
- C. Ella is regularly cornered in the corridor and told she is a 'slut' by Kirk, a boy she rejected. Recently he has started sending her nudes of men and tagging his friends.
- D. Whenever Jay goes to the toilet, there is a group of boys who hang out in the corridor and make comments about his gender and sexuality. They say things like 'Hey Jay, are you a boy or a girl?' or 'That's a gay haircut!' Jay told his home room teacher who suggested he change his hair cut and start acting more like a boy.
- E. Gia has stopped playing netball at lunch time because Nash, a boy she doesn't even know, just leans on the wall a few metres away and stares at her. It makes her feel uncomfortable.
- F. Georgia likes Tri a lot. At lunchtime a group of students try and make her kiss Tri but she doesn't want to. They call her frigid and she runs away crying.
- G. Camden has been dating Beck for a few months. They really like each other. Lately Camden expects Beck to pay for lunch at the school canteen and on the way home from school the last few days they have also expected Beck to pay for coffee. Beck doesn't feel comfortable about this as they work hard to earn money with a part-time job.
- H. Flynn, the class clown, hits Elijah every time he passes him in the school. Elijah tries to go another way to his locker but Flynn always sees him. The other students laugh every time it happens.
- I. Mia's boyfriend won't let her talk to other boys at school. If she does, he won't speak to her to and gets really angry and yells. Mia feels scared and avoids her male friends.
- J. A message was posted on Nadia's social media account saying she was seen giving someone oral sex at a party last weekend. Nadia refuses to go to school.
- K. Hanna's boyfriend Enzi asked her to send him a nude. At first, she said no, but when he kept on about it she finally agreed to do it, as long as he didn't show anyone. Hanna broke up with Enzi a few weeks later. Enzi was really angry and sent her nude to all his friends to get back at her. Now basically the entire school has seen it. Everywhere Hanna goes she sees people pointing at her. A boy in the year above called her a porn star. Hanna feels violated and distressed. She doesn't want to go to school and feels like she can't trust anyone.
- L. Jesse's friends collect porn on their phones and show each other their latest additions at school. They often show Jesse too and hassle him for not having his own collection. Sometimes they say he must be gay if he's not into porn. Jesse doesn't like the way women are treated in porn – the way they are spoken to and the things that are done to them. It does not seem sexy to Jesse. He doesn't understand why his friends think it's cool and feels uncomfortable and isolated when they want to watch.
- M. Abia and 2 friends are refugees who have just arrived from Syria. Their English is developing well but they still struggle with speaking and understanding English. They are followed regularly at lunchtime by a group of Year 9 boys who laugh and snigger at them, telling them they look like lesbians with their short hair and no boyfriends. Lately they feel scared and have been forced to stay in the library all lunchtime.
- N. Sam gets at least one message a day from a boy in the school rowing club asking them for sex and commenting on how 'fit' they are. It makes Sam feel sick and Sam has stopped going to rowing training. The boy never speaks to Sam at school or rowing practise.
- O. At least once a week Henrick is bailed up at the school gate by a group of older girls and asked to hand over his canteen money. He feels scared and embarrassed and so he does it.
- P. Cedar struggles to concentrate in drama because there is so much noise. Because of this they are allowed to wear headphones. Pip constantly walks past and when the teacher isn't looking uses sign language to ask Cedar for a kiss. Cedar feels humiliated.

- Q. Gracie loves football and is really keen to play on school team next term. She knows it will be a bit of a challenge because her sight and hearing have been damaged through a childhood illness. Her mum reckons it won't matter because she comes from a long line of famous Aboriginal football stars and she is fast and strong like them. When she goes to the tryouts, Daisy, one of the other girls starts laughing and making comments that only people with good hearing and sight will be able to play. A group of students she is standing with all turn to look at her. She leaves the tryouts.
- R. Rizka wears beautiful headscarves to school. Her scarves come all the way from Indonesia and the designs are so cool and colourful that her friends are always asking if she could get some for them. But not everyone thinks they are beautiful. Slamet, a boy she doesn't really know, whose father works with her father, constantly tells her that she is not in Indonesia now and should not wear headscarves to school. In the last week he has tried to pull her scarf off on 2 occasions.
- S. A week after Noah got his new iPhone he was sent a sexual image at school. The girl was in his year level and she was completely naked and smiling at the camera. Noah was told that she had taken the picture for her boyfriend, but when they split up the ex-boyfriend sent it on to all his friends, and it's now being spread throughout the school. It seems like nearly everyone has seen it and thought it was funny. Noah doesn't want to receive images like this. He wonders how the girl feels about it and feels sorry for her. He is worried about having it on his phone.

Understanding sexual harassment



Learning outcomes

- Students will identify the nature of sexual harassment, including homophobia and transphobia.
- Students will describe impacts and outcomes of sexual harassment on victims and perpetrators.
- Students will identify the unlawful nature of sexual harassment.
- Students will identify strategies for dealing with harassment and violence in schools.



Activities

- Mapping gender and violence at our school
- What is sexual harassment?



Time Required

- 115 minutes



Handouts

- **H16** Sexual harassment and violence in schools ((from session 5)
- **H17** What is sexual harassment?
- **H18** Sexual harassment data
- **H19** What's the legal situation with sexual harassment?

Additional resources

- A box for scenarios and student responses
- A copy of the Department of Education's harassment policy. The current policy can be found at:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/Pages/SexualHarassment.aspx>

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this session contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. See the Introduction on page 10 of this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

About this session

Provide content advice and inform students that they will be learning about sexual harassment in this lesson. It is recommended that you consult with the student wellbeing leader or other relevant wellbeing staff to ensure there are no related issues you should be aware of, like current or past cases of sexual harassment involving the students in your class.

This session looks specifically at the issue of sexual harassment. It is designed to help students understand what sexual harassment is and the implications for those who experience it and those who perpetrate it. Students may reflect on their own experiences during this session, so ensure a safe environment and inform students prior to the session that they will be looking at sexual harassment.

It is also important to check in with wellbeing staff so they are aware of the content you are covering, any students that may be survivors of sexual harassment or any other issues that may be happening in young people's lives that may impact on their participation in the activity.

Activity 1: Mapping gender and violence at our school

Group: The whole class and/or small groups

Time: 40 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handouts:
 - **H16** Sexual harassment and violence in schools
 - **H17** What is sexual harassment?
- Hand out the student maps from Session 5, Activity 1: Safe spaces in our schools

Background

This activity builds on the last activity in Session 5, using the same case studies to encourage students to think more broadly about violence and its causes and effects.

Procedure

1. Hand students their maps from the last session, or display the large map that they all worked on. The maps should list each of the scenarios from 'H16 Sexual harassment and violence in schools'.
2. Cut up each of the scenarios from 'H16 Sexual harassment and violence in schools' and place them in a box in the middle of the room. Choose one scenario at a time (or get students to choose one), read it out and discuss. This activity could also be done in small groups.
3. Discuss why the scenarios are examples of violence and harassment. You may need to prompt students to bring out issues like violation of rights, victims, and people who have used violence and shown lack of respect. As a large group, discuss the following questions:
 - Do you think these are realistic examples of what happens in school?
 - How might the victim or survivor of the violence have felt?
 - What might the short and long-term consequences be?
 - What should have been done in this incident?
4. Ask students to reflect on the examples of violence and harassment that you have just discussed. You could display them or give students a handout of all the examples. As a large group, identify which scenarios do not involve a gender-based or sexual behaviour. Remove these or ask students to cross them out. Have students discuss the following questions:

- Who were more frequently victims?
- Who was more frequently using violence?
- Was there any difference in the type of violence carried out by different groups of students, for example, by girls, boys, gender and sexually diverse students, older or younger students, and so on?

5. Explain to students that this type of harassment is called sexual harassment and is against the law. Give each student a copy of 'H17 What is sexual harassment?' and go through the information on the handout with students. Use the harassment and violence situation cards you have just discussed to identify the examples that constitute sexual harassment.



You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction page 12.

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual behaviour that could make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated where a reasonable person could have anticipated that reaction in the circumstances. It can be a symptom of gender inequality and most often – but not always – affects women. Sexual harassment can be a single incident or repeated behaviour; a suggestive comment or an offensive joke. It may happen in the office, at a work party or at school. It doesn't matter what the intention is, sexual harassment is against the law. Sexual harassment includes:

- an unwelcome sexual advance
- an unwelcome request for sexual favours
- any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment can be physical, verbal or written. Examples include:

- comments about someone's private life or the way they look
- sexually suggestive behaviour like leering or staring
- brushing up against someone, touching, fondling or hugging
- sexually suggestive comments or jokes
- displaying offensive images or objects
- repeated requests to go out
- requests for sex
- sexually explicit emails, text messages or posts on social media
- sexual assault
- suggestive behaviour.

What if it was just a joke?

Sometimes people accused of sexual harassment say they were only joking. But jokes can still be insulting, threatening and unwelcome. It doesn't matter what the intention is – sexual harassment is against the law in certain areas of public life such as work and school.

In the workplace, training can help staff and colleagues understand the difference between a harmless joke and sexual harassment.

Where does it happen?

Victoria's *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* makes sexual harassment against the law in certain areas of public life, including:

- at work
- at school
- getting or using services
- renting or buying a house
- in shops.

Some types of sexual harassment may also be offences under criminal law, for example, indecent exposure, stalking and sexual assault, as well as obscene or threatening communications like phone calls, letters, emails, text messages and posts on social media.¹

Under the Commonwealth's *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* it is unlawful for:

- a teacher or student over the age of 16 to sexually harass a student
- a student over the age of 16 to sexually harass a teacher.

Victorian students are also protected under Victoria's *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*, which prohibits the sexual harassment of any person seeking admission to, or any student within an educational institution.²

Developing a sexual harassment policy

The Australian Human Rights Commission provides a detailed worksheet on developing a sexual harassment policy, with up-to-date legal information. It can be found on the Commission's website at:

<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/rights-ed-tackling-sexual-harassment-resource-sheet-developing-sexual-harassment-policy>.

¹ <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/projects/sexual-harassment-code-practice-what-sexual-harassment>

² https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/education/tackling_sexual_harassment/rightsED_Tackling_sexual_harassment_front.pdf

Activity 2: What is sexual harassment?

Group: Small group and the whole class

Time: 20 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handout:
 - **H18** Sexual harassment data
- A copy of the Department of Education's sexual harassment policy.

Background

Consider visiting the Australian Bureau of Statistics to ensure the data you are using in this class is as current as possible. Data can be found at: <https://www.abs.gov.au/>



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Procedure

1. Provide content advice and inform students that this session looks at sexual harassment in more detail (as discussed at the end of the last session).
2. Give each student a copy of the handout 'H18 Sexual harassment data' and ask them to spend 5 minutes reading the information.
3. Organise students into groups of 4 or 5 and ask them to analyse the findings in relation to the following:
 - gender, age and sexuality
 - the rates of violence boys or men are responsible for and against who
 - the rates of violence girls or women are responsible for and against who
 - whether there are other cohorts of people who are using violence. If so who they are, and against who they are violent?
 - what types of sexual harassment are most prevalent?
 - what patterns are evident?
4. As a whole class, briefly discuss the data based on these questions:
 - Who generally did the harassing?
 - Who is most likely to be harassed?
 - Do you think the types of sexual harassment would be the same for people your age? How and why might they differ?

(Provide examples of sexual harassment that young people may experience, for example: other students making sexual jokes or remarks about people's bodies; sending nude photos around via phones or computers; brushing up against someone; touching or hugging without consent; writing suggestive texts, sending explicit emails or showing sexual pictures; showing sexual pictures to other people on the internet or phone; making sexual gestures; pressuring or forcing someone into doing something sexual.)

- How commonly do you think sexual harassment occurs for young people?
- What might make it difficult for someone to recognise, talk about or report sexual harassment?
- How could your school respond to students reporting experiences of sexual harassment? (For example, involve wellbeing or other school leaders; restorative meeting to repair harm; apology; other consequences.)

Teacher note:

It's important to clarify that some forms of sexual harassment may also be offences under criminal law, such as pressuring or forcing someone into doing something sexual, sexual assault, and threatening communications. More information can be found at:

<https://www.vic.gov.au/what-sexual-assault>

Information and guidance on student sexual offending can be found in the Department's Student Sexual Offending and Problem Sexual Behaviour policy:

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-sexual-behaviours/policy>



You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction page 12.



Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics¹ 2021-2022 sexual harassment data²:

- **1.3 million women** had experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months. Of these women:
 - **70%** experienced face-to-face harassment
 - **57%** experienced harassment electronically
 - **97%** were harassed by a male perpetrator
- **426,800 men** had experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months.
 - **66.4%** experienced face-to-face harassment
 - **55%** experienced harassment electronically
 - **72.8%** were harassed by a male perpetrator

Prevalence rates

In 2021-22, an estimated 1.7 million people (8.7%) experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months, including:

- **13% of women** (1.3 million)
- **4.5% of men** (426,800)

Prevalence rates by sex of perpetrator

- **For women, the perpetrator of sexual harassment was most often a male:**
 - **1.2 million women** (12%) experienced sexual harassment by a male
 - **110,900 women** (1.1%) experienced sexual harassment by a female
- **Men were about as likely to experience sexual harassment by a male as by a female.**
 - **310,800 men** (3.3%) experienced sexual harassment by a male
 - **250,400 men** (2.6%) experienced sexual harassment by a female

Women who experienced sexual harassment were more likely to experience it by a male than by a female:

- **97% (1.2 million)** experienced sexual harassment by a male
- **8.9% (110,900)** experienced sexual harassment by a female

Of women who experienced sexual harassment, more experienced it by a known person (63%) than by a stranger (55%), including the following known perpetrator types:

- **27% (332,400)** by a work/professional relationship
- **20% (244,700)** by an acquaintance or neighbour
- **15% (193,000)** by an intimate partner
- **14% (170,900)** by a friend or housemate

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021-22). Sexual harassment. ABS. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/sexual-harassment/latest-release>.

² The 2021-22 PSS was conducted between March 2021 and May 2022 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout this time, government policies were in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19, including stay-at-home orders, border control measures, limits on gatherings, and social distancing rules. The survey results should be understood and interpreted within the broader context of the wide-ranging changes to everyday life during the pandemic.

Proportion of women who experienced each sexual harassment behaviour:

	%
Inappropriate comments about body or sex life	63.4
Indecent text, email or post	40.4
Unwanted touching, grabbing, kissing or fondling	32.1
Exposure to pictures or videos that the person did not wish to see	17.6
Indecent phone call	13.6
Indecent exposure	10.1
Distributing or posting pictures or videos of the person without their consent	4.1

Prevalence rates by age

	%
18 to 24	35
25 to 34	20.8
35 to 44	12.5
45 to 54	9
55 to 64	6.3
65 and over	3.2

Sexual Orientation

Women who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or who used a different term such as asexual, pansexual or queer were more likely to have experienced sexual harassment (37%) than women who identified as heterosexual (11%).

For both groups, the majority of those who experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months experienced it by a male perpetrator.

Disability

Women with disability were more likely to have experienced sexual harassment (14%) than women without disability (12%).

Sexual harassment behaviours

Of the 1.3 million women who experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months:

- **63% (792,900)** received inappropriate comments about their body or sex life
- **40% (505,100)** received an indecent text, email, or post
- **32% (401,700)** experienced unwanted touching, grabbing, kissing, or fondling
- **18% (220,100)** were exposed to pictures or videos, which were sexual in nature, that they did not wish to see
- **14% (170,300)** received an indecent phone call
- **10% (126,900)** experienced indecent exposure
- **4.1% (51,700)** had pictures or videos of themselves, which were sexual in nature, distributed or posted without their consent

Number of sexual harassment behaviours experienced

Of the 1.3 million women who experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months, nearly half (45%) experienced more than one harassment behaviour, including:

- **23% (293,000)** who experienced two behaviours
- **12% (145,100)** who experienced three behaviours
- **9.5% (119,300)** who experienced four or more behaviours

At school

As a student you are entitled to an education free of sexual harassment. The same applies to teachers - they are entitled to a workplace free from harassment.

Schools have an obligation to deal with sexual harassment and all other forms of bullying.

Sexual harassment by a member of staff

Regardless of your age, it is unlawful for a teacher to sexually harass you.

Sexual harassment by another student

Regardless of your age, it is unlawful for an adult student to sexually harass you. Certain types of bullying, about sex or sex-based characteristics, may also be sexual harassment.

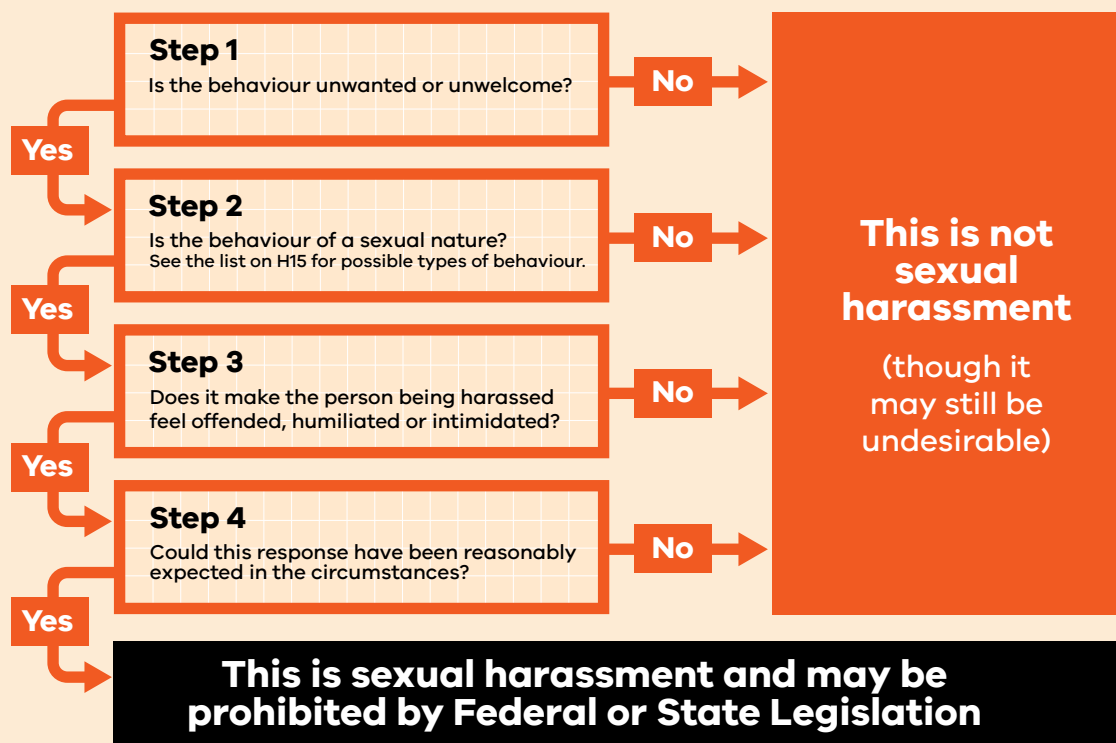
Who is responsible?

Anyone aged over 16 is considered an 'adult student', which means they are personally liable for sexually harassing another student or teacher. If you are harassed, you may be able to lodge a complaint against the student and, in some cases, against the school.

In Victoria, a legal complaint of sexual harassment can not be made against another student if the harasser is under 10 years of age. In these circumstances, please notify the school immediately. Every Victorian school has a duty of care to protect students from harassment and discrimination.

What does that mean and how does it apply to real situations?

Follow the steps in the flowchart below to decide:





Learning outcomes

- Students will identify their own expectations in relation to gender.
- Students will identify implications of narrow understandings of gender.



Activities

- Rewriting the script



Time Required

- 60 minutes



Handouts

- **H16 Sexual harassment and violence in schools (from session 5)**

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this session contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. See the Introduction on page 10 of this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

About this session

This is one of the final sessions in Unit 1. It is designed to review the information, understandings and skills covered in the unit and finish with the modelling of respectful practises. The session requires students to engage in role-plays, so if you are unfamiliar or inexperienced with these practises you could consider checking in with a colleague who teaches drama. Resources to assist teachers to incorporate drama into teaching and learning activities can be found by searching 'drama techniques' on ARC: <https://arc.educationapps.vic.gov.au/home>. One of the key features of role-play is the briefing and debriefing process. Adequate briefing at the beginning enables students to be clear about what they need to do to get into role. Debriefing is possibly more important as it is how the role-play is analysed but also provides a structure for students to de-role. This is very important as students may be playing a character being harassed or doing the harassing and may feel very uncomfortable about this in real life.

Activity 1: Rewriting the script

Group: Small groups and the whole class
Time: 60 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handout:
 - **H16 Sexual harassment and violence in schools.**
- Cut the scenarios into sections so that they can be used individually.
- Provide a large space for students to practise their role-plays.

Background

It is important for students to have participated in Sessions 5 and 6 prior to this final session. The activity uses the violence and harassment examples that students have been working with over the last 2 sessions, so they should be familiar with them and with ways to address and prevent these types of situations.

Ensure you have informed students that they will be role-playing these situations.

This activity incorporates several drama techniques. A freeze-frame is used in which

students develop an action shot from the violence and harassment examples. They play it, then freeze it, and students analyse it. It also incorporates still images (the freeze) and improvisation. Then the rest of the class rewrites the frame to demonstrate how it would look if the situation was a respectful one, and then the frame is brought to life, showing bystanders taking action, victims voicing their feelings and so on. Students use improvisation to replay the example. You might like to ask a colleague who teaches drama to provide some advice or assistance if you have not used these techniques before.

Procedure

1. Provide content advice and inform students that this unit of work will be looking at negative gender and sexuality situations and what can be done to care for self and care for others.
2. Inform students that they are going to have a chance to show their drama skills.
3. Divide students into groups of 4 or 5. Some of the examples only involve one or 2 people; however, students can think about how they could include all students. Give each group 2 of the violence and harassment examples from 'H16 Sexual harassment and violence in schools'. Ensure that all types of sexual harassment are covered, for example:
 - unwanted touching
 - staring and leering
 - suggestive comments or jokes
 - sexually explicit photos, etc.
 - unwanted invitations to go on a date
 - requests for sex
 - intrusive questions about your personal/private life
 - insults, name calling or taunts based on your sex
 - derogatory graffiti
 - sexually explicit text messages, social media posts, emails and so on.
4. Ask students to develop a short scenario based on one of the situations they have been given. If time permits, they will also write a short scenario for another situation. One person tells the rest of the class what the scenario involves. If the scenario involves only 2 people, ensure that other students in the group are present as friends or bystanders.
5. The rest of the class must tell them how they could change the scenario to demonstrate what could happen to stop the situation and demonstrate respect in the situation.
6. The teacher will say 'play' and the group improvises to replay the situation. Finish each scenario by discussing whether the strategies

worked and ask students to think about what else would need to happen to prevent sexual harassment occurring.

7. Give each group 5 minutes to write out their scenarios. The tasks for the rest of the class are to advise the group performing how the situation could be changed to prevent, stop or change the situation to one that demonstrates respectful relationships.
8. As a whole class, discuss the following questions:
 - What barriers might prevent the victim, perpetrator or bystanders from taking these actions?

Encourage students to think about the way barriers that intersect can work together such as age, gender and sexuality. For example, take the Abia example below. Students will need think about the way that having English as an additional language impacts understanding of derogatory comments and intersects with gender and age. These intersections result in the girl's movement in the school yard being reduced, whereas for the boys their higher year level and access to language increases the power they have to harass. Although other girls whose first language is English may have their freedoms reduced by such comments from the boys, refugee status and lack of familiarity with English can add another level of trauma. English speaking girls may have the language to retaliate or speak to a teacher or the librarian.

Abia and 2 friends are refugees who have just arrived from Syria. Their English is developing well but they still struggle with speaking and understanding English. They are followed regularly at lunchtime by a group of Year 9 boys who just laugh and snigger at them, telling them they look like lesbians with their short hair and no boyfriends. Lately they feel scared and have been forced to stay in the library all lunchtime.

- What enablers or encouraging factors might help the victim, perpetrator or bystanders to take the suggested actions?
 - What can we as individuals do to reduce the barriers and increase the enablers? (E.g., encourage friends to be respectful, challenge each other about attitudes, show support for victims, and tell people when we disagree with their actions.)
9. Introduce the concept of taking an ethical approach to intimate relationships⁶⁴. Explain to students that this means that thinking in terms of ethics helps us to assess decisions we make on behalf of ourselves and other people. This involves asking ourselves the following questions:
 - How do I care for myself?

- How do I care for others?
- How do I negotiate the situation? What sort of situation? Tricky? Sexual? Ethically challenging?
- What has or could be the outcome of the decision I make? How could I do things differently to make sure I not only care for myself, but I care for others?

For example, to unpack the 'Sam' scenario from H15, you would be asking students to think about:

- How Sam cares for themselves so that they are not harassed on their phone? What could they do to stop the harassment?
- Is there anyone else in this scenario that also needs care? Who and what do they need? Will this impact on Sam and the person who is making the phone calls? How?
- Who may Sam have to negotiate with? From past experience and reflection how could they do this while still caring for themselves and others?

In the Flynn scenario, prompt students to think about:

- How Elijah cares for themselves and others involved in the scenario
- How Flynn and the other students care for themselves and others
- What needs to be negotiated in this scenario and with whom
- What reflection needs to be undertaken.

Ask the groups to revisit their scenarios to ensure the practices are ethical. What had to be changed to ensure an ethical approach?



You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction page 12.



Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

How to help a friend



Learning outcomes

- Students will reflect on the impact and outcome of sex-based harassment.
- Students will identify how they could help a friend who is experiencing harassment and violence.



Activities

- How to help a friend
- Taking a standp



Time Required

- 60 minutes



Handouts

- **H16** Sexual harassment and violence in schools (from session 5)
- **H20** Where to go for help
- **H21** Common responses to experiences of violence
- **H22** What can I do to help a friend?
- **H23** Responses to scenario activity

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this session contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. See the [Introduction on page 10](#) of this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

About this session

This session aims to provide students with the necessary tools to support a friend who may be experiencing violence. It also develops an understanding of the impact and outcome of violence on the lives of victims and survivors, as well as some strategies to take action.

Activity 1: How to help a friend

Group: The whole class and pairs

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handouts:
 - **H20** Where to go for help
 - **H21** Common responses to experiences of violence
 - **H22** What can I do to help a friend?
 - 'Scenario cards' from **H16** Harassment and violence in schools
 - **H23** Responses to scenario activity

Procedure

1. Provide content advice and inform students that this lesson will use the violence and harassment scenarios used in the last few activities to explore how we can help a friend.
2. Provide students with the following definition of gender-based violence:

Gender-based violence refers to any behaviour, directed at any person, or that affects a person, because of their sex, gender or sexual orientation, or because they do not adhere to socially prescribed gender roles, that creates a risk to health and safety. It refers to any violence that has a gender basis and includes violence against women and gender and sexually diverse people such as, domestic violence, sexual harassment and sexual assault, face to face and online.

3. Ask students to briefly brainstorm as a whole class what they think some common responses might be to experiencing gender-based violence, such as those detailed in the scenarios from previous sessions. Remind students of the broad nature of the violence and the different sorts of violence being discussed (social, emotional, spiritual, physical, verbal, emotional, mental and so on). Write their responses up on the board.
4. Give each student a copy of 'H21 Common responses to experiences of violence' and note which types of emotional response students didn't identify. Work through the handout as a wider group, asking students to think of different examples for each emotional response. Note that the handout provides a sample of emotions. Emotions not listed on the handout are valid responses to violence – any response that a victim survivor has is valid.
5. Give each student a copy of 'H22 What can I do to help a friend?' and discuss the importance of listening to and believing your friend, using the following questions as a guide:
 - Why do you think it's important to believe your friend? (E.g., because victims/survivors are often afraid no-one will believe what has happened to them.)
 - Why do you think it's important to listen to your friend? (E.g., so they can tell the story their way and don't feel like you are judging them or asking too many questions.)
 - Why do you think you should keep it secret and ask your friend what kind of help they want? (E.g., Because people who have been sexually assaulted often feel like things are out of their control, so it's good to support them to be empowered and in control.)
6. Explain to students that they're now going to have an opportunity to practise responding to a friend who has experienced violence, using some of same scenarios from the previous activity.
7. Give each student a copy of the handout 'H16 Sexual harassment and violence in schools'. Ask them to select a scenario that they'd like to act out in pairs. They must pick one that they haven't used in previous sessions. Ask students to read through their chosen scenario and think about which common emotional responses that person may experience. Students can tick the box on the 'H23 Responses to scenario activity' for each emotion.
8. Explain that students will have 5 minutes to do a role-play, where one person acts as the character on the card, and the other person acts as the friend supporting that victim, using the strategies listed on the handout 'H22 What can I do to help a friend?' as a guide.

Then the pairs will swap roles to allow all students to practise responding effectively.

9. Ask students to come back into the group and have a short discussion based on the following questions:
 - How did you feel doing that activity?
 - Was it hard or confronting?
 - Do you feel like you did a good job?
 - What, if anything, would you do differently?
 - How do you think you would feel if a friend came and talked to you about sexual harassment?
10. To end the discussion, acknowledge that this is something that can be very difficult to talk about. Explain that though peers are a very important source of support because young people are more likely to seek advice and support from friends, students are not expected to be counsellors and there are lots of places to go for help and support. The handout 'H20 Where to go for help' provides some useful numbers and websites that you can write on the board, post to classroom pages or photocopy and hand out to students.



You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction page 12.

Parents/carers

Parents and carers aim to look after you, care for you and support you. Often this makes them the best people to go to for help. However, that may not always be the case for everyone, or for every issue you want help with.

If you decide to talk with them about a concern, find a suitable time and place. Tell them if privacy is important to you, but understand there may be times they need to tell others to help keep you safe, to get additional help or advice or to work out with you what might be a good way forward.

Parents and carers can provide reassurance and advice. However, they aren't always experts in health or legal matters. Sometimes their advice may not be enough, or not quite what you need, and sometimes it might be hard to give them the full picture about what is going on for you. Parents and carers may also be dealing with a lot themselves and may not be able to respond exactly as you hope. However, they may be able to help you start looking for help from another family member, a counsellor, doctor, school nurse, teacher, parent, psychologist or helpline. Parents and carers might also be able to provide practical support, like getting you to appointments or providing the financial support you need to get help. If money is a problem, they may be able to seek support from agencies who can help. See below for more information about the cost of different options for professional help.

Friends

If you let a trusted friend know you want to talk, they might be able to encourage and reassure you if you decide to seek professional help.

Friends can make you feel better and give you advice. They may know you well, which helps, but friends aren't experts in health or legal matters. Sometimes their advice may not be enough, or not quite what you need, and sometimes it might be hard to give them the full picture about what is going on for you. However, if you decide to ask them for support, friends can help you look for help from a counsellor, doctor, school nurse, teacher, parent, psychologist or helpline.

It's important to remember that some friends may not feel comfortable discussing what is bothering you.

Teachers

A teacher you trust can play an important role in guiding you to get the help you need. They might ask you some questions to understand what you need help with. Teachers can encourage you, help you stay connected to learning and to school, and apply special consideration.

Arrange a time to talk with your teacher when they aren't teaching or busy. If they think you need more specialised or ongoing help, they'll connect you to the school counsellor or wellbeing support services. Teachers and other school staff will listen and respond to your concerns. They will respect your privacy, but they can't promise to keep a discussion confidential and they may need to act if you tell them about harm or abuse. There may also be times they need to talk to school leaders, or report to other authorities like the police to help keep you safe, to get additional advice or to work out with you what might be a good way forward.

As mandatory reporters, teachers must make a report to Victoria Police or DFFH Child Protection if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- a child has suffered or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse or sexual abuse
- the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

School mental health practitioner, counsellor or wellbeing leader

Your school may have a mental health practitioner, counsellor or wellbeing leader available for you to speak to. You can ask a trusted teacher to refer you to them. A trusted parent, carer or friend may also help you to access this support. School counsellors will listen to what's going on and help you to deal with the issues you're facing, or help you to find a more useful way of thinking about issues. They can talk with parents or carers on your behalf if you need them to. They can talk with your teachers if you need help with workload or deadlines. They may be able to direct you to sources of financial assistance if needed.

The services provided by your school's wellbeing team are free. Mental health practitioners, counsellors and wellbeing leaders are skilled at working with young people. They understand the kinds of things you may need help with. If they think you need more specialised or ongoing help, they can help you to access this. They may refer you to other agencies to get more support. Your school's wellbeing team will also continue to play a role in supporting you and your educational needs.

If you feel there is a risk to your safety (for example, you require the support of the police), your school's wellbeing team can help to ensure you get the support you need.

Doctor (GP)

Doctors are trained in supporting people who are having difficulties with their mental health. They can connect you to a psychologist or psychiatrist and should know about the kinds of services available in your area. There are no laws that stop you from seeing the doctor without your parents or guardians. However, if you plan on going alone, you should contact the doctors' office beforehand to confirm you want the appointment to be kept private. When you are under the age of 18 you are considered a 'mature minor'. Health professionals working with children can decide that you are capable of making your own decisions if they're satisfied that you have 'sufficient maturity, understanding and intelligence' to grasp the nature and effect of your decision.

If you go to a bulk-billing clinic, Medicare will cover the entire cost of your appointment with a doctor. At other clinics, you may have to pay a 'gap' fee. As a student, ask for bulk-billing when you make an appointment. Some schools participate in the Doctors in Secondary Schools program and have a doctor at the school on certain days of the week. Seeing this doctor is free.

Doctors will respect your privacy. However, if they reasonably believe a person under the age of 16 is in need of protection from physical injury, family violence, sexual abuse or suicide risk, they will engage other support services in a respectful way to keep you safe and get you the help you need.

Psychologist

Psychologists have specialist training in diagnosing, treating and preventing mental health problems. They will help you manage your mental health. They often specialise in different areas and approaches, so sometimes you have to find the right person for your needs. Some schools have a psychologist on staff that you can see for free. A local GP can also help you to connect with a psychologist.

If you get a referral from your GP, you may be covered by Medicare to visit a psychologist for up to 10 sessions in one year. Depending on which psychologist you go to, Medicare may cover the whole fee. However, sometimes there will be a gap that you will have to pay. It's okay to ask questions about how much a service might cost before you make an appointment. Medicare is not available for all international students, so international students should check which services they are eligible for.

Your privacy will be protected when you see a psychologist. However, psychologists are mandatory reporters who must make a report to Victoria Police or DFFH Child Protection if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- a child has suffered or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse or sexual abuse
- the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

A psychologist who reasonably believes that you are in need of protection from physical injury, family violence, sexual abuse or suicide risk, may engage other support services in a respectful way to keep you safe and get you the help you need.

Helplines

Headspace

Hours: Available 9am-1am 7 days a week

Call: 1800 650 890

Visit: <https://headspace.org.au/online-and-phone-support/>

You can have a confidential chat with Headspace professional counsellors over the phone or on their online WebChat. You can also email Headspace and someone will respond to you within 2 days. Headspace focuses on support for people aged 12 to 25. It's a safe space if you are unsure of what help you need, if you want advice, or maybe just want to talk things through. Young people or family members must register to use the service. You don't need to provide a full name, but you will need to provide an email address. You don't need to provide your name on the phone either.

A call to Headspace is free from a landline, payphone and most mobile phones. However, some mobile phone providers charge for the call, so you might need to check with your provider. Let Headspace know if you are calling from a mobile and they can call you back.

If you go to a local Headspace office for follow up, services are either free or low cost. Some services require you to have a referral from a GP, but Headspace can help you with this too. You can also create a Headspace account for instant 24/7 access to a range of online tools and support for your mental health. It is possible to build connections in a community of like-minded young people, join group chats, create your own personalised space, and get professional one-on-one support, all online and for free.

Headspace also offers *Strength in my roots* resources with mental health information and resources for multicultural young people: <https://headspace.org.au/our-impact/campaigns/cultural-identity/>

1800RESPECT

Hours: Available 24/7

Call: 1800 737 732

Visit: <https://www.1800RESPECT.org.au/>

1800RESPECT provides free information, counselling and support services for people of all genders who have experienced sexual assault or family violence (past or recent), as well as their friends and family. It provides a 24-hour crisis response for people who have experienced a recent sexual assault.

1800RESPECT also offers support groups, professional consultations, and education and training.

Calling 1800RESPECT is free from a landline, payphone and most mobile phones. However, some mobile phone providers do charge for these calls, so you will need to check with your provider.

Note that the 1800RESPECT telephone number will appear on your mobile phone bill. This means that anyone who can see your mobile phone bill will be able to see that a call was made to 1800RESPECT.

There is no charge for using the 1800RESPECT online chat.

Safe Steps

Hours: Available 24/7

Call: 1800 015 188

Visit: <http://www.safesteps.org.au/>

Safe Steps provides free specialist support services for anyone in Victoria who is experiencing or afraid of family violence. Their family violence specialists can support people to find safety.

Sexual Assault Crisis Line

Hours: Available from 5pm to 9am weeknights, weekend nights and public holidays

Call: 1800 806 292

Visit: sasvic.org.au

The Sexual Assault Crisis Line, provided by Sexual Assault Services Victoria, provides crisis counselling for victims of sexual assault. Sexual Assault Services Victoria can help you decide what to do and work with you to recover from the effects of sexual assault. There are locations throughout Victoria. Visit sasvic.org.au to locate the nearest centre.

Helplines

Rainbow Door

Hours: Available 10am to 5pm, 7 days a week

Call: 1800 729 367

Text: 0480 017 246

Visit: www.rainbowdoor.org.au

Rainbow Door is a free specialist LGBTIQ+ helpline providing information, support and referral to all LGBTIQ+ Victorians, their friends and family.

Qlife Victoria

Hours: Available 3pm to midnight 7 days a week

Call: 1800 184 527

Visit: www.switchboard.org.au

Webchat

Qlife Victoria provides free, peer-based telephone and online chat support to LGBTIQ+ people of all ages. Qlife's online Webchat uses a small amount of data if you are not connected to wi-fi, but is otherwise free.

Yarning SafeNStrong

Hours: Available 24/7

Call: 1800 959 563

Email: ysns@vahs.org.au

Facebook: @YarningSafeNStrong

Visit: <https://www.vahs.org.au/yarning-safenstrong/>

Yarning SafeNStrong is a free and confidential counselling service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and families who need to have a yarn with someone about their wellbeing. They have culturally suitable counsellors who can yarn safely and who 'get it', no matter how big or small the challenge. They offer support for social and emotional wellbeing, financial wellbeing, as well as medical support and drug and alcohol counselling and rehabilitation services.

Djirra

Hours: Available 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday

Call: 1800 105 303

Visit: <https://djirra.org.au>

Djirra provides free telephone and face-to-face legal and non-legal support to Aboriginal people of all genders who are experiencing or have experienced family violence. Their work is predominantly designed by and for Aboriginal women.

Elizabeth Morgan House

Hours: Available 24/7

Call: 1800 364 297

Visit: <https://emhaws.org.au>

Elizabeth Morgan House is an Aboriginal-led peak body providing family violence services and advocacy for Aboriginal women and children in Victoria. They offer culturally safe, holistic family violence support to Aboriginal women and their children, as well as to their partners and ex-partners. They also assist with housing, financial difficulties, child protection matters, school matters, and they provide referrals and advocacy to services like legal services, medical and healthcare services, drug and alcohol counselling, financial counselling and children's services.

All times mentioned above are based on Victorian standard times (Australian Eastern Standard Time and Australian Eastern Daylight Time).

You can find more support and information about mental health in the Students – mental health and wellbeing toolkit: <https://www.vic.gov.au/students-mental-health-toolkit>

LGBTIQ+ students can find more support on the LGBTIQ+ Student Support site: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/resources>

If you need an interpreter to speak with any of the help services, the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) is available on 131 450. More information is available on the TIS National website: <https://www.tisnational.gov.au/>

Common Emotions**Thoughts and feelings of Victims / Survivors**

Powerlessness and loss of control

I feel so helpless. Will I ever be in control again?

Emotional numbness

I feel so numb. Why am I so calm? Why can't I cry?

Shock and denial

Was it really sexual harassment?
 I'm OK. I'll be all right.
 Maybe Harry didn't mean to rub up against me...
 He's not a bad person...

Guilt and shame

I feel as if I did something to make this happen.
 If only I hadn't..

Loss of confidence

I feel I can't do anything anymore...
 even the simplest things.

Embarrassment and shame

I feel so dirty, like there is something wrong
 with me now.
 Everybody has seen me naked. What will
 people think?
 I should never have let him take a picture of
 me - everyone thinks I'm a slut. I can't be a
 'normal' teenager.

Mood changes

I feel like I am going crazy!

Low self-esteem

I feel disgusted by the memories.
 I'm just worthless.
 I don't know why I didn't say anything - there
 must be something wrong with me.

Loss of trust

I don't feel safe anywhere, with anyone.

Depression

How am I going to go on? I feel so tired
 and hopeless.

Fear

I'm constantly jumpy. A sudden noise, an angry
 voice, moving bushes, and I'm afraid.

Anxiety

I feel so tense. I'm a nervous wreck.

Hostility and anger

I hate him, everyone and everything.
 I want to kill him.

Loss of sexual confidence
and comfort

I just can't bear to be touched.

Entrapment

I feel so vulnerable. I can't leave the relationship.

Isolation

I'm so alone. I just want to hide within myself.

It can be pretty full-on when someone tells you they've experienced harassment and violence. You'll probably have feelings of your own to deal with, and you might not think there's much you can do to help. The good news is that your friend trusts you enough to talk about their experience, and there are heaps of things you can do to support them. Here are some of the most important ones.

Listen

Hear what they say and try not to interrupt. Let them talk at their own pace. Show them you are listening by making eye contact and nodding. Don't worry if they stop talking for a while – silences are okay.

Believe

Try not to overdo the questions, as this can make it seem like you doubt their story. It's important that your friend sees you're on their side and that you support them.

Validate

Tell your friend that what they're feeling is right. Let them know you think their feelings are real and normal, by repeating the feeling words they've used, for example, 'It's okay that you feel scared.' Acknowledge that you have feelings about it too, but try to keep the focus on your friend.

No blame

In our society, it's common for victims to be blamed for their experience of violence. Try to avoid questions like 'Why did you go there?' or 'Why did you go out with him?' because they might make your friend think they're responsible for what happened.

Ask

Ask your friend what sort of help they'd like from you. They're not expecting you to solve the problem, and you've already done heaps just by listening. Asking will also help your friend think about what to do next.

Trust

It's important that your friend trusts you and feels like they're in control of the story. If you think someone else needs to know, like a teacher or another trusted adult, tell your friend first. You can think together about who can be trusted, but don't tell them until your friend is okay with it.

Get help

Talk with your friend about what they need or want. Encourage your friend to tell a trusted adult who can do something about it, like a relative, teacher or school wellbeing leader.

The links below provide information about the laws around sexual abuse and harassment, and advice about where to go for help:

http://www.lawstuff.org.au/vic_law/topics/

<http://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/get-legal-services-and-advice>

<http://casahouse.com.au>

<http://www.kidshelp.com.au/teens/get-help/web-counselling/>

<http://www.headspace.org.au/>

Activity 2: Taking a stand

Group: The whole class

Time: 20 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Use the 4 continuum cards from Unit 1, Session 1, Activity 1 - 'Setting the context and boundaries' with the following positions: 'Strongly agree', 'Agree', 'Disagree' and 'Strongly disagree'.
- Use the 'List of statements' provided in the 'Procedure' section below.

Background

This activity is a repeat of the very first activity in the resource. It is a finishing-off activity and will allow students to reflect on how their opinions have changed during the course of their learning.

Procedure

1. Explain to students that the next activity is a finishing-off activity. They may remember it from the first session. Explain that they are doing the activity again now to see how students' opinions and views may have changed.
2. Ask students to stand up. Place the continuum cards in 4 corners of the room or in a line. Explain that you will make a statement, and students need to move towards a card depending on what they think about the statement. It is important to inform participants that there are no right or wrong answers in this exercise. The purpose of the activity is to allow students to appreciate that people hold different views. Inform participants that they may move at any time if they find that a reason given by another person changes the way they think about the statement.

3. Read out one statement at a time and ask students to physically move to the position that best reflects their view. If necessary, use a piece of rope or string or draw a chalk line across the room and ask students to stand on that line.

Statements

- I would know how to help a friend who had been harassed.
- Girls have better family relationships than boys do.
- One person always needs to be able to take control of things in a friendship or intimate relationship.
- Boys are more interested in playing sport than in having relationships.
- You can feel close to someone without having an intimate relationship.
- Girls have it easier than boys in relationships.
- Respect is the only thing that matters in relationships.
- Sexual harassment is something that only happens to girls.

Homework (or possible assessment)

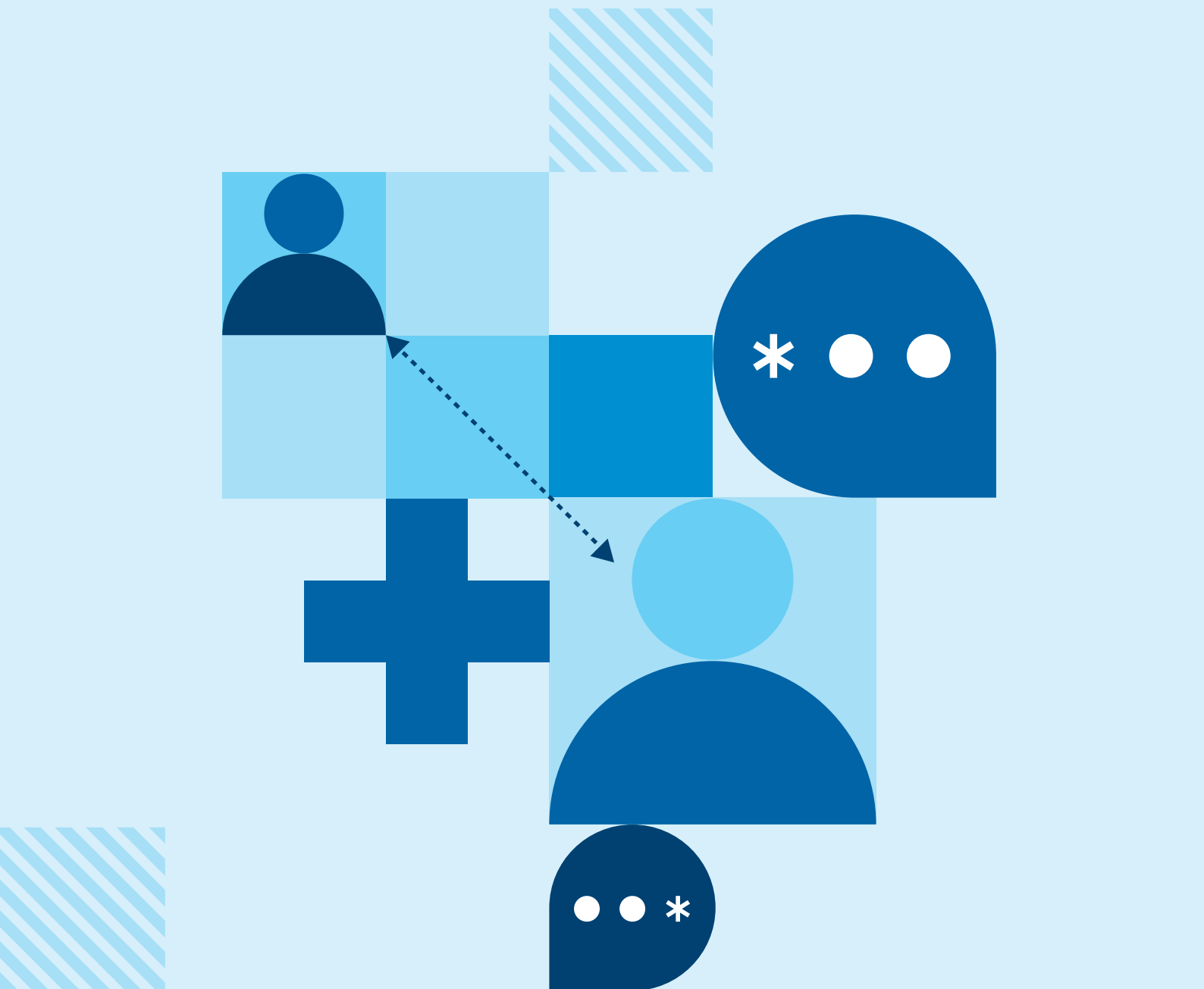
Inform students that they are required to make a one-page brochure, webpage, postcard or video clip titled ***Gender, respect and relationships: a guide for young people to inform other young people about respect and relationships***. The resource should include the following key information:

- What is gender?
- What is respect?
- What makes a respectful relationship?
- How is a respectful relationship different to a disrespectful relationship?
- Where do you go and what do you do if you need help at school?
- How do you to help a friend?

Common emotional responses

Tick all of those that might apply to your scenario

- ☐ Powerlessness and loss of control
- ☐ Mood changes
- ☐ Emotional numbness
- ☐ Low self-esteem
- ☐ Shock and denial
- ☐ Loss of trust
- ☐ Guilt and shame
- ☐ Depression
- ☐ Loss of confidence
- ☐ Fear
- ☐ Embarrassment and shame
- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Hostility and anger
- ☐ Isolation
- ☐ Loss of sexual confidence and comfort
- ☐ Entrapment



Building Respectful Relationships

Stepping out against gender based violence

Unit 2: The power connection

Unit 2

Session 1: Getting a position on gender, sex and relationships

Session 2: If respect is free, why is it so difficult to get?

Session 3: Sexual intimacy, respect and relationships

Session 4: Building an awareness of gender-based violence

Session 5: Consent and the law

Session 6: Barriers and enablers to consent

Session 7: The implications of gender-based violence

Session 8: It all comes down to respectful communication

Introduction

Unit 2: The power connection is a unit of work designed for Year 9 students. Although the teaching and learning experiences covered in the unit assume that Year 9 students have completed the foundation unit, Unit 1 'Gender, respect and relationships', it is possible to complete this unit without first doing so. If this is the case, Sessions 1 and 2 are essential to focus attention on gender and gendered sexual expectations before exploring gender and violence more explicitly.

This unit might be suitable for Year 8 students if they have already completed similar content on the nature of gender, gender expectations and sexual harassment as part of their school-based sexuality and relationships education.

This unit explores the nature of gender-based violence and consent and the implications for respectful behaviour. It enables students to consider family and intimate partner violence and sexual assault in the context of power, social and institutional structures and young people's lives. It takes a broad view of violence, covering the physical aspects as well as looking at the emotional, social and economic implications of gender-based violence, including homophobia and transphobia. It is also designed to help students understand the nature of consent, free agreement and respect and develop skills to take individual and collective action for self and others.

Timing

As with any activity, timing is only a guide and will depend on your students, the level of maturity, prior learning and student interest. Research carried out during the trial, implementation and update of these resources found that students really enjoyed activity-based experiences, enabling them to move around (for example role-play, working in groups or playing games) and being able to discuss their ideas.⁶⁵ Students maintained they learnt more by 'doing' the activities. Many teachers commented that it was difficult to keep activities to the suggested time because student interest and discussion led the class in valuable directions.

Setting up a safe space

As with Unit 1, many students undertaking this unit have been working together and have experience developing classroom rules or agreements to ensure the learning environment is trauma informed, safe and that respectful behaviours (such as listening and not allowing put-downs) are adhered to. However, some classes may be coming together for the first time or new students may have joined them. For these classes, it is essential that ground rules are established, as they provide a structure that can improve classroom management, keep students and staff safe and supported and ensure the class works effectively. It provides a framework that you can use to address inappropriate behaviour. As students will be dealing with potentially sensitive issues focusing on relationships, violence and sexuality, a structure that allows discussion of differing opinions is essential to the success of the curriculum.

Refer to [Activity 1: 'Setting the context and boundaries', in Unit 1, Session 1](#), for an activity that is designed to provide a safe space for students. This activity involves setting ground rules or agreements and providing an opportunity for students to practise using the ground rules while they work through some introductory concepts that are thematically significant to the resource.

There are additional sample statements for the 'Setting the context and boundaries' activity that are appropriate for Year 9 students. These include the following:

- The most important ingredient in a relationship is trust.
- It is easier for boys to end a relationship than it is for girls.
- If a person doesn't say no to sex then it is OK to put pressure on them.
- Sexual assault only happens to girls.
- Physical violence is more harmful than emotional or sexual violence.

- Coercive control is a form of violence.
- Sending abusive messages in online bank transfer references is a common form of harassment.
- The easiest way to end a relationship is a text message or an email.
- It would be easy to tell someone if you had been sexually assaulted.
- Understanding consent is going to help young people to know how to negotiate sexual relationships.
- Talking about sex with a partner is easy.
- I wouldn't know what to do if someone I knew was in a violent and abusive relationship.
- Pornography is a good way to learn about sex.
- Violence happens in gender and sexually diverse relationships as well as heterosexual relationships.

Ongoing reflection: keeping a journal or reflection jar

This unit requires students to undertake a great deal of personal reflection. Keeping a journal or writing ongoing reflections is a useful strategy to assist students to reflect upon and consider their reactions, emotions, the implications of the information and the understandings and skills covered in the activities. It is a useful assessment strategy, as it can be used to assess what students have gained from the unit, and also provides a written record that can be used in other assessment activities, such as creative writing. Overall, the evaluation of the resource found that reflections provided a valuable means of keeping students focused on the messages of the activities and on building assessment ideas. It is also consistent with taking an ethical approach in respectful relationships education (RRE).⁶⁶ Some reflection questions are provided throughout this unit. You may choose to include these as part of the sessions in class, or as a homework activity.

Schools also indicated that a range of assessment activities were needed to keep students engaged and to cater for different student needs. Some suggestions for assessment activities are provided at the end of Unit 2.

Getting a position on gender, sex and relationships



Learning outcomes

- Students will define sex, sexuality and gender.
- Students will build an understanding of gender that is inclusive of gender and sexually diverse young people.
- Students will explore their own gendered understandings of the personal qualities they value.
- Students will identify personal qualities that have a positive impact on developing respectful relationships.



Activities

- It's all in the definition
- Gendered qualities and relationship expectations
- Guess what I'm saying!



Time Required

- 100 minutes



Handouts

- **H5** 'Sex, sexuality and gender' cards from Unit 1, Session 2
- **H9** Graffiti sheet from Unit 1, Session 3
- **H16** Sexual harassment and violence in schools from Unit 1, Session 5
- **H1** Personal qualities cards
- **H2** Personal qualities
- **H3** Guess what I'm saying! cards

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this session contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. [See the Introduction on page 10](#) of this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

Activity 1: It's all in the definition

Group: In pairs and whole class

Time: 20 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handouts (if students have not completed Unit 1):
 - **H5** 'Sex, sexuality and gender' cards from Unit 1, Session 2.
 - **H9** Graffiti sheet from Unit 1, Session 3
 - **H16** Sexual harassment and violence in schools from Unit 1, Session 5

If your students have not completed Unit 1 'Gender, respect and relationships', read the unit to get a sense of what has been covered. You will need an extra session to ensure that students have some of the key understandings around gender prior to looking at violence. Carry out [Activity 1: 'Setting the context and boundaries'](#) from Unit 1, replacing the statements with those provided in the [Unit 2 'Setting up a safe space'](#) section which is more reflective of the issues being covered in this unit.



[Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson](#)

Background

This activity revisits the key ideas and take-home messages from Unit 1 'Gender, respect and relationships'. This enables the teacher to gain a sense of what students have remembered from the unit and what needs to be revisited prior to exploring issues such as sexual assault and family violence. It explores students' understandings of the concepts of sex, sexuality and gender to develop some common understanding of these terms.

Procedure

1. Inform students that in this class they will be revisiting some of the content they covered in Unit 1, which includes examining issues around gender, sexuality and violence.
2. Introduce the session by asking students to reflect on the unit of work they did in Year 8 on 'Gender, Respect and Relationships'. Give them a quick overview of what they covered. You could write the session titles on the board. Don't spend any more than 5 minutes on this. Ask each student to turn to the person on their right and spend a couple of minutes discussing

what message(s) they took away from the work covered. Write these on the board, briefly dispelling any myths that may arise. The best way to do this is to ask students if there are any messages they think are stereotypes, incorrect or a myth. For example, students might add boys are just as at risk of sexual harassment at school than girls and non-binary students. To unpack and dispel the myth, you can ask the other students what they think and why? This is likely to get some lively discussion. Open the discussion about sexual harassment by referring to [Unit 1, Session 6](#), and the scenarios on '[H16 Sexual harassment and violence in schools](#)' ([Unit 1, Session 5](#)) and build their understanding. Ensure you use these in a positive way to inform students that we will be looking at issues of gender and power in this unit.

3. Ask students what we mean by the concept of gender. Write their ideas on the board.
4. Ask students 'How does this differ from sex?' and write their ideas on the board.
5. Ask students, 'How does this differ from sexuality?' and write those ideas on the board.
6. Finish by revisiting the '[Sex, sexuality and gender](#)' cards from Unit 1, Session 2. Ask: 'What have definitions got to do with respectful relationships?'

Ensure that you include the activity on [page 31](#) that enables students to explore the range of ways that young people identify themselves. As outlined in the background of this activity in Unit 1, there is no aspect of Respectful Relationships Education that does not require some analysis of sex, sexuality, gender, consent and relationships. This resource is very explicit in its attempt to foreground issues of gender, sexual diversity, consent and power. It is designed to scaffold teaching and learning to assist students to see that gender and sexual relationships are always set within the context of social, cultural and power relations. Sex, sexuality and gender are often confused and highly contested. Young people demand that adults and broader society acknowledge, validate and support their sex, gender and sexualities.

In addition, there can be confusion and misuse of these terms. For example, sexuality can be used to refer to sexual preference and/or orientation and identity but also to feelings, desires, attitudes and behaviours.

Sex is often used to describe sexual activity known as sexual intercourse but can be used to refer to biological, chromosomal and hormonal differences between people. There are at least 40 known naturally occurring variations of sex, which can be referred to as intersex.

Gender has been used to describe 'what it means' to be a man/boy or woman/girl in a particular society or community. However, gender is not binary or static and there is a range of gender identities related to our psychological sense of self. For example, non-binary refers to people who do not identify as a man or a woman and may use pronouns such as them/they instead of she or he.

Similarly, gender has been used to describe the sexual differences between men and women, yet may also be used inaccurately to refer to a person's sex.

(Refer to [H5](#) in Unit 1 for more information.)

7. Alternatively, if your class has not completed Unit 1, post the graffiti sheet ([H9 in Unit 1](#)) on one wall in the room with the following stem statements for students to finish.

- Gender is...
- Sex...
- Sexuality is...

Have at least 2 sheets with each stem written on them.

8. Explore the definitions by looking at the biological and social aspects of what students have written.
9. Finish by presenting the '[Sex, sexuality and gender](#)' cards from Unit 1, Session 2 [page 34](#) and discuss the differences and similarities in the definitions provided by students.

Consult the LGBTIQ+ Student Support policy for guidance and resources if a student makes a disclosure about their gender or sexuality or requires support during classes that focus on gender and sexuality.

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/policy>



Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

Activity 2: Gendered qualities

Group: Small group and whole class

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and materials

- 2 or 3 sets of 'H1 Personal qualities cards', colour coded to assign a colour to groups of 5 to 6 students. There are 51 personal qualities cards provided. Depending on how many students you have, you may need to photocopy the cards so that you have 2 of each quality.
- Copies of 'H2 Personal qualities'.



Background

This activity revisits and explores traditional gendered expectations and common understandings of the qualities of a respectful relationship. As the unit focuses on issues of violence, such as sexual assault and intimate partner violence, students need to have an opportunity to explore their own gendered understandings and those of the community in which they live. Power is a key concept in this unit and this activity is designed to draw out both positive and negative aspects of respectful relationships.

Procedure

1. Explain to students that this activity will allow them to explore the personal qualities or traits that might be part of a relationship. Ensure students know that they will be examining issues of gender, sexuality and violence.
2. Divide students into groups of 6. Give each student 3 of the 'H1 Personal qualities cards'. The colour of cards determines the groups that students will be in to discuss the questions on 'H2 Personal qualities'.
3. Explain to students that they have 10 minutes to swap with each other any quality cards that they have but don't want. The aim is to try to get the 3 qualities they value most.
4. Students break into the colour-coded groups and answer the questions on 'H2 Personal qualities'.
5. Ask students to put the qualities on the floor or the tabletops so that students can walk around and see them. (If you have the resources, you can put magnets on the back and they can be put on a white board).

6. As a class, discuss the following questions:

- What qualities are similar? What qualities are different?
- What does this tell us about what qualities are valued?
- Do qualities differ for different groups of people (i.e. sporty people, religious people, older people, cultural groups etc.)?
- How do we develop understandings about what should be valued by different groups of people?
- What qualities do you think might be valued by people in their 50s? Why?
- What qualities might be valued by groups of people who have strong spiritual beliefs?
- Are the qualities gendered? Are there any qualities traditionally associated with boys or girls or are they applicable across a broader gender spectrum?
- What qualities do you think are associated with particular gender expressions: female, male, non-binary?
- What are the implications for young people if they do not show what are considered 'appropriate' expressions of gender?
- Which coloured list has more qualities that show respect in relationships?
- What could the implications of these qualities be for intimate relationships?

Cooperative

Committed

Sharing

Moody

Open

Patient

Quiet

Creative

Cool

Honest

Normal

Fit

Dependent

Ditzy

Stuck-up

Independent

Nosy

Communicative

Warm

Funny

Confident

Pretty

Caring

Self-assured

Strong

Loud

Happy

Emotional

Obnoxious

Confrontational

Fair

Decisive

Powerful

Scary

Cuddly

Sexy

Hot

Responsible

Reliable

Bossy

Inclusive

Passive

Thoughtful

Lovable

Cute

Muscular

Flexible

Handy

Beautiful

Assertive

Sensitive

Kind

Ethical

Self-interested

What personal qualities were you willing to swap? Why?

Was it easy to swap qualities? Why? Why not?

What couldn't you swap?

Was there a difference in the qualities valued by students of different genders?

Which qualities do you think are important in intimate relationships?

Which qualities can have a negative impact in intimate relationships?

Which qualities allow people to show respect in a relationship?

Activity 3: Guess what I'm saying!

Group: Whole class and small group

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Post-it notes and felt-tip pens.
- One set of 'H3 Guess what I'm saying!' cards.

Background

This activity is the first of a number in this unit designed to teach students about communication and its importance in contributing to respectful relationships.

Procedure

1. Explain to students that this activity allows them to look at verbal and non-verbal forms of communication.
2. As a class, describe the difference between an affirmation and a put-down. Brainstorm examples of affirmations, writing a list on the board, then brainstorm examples of put-downs. There will almost certainly be a lot more negatives than positives.
3. As a class, discuss:
 - Why are put-downs much easier to think of than affirmations?
 - What does this tell us about how a lot of people communicate?
 - Do we sometimes think put-downs are just meant as a joke?
 - Do we sometimes think affirmations are just meant as a joke?
 - Why is this different?
4. In groups of 3, ask students to talk about how it affects them to be given put-downs compared to affirmations.
5. In summing up, stress the damage of put-downs and the importance of countering them with affirmations.
6. Explain that the next part of the activity looks at non-verbal communication. Ensure everyone understands what is meant by 'non-verbal' (i.e. without words). Divide the class into 8 or 9 groups and ask for a volunteer from each group. Give each volunteer one H3 card and ask them to perform the body language on their card to their group without speaking. The group is to work out what is being

demonstrated. The cards can be swapped until everyone has a turn to act out their role.

7. To finish, discuss how much of our communication with people is verbal and how much is non-verbal:
 - Does it change for different groups of people? Can you think of any examples?
 - Are there stereotypes about how people and different groups of people communicate non-verbally?
 - Does it change for children, young people and adults?
 - What sorts of non-verbal communication show respect?

Reflection entry

Session 1 reflection questions

Finish the following stems with at least 3 lines for each stem:

- I was surprised that I...
- I learnt that others...
- My perfect partner would be...
- A respectful relationship means that I...
- A respectful relationship means that others...
- In this session I got better at...

Bored

- Looking away into space
- Yawning

Interested

- Using open-handed gestures
- Sitting on edge of seat
- Looking alert
- Making eye contact

Confident

- Looking alert
- Standing up straight
- Putting hands in pockets with thumbs out
- Making direct eye contact
- Standing erect with good posture
- Walking briskly and with purpose

Not Interested

- Turning away
- Making no eye contact
- Looking distracted
- Looking away

Suspicious

- Crossing arms
- Buttoning coat
- Drawing back
- Looking sideways
- Touching or rubbing nose

Angry

- Holding breath
- Tightening lips
- Making aggressive hand movements
- Pointing
- Being bossy
- Looking stiff
- Clasping hands behind your back

Nervous

- Clearing throat
- Whistling nervously
- Fidgeting
- Wringing hands
- Avoiding eye contact with the other person
- Crossing legs

Pleased

- Smiling
- Making open gestures
- Looking comfortable and relaxed in your body
- Making eye contact

Frustrated

- Breathing quickly
- Clenching fists
- Rubbing hand through hair

Excited

- Moving springily
- Appearing energetic
- Making upward movements
- Quickly raising and lowering your eyebrows in a single movement

If respect is free, why is it so difficult to get?



Learning outcomes

- Students will describe the stages of relationships.
- Students will reflect on the impact of ways of ending a relationship.
- Students will debate the role of respect in relationships.



Activities

- The rules of relationships



Time Required

- 60 minutes



Handouts

- **H4** One-liners

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this session contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. [See the Introduction on page 10](#) of this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

About this session

This session is designed to revise the nature of relationships and the connection to gender. It also aims to start students thinking about the connection between gender-based violence and expectations around relationships. Although there is only one activity in this session, it has several parts, each one building on the previous part. It aims to get students to think about the characteristics of an intimate relationship and how the expectations of this relationship can differ from those in other types of relationships. It also aims to continue a broad dialogue about respect and relationships. Research with young people on what they want more information about in sexuality and relationships education identified that they want to examine how to start and end relationships. This session enables them to explore respectful ways of doing this.^{67 68}

Activity 1: The rules of relationship

Group: Small group and whole class

Time: 50 to 60 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handout:
 - **H4** One-liners
- Prepare a list of songs about starting and ending relationships.

Ask students what songs they are listening to that are about starting and ending relationships and use these in the class. Be mindful of including a diverse range of music if you model the activity for the class. For example, consider including music by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artist and LGBTIQA+ artists. If you have students from other countries and/or cultural groups in your class, ensure they also have the opportunity to be included.

Procedure

1. Divide students into groups of 4 or 5. Ask them to think of one song about starting a relationship and one song about ending a relationship. If students are having trouble, refer to the sample list suggested in preparation and materials.
2. Ask students to think about what the song is saying. What key messages are in the lyrics? If you have access to the internet, students could look them up.
3. Discuss what stages in a relationship are described in the song:

- What key words are used to describe the beginning or happy stage of relationships?
- What sorts of things do songs refer to when starting relationships?
- What words are used to describe the ending of a relationship?
- If the songs are about women, how are the women described?
- If the songs are about men, how are the men described?
- Are any of the songs about gender and sexually diverse relationships? If so, do they differ in any way?
- Are there songs about different cultures, abilities, age etc.? What themes are coming through these?
- What causes are given for the end of the relationships?

4. Groups report back. List the stages described and the key words identified by the groups.
5. In the same groups, inform students they'll be writing a jingle or song about starting a new relationship, to the tune of 'Teddy bears' picnic'. Play the song for students if they are unfamiliar with the melody. Suggest they use the information from the discussion, the song lyrics and their own experience and understandings to help them write the jingle.
6. Give students 10 minutes to write the jingle and then the groups present their work.

A simple way to get them started is to suggest they brainstorm a list of words about starting a new relationship. Pick 3 words and then come up with 3 new words that rhyme with each. Build these into sentences.

7. Ask students to complete 'H4 One-liners' individually.
8. Form groups of 4 to 6 students. Fold all the One-liner sheets in half and place them in the middle of the group. Each student takes a sheet. One statement at a time, students read out what is written on the sheet. List any common themes that run through the responses. Ask students to think about any differences and similarities.

Note: Be aware of the sensitivities about single gender versus mixed groups. It is important to ensure that groupings are inclusive of non-binary students, but cultural sensitivities may also require single-gender groups with same-gender teachers. For example Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers have reported that some issues covered in respectful relationships education would only be undertaken in single-gender groups with same gender Aboriginal teachers or trusted same-gender non-Aboriginal teachers. Establishing a relationship with your school's Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO) will help you to support your Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

If you feel it would be beneficial for your class to examine the issues in gendered groups, consult with your students. As adults we often make assumptions about student's sensibilities instead of consulting with them directly. To gauge their thoughts and feelings about this, carry out a short anonymous survey such as the one on the following page.

9. Ask groups to present their response to the rest of the class. Discuss:
 - any gendered stereotypes discussed in the previous activities included in the responses
 - any stereotypes about sexualities discussed in the previous activities included in the responses
 - the types of respect shown in the ending of a relationship
 - the place of respect in making people feel good about relationships.
10. Finish with a line debate. Ask students to line up in order of height and then split the line down the middle to form 2 teams.
 - Write the statement 'Respect is free and that's why it's easy to have a respectful relationship' on the board so it's visible to students.
 - One team will be asked to form arguments to support the statement and the other team will be asked to form arguments against this statement.
 - Give students a few minutes to reflect on what they could say and argue.
 - Remind students about the classroom agreements to ensure a safe and supportive environment. To make it fun, tell students that if they break any agreements such as not listening or putting others down they will be required to cross to the other team and prepare a new argument.
 - The debate begins with a volunteer from one side going first and presenting their argument. Once they give their response, they choose a person from the opposing team to cross the floor and join their team. This challenges the student to rethink their already formed argument, taking them to a higher level of thinking.
 - The team that wins is the team with the most players left after a certain amount of time, or you may choose not to have a winner but to continue the activity until arguments have been exhausted. The aim of this activity is to challenge students' preconceived ideas about respect and to formulate the ideas and arguments that have been presented to them in the session.



You must follow the department's [PROTECT guidance](#) and [Four Critical Actions](#) if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the [introduction page 12](#).

Short Survey

Please tick the answer to the following questions

I identify as:

- non-binary
- female
- male
- Prefer not to say

If I was talking about sexual consent and potentially sexual assault, I would like to do this in a group of students who were

- gender diverse and non-binary
- female
- male
- everyone

Short Survey

Please tick the answer to the following questions

I identify as:

- non-binary
- female
- male
- Prefer not to say

If I was talking about sexual consent and potentially sexual assault, I would like to do this in a group of students who were

- gender diverse and non-binary
- female
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Short Survey

Please tick the answer to the following questions

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- male
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Short Survey

Please tick the answer to the following questions

I identify as:

- non-binary
- female
- male
- Prefer not to say

If I was talking about sexual consent and potentially sexual assault, I would like to do this in a group of students who were

- gender diverse and non-binary
- female
- male
- everyone

A good relationship makes me feel...

.....

.....

The most important thing in a relationship for me is...

.....

.....

The thing that most annoys me about the opposite/same gender (depending on your sexuality) is...

.....

.....

A bad relationship makes me feel...

.....

.....

Having a girl/boy/intimate friend is/is not important because...

.....

.....

If I end a relationship, I...

.....

.....

If I get dumped, I...

.....

.....



Learning outcomes

- Students will identify their own expectations in relation to gender.
- Students will identify implications of narrow understandings of gender.



Activities

- Different perspectives on sexual intimacy



Time Required

- 50 minutes



Handouts

- **H5** Character cards
- **H6** Different perspectives

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this session contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. [See the Introduction on page 10](#) of this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

About this session

This session is designed to encourage discussion of the range of different perspectives young people have on sexual relationships and sexual activity. It is also designed to get students involved in critical discussion about the influences that shape sexual beliefs and practises and how these impact on respect in relationships. The session is based on the sex and ethics work of Dr Moira Carmody (2009) and the case studies presented in the activity are illustrations of the issues raised in this work. Teachers may wish to read Dr Carmody's research in more detail to support delivery of this activity.

Teachers and students have told us that the following activity about sexual intimacy is very important. They maintained that it increased students' understanding of the range of positions held in relation to sexuality and challenged their attitudes to issues of respectful relationships and sexuality.

Activity 1: Different perspectives on sexual intimacy

Group: Whole class and small group

Time: 40 to 60 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Copies of the 'H5 Character cards'.
- Hats and large name tags with character names.
- Copy of focus questions (for role-play facilitator).
- Copies of 'H6 Different perspectives'.
- A large enough space for students to be briefed about role-play.
- Access to the 'Help sources tool'.



[Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson](#)

Background

This activity is modified from one developed by Dr Carmody's work on sexual ethics. The characters used are constructed from a combination of her research and program development as well as the most recent survey of Australian secondary school students conducted by Power et al. (2022).⁶⁹ For further background information to support delivery of this activity, teachers may like to read Dr Carmody's chapter 'Young people's experiences of sex'.⁷⁰

This is a potentially sensitive activity because students are playing roles that involve talking about behaviours or situations they could be uncomfortable with. Therefore, it is very important to know your students. Ensure that you have read the characters so you are aware of the issues covered, can inform students of what the role-play will cover and allocate students to roles sensitively. You might want to hand-pick the students to be involved in the activity, depending on the confidence and experience of the students undertaking the role-plays.

Make sure you have a safe environment and that your students know they are going to be looking at gender, sexuality, sexual behaviours, relationships and violence. It is very useful to have an extra teacher or colleague with you to assist in the role-play when running it for the first time. An experienced health education teacher, student wellbeing leader, drama teacher or school nurse may be an appropriate helper for this activity.

If you have a strong drama department, another option is to ask senior drama students to perform the role-play and allow the students in your class to observe and analyse.

This activity involves a role-play that some of your students will perform and some will watch. It will take about 20 minutes to set up and uses 8 students, so the remaining students need to be engaged in an activity. There are several ways to run this:

- Pick students and give them the characters prior to the class so they have a chance to prepare, which will reduce the time needed for the preparation.
- Ask VCE drama students to play the characters.
- Ask another teacher or support person to conduct the introductory activity 'Sex and relationships issues in the present day' (as outlined below), while you set up the role-play. Alternatively, if a drama teacher is available, they could set the role-play up and brief the teacher. Either way, the remainder of the class needs to be engaged in an introduction to the issue.

Procedure

1. Explain that this activity allows students to explore different views and perspectives on sex and relationships and to think about how different people form these views.
2. Set 9 chairs up in the middle of the room in a fishbowl arrangement. This circular formation enables students to talk to each other.
3. Inform students that they are going to engage in a role-play based on what the research tells us about the diversity of young people in relation to sexuality and sexual experiences and practises. Ask for 8 volunteers, including at least 3 boys. If it is a single-gender environment, students will need to play multiple genders. Allow 15 minutes for students to familiarise themselves with the character cards on H5.
4. One teacher should take this group of students out to a different space (see Step 5). The other teacher can engage the remainder of the class in the activity in the box below. If time permits, all students can participate in this activity.

Introductory activity for the remainder of the class

Sex and relationships issues in the present day

Ask the remainder of the class to brainstorm what they see as the important current sex and relationships issues for young people aged 14 to 18 years. Ask them to think about what they hear and see in the media as well as what they know from the other young people around them.

List these on the board. Stop when you get to about 10. You may need to combine related issues.

In groups of 5, ask students to prioritise the list from the most important to the least important. Do this on a piece of butcher's paper and discuss similarities and differences: Why are there differences? How easy or difficult was it to reach agreement?

5. Take the volunteers out of the room to brief them, following these steps:
 - Give each of the students a character card from H5, name tag and hat with their character name on it.
 - Explain that they will be acting as a group of young people who have come together to talk about sex and relationships.
 - Give them some time to read their character description and think about their role.
 - Give them a few minutes to get into their character.
 - Bring them back into the main room.

6. Introduce the role-play to the rest of the class by saying: 'We're going to observe a role-play involving a group of young people who've come together to talk about how they feel about sex and relationships. While the role-play is on, you're required to observe what views each character is expressing and write down what's important to each of the characters about relationships and sexuality.'

7. Bring the characters in and ask them to take a seat in the circle in the middle of the room. One teacher will act as the role-play facilitator. Ask each character to state their name and how old they are but no other information. The facilitator can work through the following questions, but it's not essential to use them all:

- What are important aspects of a relationship for you?
- Who do you think has responsibility for making decisions about sex and romance in your relationships?
- What do you think is the most important element of an intimate relationship?
- How do you work out and negotiate having sexual contact within your relationship or in your life?

Allow the characters to direct the conversation and speak openly, while ensuring they are focused on the topic. Allow the role-play to run for 10 minutes. Keep the mood light and let it be fun.

8. Finish the role-play by thanking the participants. Ask them to stay in role for now and stand behind their chairs.

9. To de-role, ask students their real names, how they are feeling right now and where they are. Thank them by using their real names and let them return to their original chairs.

This is important to ensure none of the role players has slipped into a state of distress or disassociation. If anyone is a bit off or is clearly distressed, ask them to step outside with you for a minute, but thank the others first. If you have a distressed person, spend a few minutes with them and ask what they need to help them feel more in control. It could be some fresh air or a drink. Encourage them to return to the class but provide the option to relocate to a quiet supervised space. Check in with the student again once the class has concluded and refer them to a school wellbeing leader or provide and discuss the Help Sources Tool below.

10. As a whole class, discuss the following:

- What views were expressed?
- What were the important issues?
- Why was there such a difference in views, values etc.? Identify the different influences,

such as family, religion, spirituality, gender, sexuality, culture, ability, experience and pressure from friends.

- Which characters had a respectful approach to relationships? This includes respect for themselves and respect for others.
- Were there any illustrations of actively seeking and obtaining consent?

The focus of the discussion should be on diversity and the different views young people have about sex and relationships.

11. Compare the issues raised to those that students identified in the introductory activity. How different or similar are these issues to those identified by the young people in the role-play? Why? What did young people say about consent?

12. If time allows, provide students with a copy of 'H6 Different perspectives' to record their thinking.

Reflection entry

Session 3 reflection questions:

Finish the following stems with at least 3 lines for each stem:

- I was surprised that I...
- I learnt that others...
- Diversity means...
- A respectful relationship means that I...
- A respectful relationship means that others...
- In this session I got better at...



You must follow the department's [PROTECT guidance](#) and [Four Critical Actions](#) if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the [introduction page 12](#).



[Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson](#)

Fenhua

Fenhua is 16 and currently completing Year 10 at a school in a large regional city. He is committed to his religious beliefs and believes that sex is special and should happen in the context of marriage.

He would only go out with a girl who had the same values and beliefs about marriage.

He tries to avoid situations where he might be tempted to do anything other than kissing.

He thinks he might get married young so that he can have sex.

He believes that sex education should teach men to protect and look after women.

He believes sex education should teach women to respect themselves.

'I guess when you get to that stage where you're thinking seriously about marriage with a partner, or a girlfriend, well... you're more likely to share the same values, the same beliefs as your partner, so you both respect that you both want to wait until you're married.'

'...Teaching women self-respect as well would be a good start, and teaching men to respect themselves as well. I think, I guess it's more of a values thing, but it's important that young people are able to respect themselves and each other.'

Your character needs to talk to the other young people about how he feels about these issues and what has influenced him to reach the point of view that feels right for him. He will talk about his religion and his feelings about men and women. He will talk about the importance of having a partner who has the same beliefs. Refer to the quote for some help.

Isla

Isla is 15 and is doing year 9 at a government girls' high school in the city. She has had one boyfriend but has not had sexual intercourse, although she has engaged in other sexual activities. Isla's family are conservative and they believe sex should occur within marriage.

She wants to have sex before she is married but is not ready yet.

Her parents have taught her what is right and wrong, but she feels they are old-fashioned.

She believes Australia is different from where her parents grew up and gets frustrated by her parents' old-fashioned beliefs.

Isla thinks you need to be in a relationship before you have sex so that you can get to know your partner.

She believes it is important that you can trust the person you have sex with.

'Um, I think it also depends on where you're coming from, like what your upbringing was like and like, I said I've always come from a place where morals were very clear, and I knew exactly what was right and wrong. I changed them to suit myself as my parents grew up in a different generation in [another country]. Australia is different'

Your character needs to talk about how she feels about her parents' beliefs and how these have influenced her and what she believes. Your character will talk about how she has reached the point of view that is right for her, including the importance of getting to know a person first and being able to trust each other. Refer to the quote for some help.

Daisy

Daisy is 14, in Year 9 and is very interested in girls. She's not sure but thinks she might be a lesbian. She's had one relationship with a girl, but she has also been attracted to boys. Her parents are religious, and when she told her parents she thought she might be a lesbian they were unhappy because it's against their religious views. But they're very loving and try to understand.

She is confident.

She really likes a girl at her dancing school but knows she would never say or do anything about it.

She finds it hard to identify what she wants in a relationship.

She's not very good at communicating what she'd like in a relationship.

In her last relationship she could say what she didn't want to do sexually but she finds it too hard to say what she would like to do sexually.

She believes that she could hurt someone's feelings by telling them she didn't like what they were doing.

'I think I'm a lesbian but I'm not sure because I have also been attracted to a boy. I guess this gives me more options than most. Being gay, straight or bi doesn't really bother me – what I find hard is expressing my romantic and sexual likes. Don't get me wrong, I can say no to sex but I cannot ask for what I would like in a relationship.'

Your character is a bit confused about how to make things better. She needs to talk confidently about not being sure who she is attracted to or rather being attracted to both girls and boys. She is aware that she is able to negotiate to say no to sex, but she is unclear why she can't find her voice to ask for what she wants and needs to talk about this. Refer to the quote for some help.

Willow

Willow is 16 and in Year 10. She has had 4 boyfriends and has been sexually active since she was 13. The first time she had sexual intercourse, the boy was 15 at the time. Although she was willing to have sex, she feels he took advantage of her. This has influenced her beliefs about sex.

She believes that relationships should be equal.

She is comfortable with herself and her decision to be sexually active; she thinks that it's nobody else's business but her own.

She's able to talk about relationships and negotiate for what both partners want. She believes that partners must give verbal permission to do any intimate and sexual activity.

She is very committed to talking and not just relying on non-verbal communication in sexual encounters.

'I like people who you can be in a relationship with and talk and be honest. Ask permission. You should have the right to say what you want and how you feel, you know and not let them sort of decide what they want and then just go from there, like you know there has to be sort of an equal companionship sort of thing, you need to both speak, not just one. Especially if they want to do things like what they've seen or heard about and it doesn't feel good to you. They just can't assume you are into it. You need to talk about it together and only do what you really want.'

Your character is arguing that sex is a joint responsibility and that consent is needed. She is stating the importance of verbal communication between partners. She feels that both people's needs have to be considered, not just one partner's. She is comfortable that she has been sexually active from a young age, as she feels it is no one else's business if she likes sex. Refer to the information in the quote to help you.

Jesse

Jesse is 18 and an apprentice carpenter. He lives in a country town and has been captain of the football team for the past 3 years.

Like many of his friends, Jesse has watched quite a bit of porn and learnt about/how to have sex from what he has seen in it. He has had 5 sexual partners, including casual sex and sex with 2 of his girlfriends.

He talks about how you pick someone up for casual sex and how there is very little direct communication about what is going to happen.

'I don't think it's even talked about at that stage, it's more like maybe standing outside the pub or the footy club, or unless something's happened inside the pub, you know, the dance floor and you start dancing with a girl and then it starts there, unless that's happened it's more like you've left the pub and you're out in the taxi rank or buying a pie to munch on or something and they'll come and say, or you'll go to them and say you know, where are you going now, what's going on? Um...and if you happened to end up in a taxi together and end up in the same place it goes from there. Once again I don't know if there's too much communication involved, well there might be communication but not about what's actually going to happen.'

Your character needs to describe this typical situation and use the example above. You need to stress the line that there is very little verbal communication about what is going to happen – this is just the way it is. Use the information in the quote to help you.

Dural

Dural is 16 and moved to the city from Boonwurrung Country to take up a traineeship with a Victorian footy club. He has had sex with 3 girls as part of relationships, except for one casual hook-up. He describes himself as a quiet kind of guy and says his mob has taught him the difference between right and wrong. He is involved in an ongoing relationship that is 'getting serious'. He doesn't think it is right to be violent towards a woman.

'I could never really see myself being aggressive or really hurting a female or whoever so yeah, it's just me personally, 'cause I'd rather have the pleasure of fun, loving sex or whatever than the aggressive and, you know, hitting a girl around. 'Cause like I said to my girlfriend now, I said there's no way I'd ever do it to you, I just wouldn't raise my hand and, you know, whack you over the head or whatever, there's no way I could do it, so and she said 'Oh, well', then she said 'Thank you, I trust you on that.'

This carries over into his sexual relationship, where he makes sure he isn't pressuring his partners.

Dural is quietly spoken but has clear views on non-violence towards female partners, the need to check out what his partner wants to do sexually and if she feels OK. He is very strong and firm in his belief that this approach is important. Family and community are very important to him.

Your character needs to describe this typical situation and use the example above. You need to stress that there is a right and wrong when it comes to relationships and sex. You should never pressure anyone into sex, and it is never right to be violent to a partner. Relationships and sex should be loving, respectful, consensual and fun.

Jayden

Jayden is 15 and still at high school. She currently has her first boyfriend. They've been going out for the past 3 months but haven't had sex, although they have fooled around a bit. She feels she is not emotionally ready to have sex yet. Her mum is really open about sex and has encouraged her to make her own decisions about it. She feels this has encouraged her to be open with her boyfriend and realise she doesn't have to rush it.

She is confident and assertive.

She believes that sex is a normal part of a relationship with someone you really care about.

She finds it difficult to understand how a few of her friends can have oral sex with someone they meet for the first time.

She doesn't want to have sex when she is drunk like a few of her friends have done and regretted it.

She spends a lot of her time talking with and helping her friends to deal with these issues after they happen.

'I could never really see myself just hooking up with someone I just met. I think some of my friends have sex even though they don't want to. They think boys will like them more if they 'put out' but they just get called sluts and boys use them. One of my friends says she doesn't even like sex but she is usually drunk and just does it. I think it's gross. I have more self-respect than that.'

Your character is to talk about how her mum's open attitude to sex and her friend's behaviour impact of how she feels about sex and relationships. Refer to the information in the quote to help you.

Ja

Ja is 16 and in Year 10. They identify as non-binary and have only had one partner. That relationship was very respectful but not sexual. They did kiss and cuddle but nothing else.

Ja would really like to have sex but feels embarrassed about their body. They were assigned female at birth. At puberty they developed testes.

This was a very confusing time and the first time they had ever heard of people being intersex. It has been a very difficult few years however, their parents have been so supportive. Even so, they feel shame and different and now bind their breasts.

Ja is very scared to hook up for fear of what others will think of them. This has influenced their beliefs about sex.

They believe that relationships should be respectful and equal, and that no one should ever put pressure on another person for sex.

Ja is slowly starting to feel comfortable with themselves and would really like to be sexually active, but is scared to disclose their intersex status.

'I really want a partner but am afraid I will be rejected. I would be horrified if I was hooking up with someone and they touched my bound breasts. It is important to ask before you touch anyone. I hope I can find love some day and someone who will love me for who I am.'

Your character is arguing that the heterosexual focus on sex discriminates against gender and sexually diverse young people and puts them in a very difficult position that expects them to disclose their sexual status. You believe if there was more focus on consent you would have less to worry about as no one would try and touch your body without permission.

FENHUA

Views expressed:

Important issues:

ISLA

Views expressed:

Important issues:

DAISY

Views expressed:

Important issues:

WILLOW

Views expressed:

Important issues:

JESSE

Views expressed:

Important issues:

DURAL

Views expressed:

Important issues:

JAYDEN

Views expressed:

Important issues:

JA

Views expressed:

Important issues:

Parents/carers

Parents and carers aim to look after you, care for you and support you. Often this makes them the best people to go to for help. However, that may not always be the case for everyone, or for every issue you want help with.

If you decide to talk with them about a concern, find a suitable time and place. Tell them if privacy is important to you, but understand there may be times they need to tell others to help keep you safe, to get additional help or advice or to work out with you what might be a good way forward.

Parents and carers can provide reassurance and advice. However, they aren't always experts in health or legal matters. Sometimes their advice may not be enough, or not quite what you need, and sometimes it might be hard to give them the full picture about what is going on for you. Parents and carers may also be dealing with a lot themselves and may not be able to respond exactly as you hope. However, they may be able to help you start looking for help from another family member, a counsellor, doctor, school nurse, teacher, parent, psychologist or helpline. Parents and carers might also be able to provide practical support, like getting you to appointments or providing the financial support you need to get help. If money is a problem, they may be able to seek support from agencies who can help. See below for more information about the cost of different options for professional help.

Friends

If you let a trusted friend know you want to talk, they might be able to encourage and reassure you if you decide to seek professional help.

Friends can make you feel better and give you advice. They may know you well, which helps, but friends aren't experts in health or legal matters. Sometimes their advice may not be enough, or not quite what you need, and sometimes it might be hard to give them the full picture about what is going on for you. However, if you decide to ask them for support, friends can help you look for help from a counsellor, doctor, school nurse, teacher, parent, psychologist or helpline.

It's important to remember that some friends may not feel comfortable discussing what is bothering

Teachers

A teacher you trust can play an important role in guiding you to get the help you need. They might ask you some questions to understand what you need help with. Teachers can encourage you, help you stay connected to learning and to school, and apply special consideration.

Arrange a time to talk with your teacher when they aren't teaching or busy. If they think you need more specialised or ongoing help, they'll connect you to the school counsellor or wellbeing support services. Teachers and other school staff will listen and respond to your concerns. They will respect your privacy, but they can't promise to keep a discussion confidential and they may need to act if you tell them about harm or abuse. There may also be times they need to talk to school leaders, or report to other authorities like the police to help keep you safe, to get additional advice or to work out with you what might be a good way forward.

As mandatory reporters, teachers must make a report to Victoria Police or DFFH Child Protection if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- a child has suffered or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse or sexual abuse
- the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

School mental health practitioner, counsellor or wellbeing leader

Your school may have a mental health practitioner, counsellor or wellbeing leader available for you to speak to. You can ask a trusted teacher to refer you to them. A trusted parent, carer or friend may also help you to access this support. School counsellors will listen to what's going on and help you to deal with the issues you're facing, or help you to find a more useful way of thinking about issues. They can talk with parents or carers on your behalf if you need them to. They can talk with your teachers if you need help with workload or deadlines. They may be able to direct you to sources of financial assistance if needed.

The services provided by your school's wellbeing team are free. Mental health practitioners, counsellors and wellbeing leaders are skilled at working with young people. They understand the kinds of things you may need help with. If they think you need more specialised or ongoing help, they can help you to access this. They may refer you to other agencies to get more support. Your school's wellbeing team will also continue to play a role in supporting you and your educational needs.

If you feel there is a risk to your safety (for example, you require the support of the police), your school's wellbeing team can help to ensure you get the support you need.

Doctor (GP)

Doctors are trained in supporting people who are having difficulties with their mental health. They can connect you to a psychologist or psychiatrist and should know about the kinds of services available in your area. There are no laws that stop you from seeing the doctor without your parents or guardians. However, if you plan on going alone, you should contact the doctors' office beforehand to confirm you want the appointment to be kept private. When you are under the age of 18 you are considered a 'mature minor'. Health professionals working with children can decide that you are capable of making your own decisions if they're satisfied that you have 'sufficient maturity, understanding and intelligence' to grasp the nature and effect of your decision.

If you go to a bulk-billing clinic, Medicare will cover the entire cost of your appointment with a doctor. At other clinics, you may have to pay a 'gap' fee. As a student, ask for bulk-billing when you make an appointment. Some schools participate in the Doctors in Secondary Schools program and have a doctor at the school on certain days of the week. Seeing this doctor is free.

Doctors will respect your privacy. However, if they reasonably believe a person under the age of 16 is in need of protection from physical injury, family violence, sexual abuse or suicide risk, they will engage other support services in a respectful way to keep you safe and get you the help you need.

Psychologist

Psychologists have specialist training in diagnosing, treating and preventing mental health problems. They will help you manage your mental health. They often specialise in different areas and approaches, so sometimes you have to find the right person for your needs. Some schools have a psychologist on staff that you can see for free. A local GP can also help you to connect with a psychologist.

If you get a referral from your GP, you may be covered by Medicare to visit a psychologist for up to 10 sessions in one year. Depending on which psychologist you go to, Medicare may cover the whole fee. However, sometimes there will be a gap that you will have to pay. It's okay to ask questions about how much a service might cost before you make an appointment. Medicare is not available for all international students, so international students should check which services they are eligible for.

Your privacy will be protected when you see a psychologist. However, psychologists are mandatory reporters who must make a report to Victoria Police or DFFH Child Protection if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- a child has suffered or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse or sexual abuse
- the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

A psychologist who reasonably believes that you are in need of protection from physical injury, family violence, sexual abuse or suicide risk, may engage other support services in a respectful way to keep you safe and get you the help you need.

Helplines

Headspace

Hours: Available 9am-1am 7 days a week

Call: 1800 650 890

Visit: <https://headspace.org.au/online-and-phone-support/>

You can have a confidential chat with Headspace professional counsellors over the phone or on their online WebChat. You can also email Headspace and someone will respond to you within 2 days. Headspace focuses on support for people aged 12 to 25. It's a safe space if you are unsure of what help you need, if you want advice, or maybe just want to talk things through. Young people or family members must register to use the service. You don't need to provide a full name, but you will need to provide an email address. You don't need to provide your name on the phone either.

A call to Headspace is free from a landline, payphone and most mobile phones. However, some mobile phone providers charge for the call, so you might need to check with your provider. Let Headspace know if you are calling from a mobile and they can call you back.

If you go to a local Headspace office for follow up, services are either free or low cost. Some services require you to have a referral from a GP, but Headspace can help you with this too. You can also create a Headspace account for instant 24/7 access to a range of online tools and support for your mental health. It is possible to build connections in a community of like-minded young people, join group chats, create your own personalised space, and get professional one-on-one support, all online and for free.

Headspace also offers *Strength in my roots* resources with mental health information and resources for multicultural young people: <https://headspace.org.au/our-impact/campaigns/cultural-identity/>

1800RESPECT

Hours: Available 24/7

Call: 1800 737 732

Visit: <https://www.1800RESPECT.org.au/>

1800RESPECT provides free information, counselling and support services for people of all genders who have experienced sexual assault or family violence (past or recent), as well as their friends and family. It provides a 24-hour crisis response for people who have experienced a recent sexual assault.

1800RESPECT also offers support groups, professional consultations, and education and training.

Calling 1800RESPECT is free from a landline, payphone and most mobile phones. However, some mobile phone providers do charge for these calls, so you will need to check with your provider.

Note that the 1800RESPECT telephone number will appear on your mobile phone bill. This means that anyone who can see your mobile phone bill will be able to see that a call was made to 1800RESPECT.

There is no charge for using the 1800RESPECT online chat.

Safe Steps

Hours: Available 24/7

Call: 1800 015 188

Visit: <http://www.safesteps.org.au/>

Safe Steps provides free specialist support services for anyone in Victoria who is experiencing or afraid of family violence. Their family violence specialists can support people to find safety.

Sexual Assault Crisis Line

Hours: Available from 5pm to 9am weeknights, weekend nights and public holidays

Call: 1800 806 292

Visit: sasvic.org.au

The Sexual Assault Crisis Line, provided by Sexual Assault Services Victoria, provides crisis counselling for victims of sexual assault. Sexual Assault Services Victoria can help you decide what to do and work with you to recover from the effects of sexual assault. There are locations throughout Victoria. Visit sasvic.org.au to locate the nearest centre.

Helplines

Rainbow Door

Hours: Available 10am to 5pm, 7 days a week

Call: 1800 729 367

Text: 0480 017 246

Visit: www.rainbowdoor.org.au

Rainbow Door is a free specialist LGBTIQ+ helpline providing information, support and referral to all LGBTIQ+ Victorians, their friends and family.

Qlife Victoria

Hours: Available 3pm to midnight 7 days a week

Call: 1800 184 527

Visit: www.switchboard.org.au

Webchat

Qlife Victoria provides free, peer-based telephone and online chat support to LGBTIQ+ people of all ages. Qlife's online Webchat uses a small amount of data if you are not connected to wi-fi, but is otherwise free.

Yarning SafeNStrong

Hours: Available 24/7

Call: 1800 959 563

Email: ysns@vahs.org.au

Facebook: @YarningSafeNStrong

Visit: <https://www.vahs.org.au/yarning-safenstrong/>

Yarning SafeNStrong is a free and confidential counselling service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and families who need to have a yarn with someone about their wellbeing. They have culturally suitable counsellors who can yarn safely and who 'get it', no matter how big or small the challenge. They offer support for social and emotional wellbeing, financial wellbeing, as well as medical support and drug and alcohol counselling and rehabilitation services.

Djirra

Hours: Available 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday

Call: 1800 105 303

Visit: <https://djirra.org.au>

Djirra provides free telephone and face-to-face legal and non-legal support to Aboriginal people of all genders who are experiencing or have experienced family violence. Their work is predominantly designed by and for Aboriginal women.

Elizabeth Morgan House

Hours: Available 24/7

Call: 1800 364 297

Visit: <https://emhaws.org.au>

Elizabeth Morgan House is an Aboriginal-led peak body providing family violence services and advocacy for Aboriginal women and children in Victoria. They offer culturally safe, holistic family violence support to Aboriginal women and their children, as well as to their partners and ex-partners. They also assist with housing, financial difficulties, child protection matters, school matters, and they provide referrals and advocacy to services like legal services, medical and healthcare services, drug and alcohol counselling, financial counselling and children's services.

All times mentioned above are based on Victorian standard times (Australian Eastern Standard Time and Australian Eastern Daylight Time).

You can find more support and information about mental health in the Students – mental health and wellbeing toolkit: <https://www.vic.gov.au/students-mental-health-toolkit>

LGBTIQ+ students can find more support on the LGBTIQ+ Student Support site: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/resources>

If you need an interpreter to speak with any of the help services, the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) is available on 131 450. More information is available on the TIS National website: <https://www.tisnational.gov.au/>



Learning outcomes

- Students will identify the nature of gender-based violence.
- Students will develop a shared understanding of the concepts of consent violence and power.
- Students will identify the influence of power on gender-based violence



Activities

- Defining violence, power and consent
- Anh and Sam



Time Required

- 60 minutes



Handouts

- **H7** Stories of power
- **H8** Types of power
- **H9** Anh and Sam

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this session contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. [See the Introduction on page 10](#) of this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

The aim of this session is to look specifically at instances of gender-based violence. The first activity helps students to identify what violence is and how power plays out in the perpetration and prevention of gender-based violence. The case studies presented cover a broad range of issues to enable students to see that violence involves emotional, social and institutional acts as well as physical, verbal and criminal acts. The session then looks at the issue of sexual assault to focus students' attention on the issue of consent.

Activity 1: Defining violence, power and consent

Group: Small group and whole class

Time: 45 minutes

Preparation and materials

- A whiteboard, screen or butcher's paper on which to record feedback.
- Whiteboard markers or felt-tip markers.
- Provide students with a copy of the following handouts:
 - **H7** Stories of power
 - **H8** Types of power
- Students' images of pets from the homework task in session 4, activity 2.



[Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson](#)

Background

This activity is designed to enable students to see that gender-based violence can take many forms. It also aims to assist students to see the connection between gender, power and violence. Make sure students know that they will be examining the issue of sexual consent.

The concept of power can be difficult to understand. Students tend to think of power in terms of obvious examples, such as physical violence. The following activity will help students to see that power also exists, for example, in language and in institutions such as marriage and the law. Three case studies are included, which look at:

- power through family relationships
- power through a sexual assault situation
- the use of technology and social power.

By using the case studies, many dimensions of power are covered. If you choose to work with only one case study, you will need to ensure that these other dimensions are drawn out.

Stories of power

There are 3 stories looking at different illustrations of gender-based violence and consent.

Procedure

1. Inform students that the aim of this activity is to examine examples of violence, power and consent and to develop some shared understanding of the concepts.
2. Divide students into groups of 3 or 4. Groups appoint someone to record and someone to report back. Give each student a copy of 'H7 Stories of power', butcher's paper, pens and a highlighter if possible.
3. Allocate a different story to each group. Make sure that each story is covered by at least 3 groups. Ask students to read the story individually, highlighting what they consider to be different examples of power. Alternatively, depending on time and literacy levels, a student in the group could read the story to the group.
4. As a group, students then list the examples of power on a piece of butcher's paper.
5. Each group then joins with another group who examined a different story and then reports back on the types of power identified in each story.
6. On another piece of butcher's paper, students come up with a group definition of power.
7. Each group reports back on their definition. Assist students to examine the examples and the definitions of power developed by helping them see that the exercise of power is not only physical, such as physical assault or rape, but are also related to a person's position, as is the case with Harper's boss. In addition, point out that power exists in the way language is used, such as Ruby's husband's verbal abuse, or as part of gender relations such as those present in the attitudes to women referred to in Asha's story and which prevent a strong girl like Harper from fighting back. To facilitate this whole class discussion, provide students with 'H8 Types of power', which supports students to explore different types of power, using specific examples from the case studies.

Questions to assist students to identify and understand power relations include:

- What is similar about all the definitions?
- What would power look like in a respectful relationship?
- Is there a connection between power and consent in these stories?

- Asha's story examines intimate partner violence in teenage dating relationships. It enables an examination of sexual, emotional, verbal and online gender-based violence. It also enables a critical examination of gendered assumptions about girls' responsibility for the violence perpetrated against them.
- Ruby's story examines family violence and is very useful for exploring the structural nature of violence found in practises such as marriage and in aspects of language. It also gives students a chance to explore subtle violent behaviours and behaviours that are often not considered violent. It does not identify the gender of the partner so that it can be used in a more inclusive way. Additional questions for this case study include:
 - What gender do you think Ruby's partner is? Why?
 - What makes you think this? What stereotypes are you drawing on?
 - If Ruby's partner is a woman or a non-binary partner does this make you feel differently about the violence and abuse? What stereotypes are you drawing on?
- Harper's story looks at sexual assault and abuse of power in the workplace. It also examines questions about gendered expectations at work and in relation to women, fear and physical strength.
- Mindy's story explores intimate relationships and the use of technology and sexting as a form of gender-based violence and abuse of power.

Alternatively, there are several very good clips available that address aspects of partner violence. 'Love Control' by Bent Wheel Productions is a film produced by Women's Health in the North. It highlights how jealous and controlling behaviour can escalate into full-blown violence and is based on young women's real-life experiences of abusive relationships. Love Control can be viewed on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_zHt7MvIA8A.



You must follow the department's [PROTECT guidance](#) and [Four Critical Actions](#) if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the [introduction page 12](#)

Asha's story

Asha attended a private girls' school and her boyfriend at the time attended a prestigious boy's school. She had known him since she was 10. She recalls countless instances of him pressuring her into sex and refusing to stop no matter how many times she said no or began to cry. 'A few times I had to physically fight him off for it to stop,' she says. 'I would then have to hold him while he cried and begged for forgiveness. I pleaded with him to get help and tell his parents what had been going on, but when he told his mother she said "Rape is a very harsh word to use, she's emotionally manipulating you". So of course, after that I gave up seeking help from adults who were supposed to be able to help me.'

This continued for 2 years until Asha built up the courage to leave him. 'He sent me paragraphs of verbal abuse and once followed my mother down the street. He would send aggressive messages to anyone who he saw hanging out with me.'

'I was good friends with a few of his friends who knew what was going on. Some of them supported me and are still my friends to this day. However, some of them didn't want to cause any conflict and continued to support him, which was really hurtful.'

Ruby's story

Ruby had been married for a few years when she noticed her partner's bad temper gradually becoming worse and the controlling behaviour in the relationship intensifying. 'From the outside, we had a wonderful lifestyle – a big house, swimming pool and tennis court. But nobody knew what our relationship was really like,' says Ruby. 'Jo would get very angry over the smallest things and take days to calm down.'

'Apart from physically assaulting me, Jo was also verbally, emotionally, financially and physically abusive. There was increasing paranoia about me speaking to other people and I was asked to choose between Jo and my family. I became very careful about everything I did. It was like walking on eggshells trying to predict what would make Jo snap. Looking back, I realise it didn't matter what I did, nothing would have been good enough.'

Ruby's partner became more controlling after the birth of each of their children. 'I had low self-confidence and post-natal depression from dealing with the behaviour,' Ruby says. 'When Jo tried to kill me one night with my one-week-old baby in my arms, I knew we had to leave. I didn't want my daughter growing up in that environment. So, in the middle of the night, I took my children and stayed with a friend. We stayed with my parents while Jo continued to live in the house and emptied our bank account, so all we had left were the clothes we had with us.' Ruby says it's been difficult to start again and get back on her feet.

'There's been a lot of stress associated with the costs of part-time work, childcare, the court system and raising my children. Jo also made it harder for me by telling lies about me to the authorities,' she says. 'Despite everything, I made the right decision in leaving the relationship because I was living in fear. I don't have to be scared anymore.'

Harper's story

Late on a Friday afternoon, a small, thin man drove a young woman up to the lookout point in the Dandenongs overlooking Melbourne. There are usually a lot of people at the lookout point: tourists, bushwalkers, and locals showing their friends the sights. Today there were fewer people than usual, probably because it was close to dinnertime. The man, small as he was, overpowered the healthy, strong young woman. He raped her. That is, he made her have sexual intercourse with him despite her protests, even though she told him she wasn't on the pill and that she felt nothing for him. She cowered against the door and cried. She was very, very scared. He carried on and raped her anyway. In the car, with some people quite close by.

She'd worked for him for 3 months and known him before she got the job. He was supervisor of a local skills training program in which she was employed. On this afternoon, he had told Harper and her workmates that he'd give them a lift home. After dropping off the others, he said he'd show her the view from the Dandenongs.

She didn't want to go, but she didn't want to be rude. She didn't tell anyone what had happened. She tried to leave the job as soon as possible. She knew if she stayed it would happen again.

Harper worked in a nursery and spent a lot of time digging and lifting. She was physically strong and good at netball and soccer. Harper's boss was a weedy little guy. The girls all thought he was a bit of a creep. He was always trying to show them who was boss.

Ollis, D., Harrison, L. & Maharaj, C. (2013), Sexual Education Matters, Deakin University, Geelong

Mindy's story

Mindy has been going out with Rafael for one month when he asks her to send him a nude. He says he will keep it to himself, but he would love to be able to have a hot picture of her to look at. Mindy doesn't like this idea and tells Rafael she doesn't want to, but he is persistent, asking her often and saying how much it would mean to him. He tells her other girls he has been out with do it and it's no big deal. He suggests if she loves him she wouldn't hesitate and would see it as a compliment. Mindy really loves Rafael and thinks 'What harm could it do?' She sends the image. The next day at school people seem to be staring and laughing at her. When she checks her phone she finds the image she sent Rafael has been posted online and that anyone in the school can see it. The assistant principal calls her into his office and informs her she is being suspended for distributing pornographic material.

Ollis, D., Harrison, L. & Maharaj, C. (2013), Sexual Education Matters, Deakin University, Geelong.

Personal power is the power a person feels when they make decisions and choices to take or not to take action. Examples from the case studies:

- Asha chose to leave an emotionally and sexually abusive relationships after 2 years. Asha's boyfriend exercised his personal power to make the choice to assault her.
- Ruby chose to leave her violent relationship with Jo. Jo chose to use violent and controlling behaviour.
- Harper felt she didn't have the power to say no to going for a drive with her boss. Harper's boss chose to use his power as Harper's employer to make her feel obligated to go with him to the Dandenongs. Once there, he chose to use sexual violence against Harper.
- Mindy felt she had to send Rafael a sexual image. Rafael chose to ignore Mindy's discomfort about sending a nude and used his personal power to coerce her into sending an image she wasn't comfortable sharing.

Social power refers to the power dynamics that happen in the day-to-day relations between people in social situations. This power can be derived from things such as educational background, positions of authority, status, financial resources, gender, sexual orientation, race and so on. Examples from the case studies:

- Asha's boyfriend's boys' network in the independent school that resulted in them supporting him even though they were aware of the abuse.
- Ruby's husband making her choose between him and her family relationships.
- Harper's boss always trying to show the girls who is boss.
- The right as a male that Rafael felt he had in posting a picture of Mindy.

Institutional/structural power is something that is hard to see as it is part of everyday life and forms part of practises and meanings of institutions, such as the law, marriage, language and family. Institutional power can also be expressed by active discrimination, omission and silence. Examples from the case studies:

- The accusations of emotional manipulation by Asha as a woman.
- Ruby hiding the violence because that is not what happens in happy families.
- Harper feeling that she had to leave her job to prevent her boss assaulting her again.
- Mindy being suspended because she sent the image, even though Rafael posted it online.

Activity 2: Anh and Sam

Group: Small group and whole class

Time: 10 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handout:
 - **H9 Anh and Sam.** As this handout is going to be used for a few activities over the next few sessions, it is worth laminating and can be handed out each time it is needed.
- Make sure there is an online collaboration space where images of pets can be posted, or printed copies of the images below.



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Background

This activity is designed to explore students' opinions about consent, sexual coercion, relationships and communication. In Activity 1, students explore a range of gender-based violence situations as a means of understanding violence and the connection to power. In this activity, students look specifically at the issue of sexual assault and focus on the issues of consent, free agreement and communication in relationships.

The case studies used in these activities don't include the gender of the young people. This enables a more inclusive approach by not assuming that this is a heterosexual couple. Consultations with students indicated that young people generally interpreted the situation as heterosexual and this change provides an opportunity to discuss assumptions about gender and sexual activity.

Advise students that in this session they will be focusing on stories of sexual assault. This means examining a situation of violence, including sexual assault and family violence. Remind students about class ground rules or agreements about respectful behaviour.

If you have a student who has the same name as one in the case study, it is a good idea to change the name to another that isn't present in the cohort. Students have reported that having the same name as a character in a scenario can make them feel uncomfortable and can lead to harassment if not well managed by the teacher using class agreements etc.

Procedure

1. Explain that we are going to read and discuss the stories on 'H9 Anh and Sam'. Make sure each student has access to a copy. Either read the story or get one of the students to read it to the rest of the class.
2. Inform students that you are going to ask questions about the story that they will need to answer by raising their hand.
3. Inform students that there are no right or wrong answers and it's important to hear as many people's opinions as possible.

Questions

1. **Whose story do you think is right?**
 - Ask students to put their hands up for Anh, for Sam or if they're not sure.
 - Ask volunteers to say why they put their hand up.
2. **Was either Anh or Sam showing respect in this situation?**
 - Hands up for yes, hands up for no, hands up for not sure.
 - Ask volunteers to say why they put their hand up.
 - Prompt question: How do you know whether there was or wasn't respect
3. **Who has the most power in this situation?**
 - Hands up for Anh, hands up for Sam, hands up for not sure.
 - Ask students why they put their hand up – what is their opinion?
 - Prompt question: What do we mean by 'power'? What different kinds of power are there? Think back to the previous activity.
4. **Who knows more about sexual assault?**
 - Hands up for Anh, hands up for Sam, hands up for not sure.
 - Ask students why they put their hand up – what is their opinion?
 - Prompt question: Does either person use the word 'sexual assault'? Why/why not?

After each question and answer, ask students why they have that opinion (e.g., why do you think Sam or Anh has more power?).

5. **Explain that the next questions have a yes/no answer.**

- Do you think Anh has been sexually assaulted? Why?
- Do you think Sam could be charged with sexual assault? Why?

For both questions, allow students to explain their responses.

Explain that Anh has been sexually assaulted and Sam could be charged with sexual assault. They had a responsibility to check whether Anh wanted to have sex. Anh had a right to take Sam upstairs and feel safe. Checking is called seeking consent.

Present students with the changes to consent laws in Victoria, pointing out that other states and territories have made similar changes.

Consent laws in Victoria

- Affirmative consent laws make it clear that everyone has a responsibility to get free and voluntary agreement before engaging in sexual activity. For their belief in consent to be reasonable, a person must have taken steps by saying or doing something to find out if the other person consents, and they must receive a clear and enthusiastic go-ahead. A person does not consent to an act just because they do not resist the act verbally or physically.
- Seeking consent can include but isn't limited to verbally asking and getting a 'yes', a physical gesture like a nod, or reciprocating a move such as removing clothes.
- A person is not consenting if they were forced, harmed or were in fear of force or harm of any kind, or if they were pressured (also called coerced) or intimidated (made to feel scared).
- The law also covers image-based sexual abuse, which includes taking intimate videos of someone without their consent and distributing, or threatening to distribute, intimate images, including deepfake porn.
- In addition, the law states that circumstances where there is no consent to the removal, non-use or tampering of a condom – commonly referred to as 'stealthing' – without the other person's consent is a crime.

Further, a person does not consent to an act just because they consented to:

- a different act with the same person
- the same act with the same person at a different time or place
- the same act with a different person
- a different act with a different person.
- Ask students what makes an act sexual

assault. Try to bring out that sexual assault can be any sexual behaviour that makes the victim/survivor feel uncomfortable, frightened or threatened (see the Session 5 handout, 'H10 Consent and the law').

- If time permits, get students to research the differences in Australian consent laws across the various states and territories, which can be accessed at: <https://wesnet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2023/02/Affirmative-consent-policy-position-paper.pdf>. If you have time, you could ask students in groups of 3 present to the class what they think the most progressive consent laws are and why. Alternatively, you could set this as an assessment or reflection task.

Follow up

It's also important to establish, at the end of the discussion, that this is a sexual assault and Sam's behaviour is harmful as well as unlawful.



You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the [introduction page 12](#).

In addition, it is important that you provide students with links to support services, including wellbeing leaders in the school. Student diaries may already provide school support information, so check that students know where the information is. If not, check with school/wellbeing leaders that students have access to this information anonymously. The 'Where to go for help' handout is also an excellent source of information.

You could also consider inviting a guest speaker from a local service to provide an overview of where young people in your communities could find services, including such things as confidentiality, using your Medicare card etc. The following links may also be of use:

<https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/sexual-assault-support-services>

<https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-support-lgbtq-communities>

<https://www.vacca.org/page/contact/needng-help-now>

<https://safeandequal.org.au/find-a-service/>

<https://aifs.gov.au/resources/resource-sheets/key-organisations-working-culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-families#victoria>

<https://odsc.vic.gov.au/abuse-prevention/resources-on-preventing-and-responding-to-abuse/>

Collect the 'H9 Anh and Sam' handouts for use in the next session.

Reflection entry:

Session 4 reflection questions

Finish the following stems with at least 3 lines for each stem:

- I was surprised that I...
- I learnt that others...
- A violent relationship means...
- Power is...
- Showing respect in a sexual relationship means I...

Homework: Pets and Consent

Utilise a collaborative online platform to collate images about 'pets and consent', or provide students with a hard copy of the images on the next page.

Ask students to complete the task for homework or bring a copy of a picture of their pet or a pet they know to class for the next session. Use the following prompt for the task:

Post a picture of your pet and describe how the pet responds to being patted when they want to be patted and when they don't. What noises do they make, what do they do?



Cat: Paddy

Hisses and growls when he doesn't want to be patted or picked up. Purrs when he's enjoying a snuggle.



Dog: Barko

Snuggles and licks when she likes a pat. Puts her tail between her legs and pushes away from you with her legs when she doesn't like it.



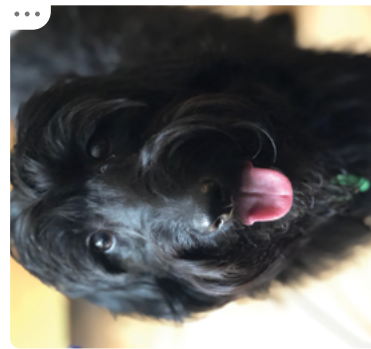
Pig: Poppy

Wags her ears and her tail and nuzzles into you when she's happy being patted. Snorts and lowers her ears and head when she's warning you not to touch her.



Cat: Neo

Purrs, closes her eyes and pushes her head against you when she's enjoying a pat. Bites or scratches when she's telling you to stay away.



Dog: Luna

Nudges and licks when she wants to be patted or lies down for tummy rubs. Gives you a 'look' when she doesn't want to be touched.



Bird: Shaz

Relaxes her body when she wants attention and rests her head on your hand. Quivers her body and feathers when she's nervous and doesn't want to be touched.



Guinea pigs: Wren and Ridley

Close their eyes and relax during pats or scratches when they want to be touched. Chatter their teeth and show they want to be put down when they aren't enjoying it.



Dog: Stanley

Ducks his head away when he doesn't want to be patted. If you ignore him, he growls or snaps. Wags his tail and pushes his head into your leg when he wants pats.

One story, two experiences**Anh, aged 16**

'I'll never forget that night as long as I live. Sam and I had been going out for a while and Sam had always acted like a really sweet person — well, we had done some kissing and fooling around but Sam never gave me any reason not to trust them. The night of the party I wore this gorgeous outfit that I borrowed.

It was a bit showier than the clothes I normally wear but I thought it was really flattering. At the party I had some beer and it made me really tired so I wanted to lie down. Maybe I shouldn't have suggested we both lie down together but it felt weird to just go upstairs by myself and leave Sam all alone. The next thing I know Sam is all over me, forcing me to have sex. It was horrible. I didn't want to scream and make a fool of myself with all those other people in the next room. I tried to fight Sam off but they were too strong. Needless to say, I never want to see Sam again. Sam seemed like such a nice person. What happened?'

Sam, aged 17

'I still don't understand what happened. Anh and I had been seeing each other for about two months and although we hadn't slept together yet, I had made it pretty clear that I was very attracted to Anh and eventually expected to have sex. We were supposed to go to a party and when Anh showed up in this hot outfit I thought maybe it was a way of saying 'I'm ready'. At the party we drank some beer, which made Anh sort of sleepy and sensual.

When Anh said they wanted to go lie down and wanted me to come and snuggle, what was I supposed to think? Of course I thought Anh wanted to have sex. Anh did grumble a bit when I started to undress them but I just thought Anh wanted to be persuaded. Lots of people feel a bit funny about being forward. I don't know.

We had sex and it was fine. I took Anh home from the party and I thought everything was okay. But ever since then Anh refuses to talk to me or go out with me.

I thought Anh really liked me. What happened?'



Learning outcomes

- Students will identify the laws associated with consent.
- Students will develop an understanding of what the laws mean to young people.
- Students will identify where to go for information on consent.



Activities

- The law on consent
- Consent cards



Time Required

- 60 to 80 minutes



Handouts

- **H10** Consent and the law
- **H11** Is this consent?
- **H12** Consent cards

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this session contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. See the Introduction on page 10 of this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

About this session

This session builds on the previous activity and is designed to teach students about the laws of consent and what this means for their relationships. The 2 activities are all about the laws in relation to consent. The session is designed to enable students to understand that the law of consent emphasises *free* agreement. It also aims to assist students to understand laws relating to the age of consent, guardian rules and people in authority.

Advise students that in this session they will be focusing on laws about sexual consent and on what is legal sexual activity between people in terms of age and consent.

You may find an officer from the Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Unit of Victoria Police would be willing to come and speak to students. You will need to give them very clear instructions about what you want them to cover. Two useful websites which are designed for young people and can be used to help students research information about consent are:

- Youth Law Australia: <https://yla.org.au/topics/health-love-and-sex/sex/>
- Sexual Health Victoria: <https://shvic.org.au/for-you/sex-and-the-law/sex-and-young-people-what-does-the-law-say>

You may also want to familiarise yourself with these 2 websites.

Activity 1: The law on consent

Group: Large group

Time: 40 minutes

It is important that students are provided with an opportunity to discuss these issues in a safe and comfortable environment. Young people maintain that single-gender groupings are an outdated practise because of the importance of gender inclusivity and because young people need to hear others' perspectives and learn from each other.⁷¹ However, some research does suggest that some girls are also more comfortable in single-gender groupings.⁷² If you feel it would be beneficial for your class to examine the issues in gendered groups, consult with your students. As adults we often make assumptions about students' sensibilities instead of consulting with them directly. To gauge their thoughts and feelings about this, carry out a short anonymous survey such as the one on [page 143](#).

You know your students best and may have experience that shows students would benefit from some discussion in single-gender groups. You may want to consider using small groups within a mixed class.

In addition, consideration needs to be given to the cultural context. For example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people may prefer to work in single-gender classes with a same-gender teacher. Establishing a relationship with your school's KESO will help you to support your Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Preparation and materials

- Students' completed 'pet' homework task from session 4, activity 2.
- Provide students with a copy of the following handouts:
 - **H10** Consent and the law
 - **H11** Is this consent?
- Access to computers if students are going to conduct research.
- A large enough space for students to walk around.
- Access to whiteboard and pens.



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Background

This activity is about the laws in relation to consent and is designed to enable students to understand that the law of consent emphasises free agreement and affirmative consent.

Common questions that come up in this activity include the following:

- What if you were already going out with your basketball coach before they became your coach?
- What if your basketball coach is the same age as you?
- Does that mean a doctor can never treat their husband/wife/partner as a patient?
- What if one person is 15 and the other is 2 years and 2 days older than them?
- What about stepfamilies and foster families?

These can be tricky questions. But in general, you will be able to answer them using the following key message as a guide:

The law is there to protect people who may have less power in a relationship. The person who is older and/or with professional responsibility has to make sure they are not breaking these laws.

There are more notes for teachers on [page 170](#).

Procedure

1. Inform students that this activity looks at consent and free agreement. Connect it back to Anh and Sam's stories.
2. Ask if anyone can explain what is meant by the word 'consent' (e.g. permission, agreement, wanting to do something). Refer to the Pets and Consent homework task. Show students the Pet Padlet and let them identify their Pets or the Pets they have added. Ask students to think about their pets, or a friend or family member's pet. How do you know they like being patted? What do pets do when they don't want to be touched? Do people try to bribe pets with food? What can happen? What are some examples of the body language of pets?
3. Explain that in relation to sex and sexual assault, consent = free agreement. Write this on the board and emphasise that it means both people are doing things because they want to, not because they feel forced.
 - Emphasise that *affirmative* consent makes it clear that everyone has a responsibility to get 'enthusiastic' consent before engaging in any sexual activity.
 - A person must have taken steps by saying or doing something to find out if the other person consents – simply, it must be a clear and enthusiastic go-ahead.

- This can include but isn't limited to verbally asking and getting a 'yes', a physical gesture like a nod or reciprocating a move such as removing clothes.
 - There is no consent if a person intentionally does not use, removes or tampers with a condom – commonly referred to as 'stealthing' – without the other person's consent. This is a crime.
 - Image-based sexual abuse is also a crime, this includes sharing intimate images/ videos of a person without their consent or threatening to distribute, intimate images, including deep fake porn.
 - Consent is ongoing – a person can change their mind at any time and if someone has given consent in the past, it doesn't mean that they agree to doing it again.
4. Give out 'H10 Consent and the law' and read through the first section, 'Are you old enough?'
 5. After the information on the sheet has been read out, ask if it's legal for the following pairs of people to have a sexual relationship and why/why not:
 - 13 and 15 years old?
 - 9 and 11 years old?
 - 20 and 18 years old?
 - 15 and 16 years old?
 6. Ask students:
 - Which rule(s) applies to you?
 - Why do you think the two-year rule applies and who is it trying to protect?
 - Why do you think there are laws about guardians and people in authority?
 - Do you agree with the laws?
 7. Briefly discuss:
 - Is sexual contact lawful in families?
 - Are doctors able to have a sexual relationship with their patients?
 - Can a teacher have a sexual relationship with a student?

Alternatively, use the guest speaker to cover these issues with students or ask students to visit the Youth Law Australia and Sexual Health Victoria websites (listed above) to find answers to the questions.

Sexual contact between close relatives is against the law and this is acknowledged in the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic). In addition to the law, there are ethical and policy dimensions to consider. For example, because of their professional code of conduct, doctors cannot have sexual relationships with any patients. Likewise, teachers cannot have a sexual relationship with students, even when students are over 18.

8. Read through the other side of 'H10 Consent and the law', 'What you need to know about consent' (see 'Notes for teachers' below). If you have a guest speaker, ask them to cover this material.

When you get to the box, 'Why do people agree...?', you can ask students to come up with examples for each rule, but you may prefer to provide examples for them, as in the 'Notes for teachers' below.

Ask students if they have any questions about these laws or if they can think of any situations that they are unsure about.

9. Give students 'H11 Is this consent?' and in pairs ask them to decide which situations are consenting and which are sexual assault. Discuss which situations make it difficult to decide.
10. You may like to conclude the lesson by showing students a reputable Victorian video resource about consent.

Extension and assessment

1. Show students the consent video by Victoria University (accessible at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sblFoiFy7ao>) or any relevant Victorian Government Campaigns on consent.
2. Ask students to reiterate the key messages in the video. Discuss why they think the presenters used this approach and these messages. Are there any other messages or information that young people will need about consent?
3. Ask students: 'From what you have learned about consent, are there any other aspects and information that should be included in the video to help young people understand consent laws?'
4. Ask students to form students into groups of 3.
5. Inform students that their task is to develop a short 2 to 3 minute video to teach other students about consent and advise the government about the needs of young people and consent.

To do this students are to select an audience from the following list or identify another group of interest:

- Primary students
- Year 10 students

- Young people with a strong religious and/or spiritual background
 - Young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background
 - Young people from the LGBTIQ+ community
 - Young people from a culturally diverse background
 - Young people with other diverse needs such as disability, rurality, in care.
6. Provide students with some key tasks and ideas to carry out this task. Encourage students to interview other students and their families. Emphasise that participation in interviews is voluntary and that stories of personal experiences should not be shared. This may involve them researching their group to see if there are any:
- issues that are specific
 - sensitivities, such as values about sex before marriage, or inclusive language
7. Workshop potential interview questions with students to ensure questions asked are age-appropriate and sensitive. For example:
- Have you heard the of the term consent?
 - What do you think consent means?
 - Is there anything you find confusing about the concept of consent?
 - What do you think are important messages about consent for young people? What is one key message you think should be communicated about consent?
 - Do you understand the law around consent in Victoria?
 - Are there any issues around consent that are particularly important for your community?

Note: This activity could be used as an assessment task.

Notes for teachers

'H10 Consent and the law': what you need to know about consent

There are many reasons why people may feel forced or pressured to engage in sexual activity and the law addresses many of them.

While you're reading through the information in the box, ask students to come up with an example of each. Alternatively, read out the examples below as you go:

A person does not freely give consent if:

1. 'They submit because of coercion or intimidation.'

Example: Someone has threatened to physically hurt them if they don't go through with it, so they submit to avoid that harm, or someone has used coercion to pressure someone to participate and they submit as a result of that coercion.

2. 'They submit because of the fear of harm of any type for themselves or someone else.'

Example: Someone in the family who is sexually assaulting a teenage girl may tell her if she doesn't do what they want, they will assault her little sister, so she says yes.

3. 'They submit because of being unlawfully detained.'

Example: Someone might be locked in a room and told they're not allowed to leave until they have sex with a person, so they do it.

4. 'They are asleep, unconscious or so affected by alcohol or another drug as to be incapable of freely consenting.'

Example: If someone has passed out from drinking and someone does things to them, including having sex, the person who has passed out is not able to give consent so it's an offence.

5. 'They are incapable of understanding the sexual nature of the act.'

Example: They are children or have an intellectual disability and cannot understand that what's being done is sexual.

6. 'They are mistaken or unaware about the sexual nature of the act and the identity of the person.'

Example: Two brothers look very alike and are nearly the same age. One of them brings a girl home and sleeps with her and during the night while she's asleep the brothers swap places. In the morning the girl has sex with the second brother, thinking he's the first brother. Both brothers could end up being charged with sexual assault.

7. 'They are mistaken in the belief that the act is for medical or hygienic purposes.'

Example: If a doctor or nurse makes you do something unnecessary but makes you believe it is necessary (e.g. making you take all of your clothes off when you only have a chest infection).



You must follow the department's [PROTECT guidance](#) and [Four Critical Actions](#) if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the [introduction page 12](#).

Are you old enough?

The law says if you are:

Under 12

No one can have sex with you or touch you sexually, or get you to touch them sexually or perform a sexual act in front of you.

12 to 15

Only a person who is within 24-months of your age can have sex with you or touch you sexually or get you to touch them sexually. Even if you both want to do it, it is illegal if there is more than a 24-month age gap between you.

No one who is caring for you or supervising you (e.g. a teacher, youth worker, doctor, sports coach, foster carer) can have sex with you or touch you sexually, even if you agree.

16 or 17

No one who is caring for you or supervising you (e.g. a teacher, youth worker, doctor, sports coach, foster carer) can have sex with you or touch you sexually, even if you agree.

18 and over

If there is consent, you can legally have sexual contact with anyone over the age of 16 that is not a close family member or you are caring for or supervising.

Certain professions (doctors, teachers etc.) have codes of conduct that do not allow any sexual contact with patients/students etc. even if they are over 18.

For further information about age and consent visit <https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/> and search for 'consent'.

What you need to know about consent

- Affirmative consent makes it clear that everyone has a responsibility to get 'enthusiastic' consent before engaging in any sexual activity.
- A person must have taken steps by saying or doing something to find out if the other person consents – simply, it must be a clear and enthusiastic go-ahead.
- This can include but isn't limited to verbally asking and getting a 'yes', a physical gesture like a nod or reciprocating a move such as removing clothes.
- A person is not consenting if they were forced, harmed or were in fear of force or harm of any kind, or if they were pressured (also called coerced) or intimidated (made to feel scared).
- There is no consent if a person removes, non-use or tampering with a condom – commonly referred to as 'stealththing' – without the other person's consent. This is a crime.
- Image-based sexual abuse is also a crime, this includes taking intimate videos of someone without their consent and distributing, or threatening to distribute, intimate images, including deepfake porn.
- Further, a person does not consent to an act just because they consented to:
 - a different act with the same person
 - the same act with the same person at a different time or place
 - the same act with a different person
 - a different act with a different person.

Further examples of when the law says a person cannot have given consent:

- A person can be unable to provide lawful consent because of their age (for example, being too young or the age difference being too great – see further information relating to age of consent).
- The person submits to the act because of force or the fear of force, whether to that person or to someone else, or fear of harm of any type to that person or to someone else or to an animal.
- The person submits to the act because of coercion or intimidation.
- The person is so affected by alcohol or drugs that they are incapable of consenting to the sexual activity or being able to withdraw their consent.
- The person is unlawfully detained (e.g., being locked in a room and not allowed out without doing a sexual act).
- The person is mistaken about the identity of a person (they thought they were engaging in sexual activity with one person, but another person has replaced them – for example, in a dark room).
- The person consents because the other person has a position of authority over them (e.g., a boss, a parent, family member, teacher, carer, coach, support worker).
- They are asleep or unconscious.
- The person is mistaken about the sexual nature of the act.
- The person is incapable of understanding the sexual nature of the act.
- The person mistakenly believes that the act is for medical or hygienic purposes.
- The person does not say or do anything to indicate that they consent.
- Having already given consent to the act, the person later withdraws consent to the sexual activity occurring or continuing.

For further information about age and consent, search 'consent' on the Legal Aid website: <https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/>.

Why do people agree to have sex if they really don't want to?

The law says consent equals 'free agreement'.

The law says it's not really 'free agreement' if:

- They say yes because of force, fear or fraud.
- They say yes because of the fear of harm of any type for themselves or someone else.
- They say yes because of being unlawfully detained.
- They are asleep, unconscious or so affected by alcohol or another drug that they are incapable of freely consenting.
- They are incapable of understanding the sexual nature of the act.
- They are mistaken about the sexual nature of the act and the identity of the person.
- They are mistaken in the belief that the act is for medical and or hygienic purposes.

Lily is 15 and been going out with Bjorn, who is 17, for the past 6 months. Last week she went over to Bjorn's for dinner with his family. After dinner they went to Bjorn's room to watch TV as they generally do. Bjorn locked the door and told Lily he had something special he wanted her to watch. He starting watching porn on his computer. Lily was upset and said she didn't want to watch it. Bjorn responded by saying don't be a baby, it's only a movie.

Noah is 19 and Liam is 17 and they have sort of been seeing each other for 4 months. Noah is openly gay but nobody knows Liam is gay. Liam has been intimate with Noah but they have not had penetrative sex, as Liam doesn't feel ready. Noah told Liam if he doesn't have sex, he will tell everyone he is gay. Liam is so scared that his family will find out and reject him that he has sex with Noah.

Grace and her friends Ella and Harmie are all 16. Last weekend they went to Jay's 18th birthday party. Grace and Jay really like each other and are sort of going out. They haven't had sex yet but Grace is pretty keen. Grace ended up drinking too much and passed out. Her friends put her to sleep in Jay's little sister's bed. When Ella and Harmie went to get Grace to go home, Jay was having sex with her and Grace was asleep.

Carlos has been going out with Amalia for about 6 months. Amalia really loves Carlos but hasn't felt ready to have sex. Last weekend Carlos told Amalia if she didn't have sex with him he wouldn't go out with her. Amalia was so scared of losing Carlos that she had sex when she didn't want to.

Frankie is 21. Last week they were at a nightclub in the city and they hooked up with a really gorgeous person named Mali. They had sex and Frankie was very keen to see Mali again. The next day Frankie found out Mali was 15 years old and goes to school with their 15-year-old sibling.

Chloe is 15 and has just started work at a local café. She met Harriet at the café who is 19 and really likes her. Harriet has started picking her up from school and hanging out all the time. Chloe has started having a sexual relationship with Harriet and is very happy.

Activity 2: Consent cards

Group: Whole class

Time: 20 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Print and cut out 'H12 Consent cards'.

Background

This activity enables the revision of consent laws in an interactive, visual format. It is directly related to Activity 1, 'The law on consent'. It aims to revise knowledge relating to the age of consent and free agreement and is designed to discuss issues of power, control and responsibility that are reinforced in law.

Procedure

1. Explain to students that they are going to do an activity to revise consent laws in relation to age and to check how much they have remembered.
2. Draw a stick figure on the whiteboard.
3. Hand one 'H12 consent card' to each person/pair. Tell students you are going to put one card on the figure at the front and their job is to work out whether the person on their card can legally have sexual contact with someone of that figure's identity (e.g., a 21-year-old).
4. First write '15-year-old' on the whiteboard figure. Go around the group asking each person with a card:
 - Is sexual contact permitted between these 2 people?
 - Why or why not?
 - 14 to 16-year-old – YES because within 24 months if both people are consenting.
 - 18 to 30-year-old – NO because an adult cannot have sexual contact with a child under 16 years.
 - Same-age partner – YES if both consenting.
 - Doctor/basketball coach/family members – NO because the child is 15 years of age and adults cannot have sexual contact with anyone under the age of 16. Further sexual contact between close family members and a person who has the child under their care, supervision or authority is also against the law.
5. Now place a card saying '17-year-old' on the whiteboard figure. Go around the group and ask the same questions again. Two of the answers will be the same as last round, and 2 will be different because of important laws relating to age:
 - 13 to 15-year-old – NO because not within 24 months
 - 18 to 30-year-old – YES, if both people are consenting, because when a person turns 16 the 24-month rule no longer applies unless their partner is younger.
 - Same-age partner – YES if both people are consenting
 - Doctor/basketball coach/family members NO – because a 17-year-old under care, supervision or authority cannot consent to sexual activities. Further sexual contact between family members is also against the law.
6. Key points to reinforce:
 - The laws refer to any sexual contact, not just sexual intercourse or having sex. It could be touching, digital penetration, being forced to watch pornography, posting nudes of a person, damaging a condom etc.
 - The 24-month rule applies to people between 12 and 15 years old. When you turn 16 it only applies to you if your partner is under the age of 16.
 - Family members, unless married or in a de facto relationship, can never have sexual contact with each other, regardless of age. Should such a case be brought to court, it is the older family member who is breaking the law. The younger person is not held legally responsible.
 - Laws apply equally to all genders and to heterosexual and same-gender homosexual relationships.
 - The law is there to protect people, but we may not always agree with it ethically or morally. For example, what do we think about 12-year-olds having sexual relationships?
 - You may wish to reinforce these messages using a question and answer format:
 - What age group does the 24-month rule apply to?
 - Does the 24-month rule apply to 16-year-olds in any way?
 - Is sexual contact allowed within families? If it happens, who is the more powerful or responsible person in the situation?
 - Do the laws apply in the same way to men, women and sexually and gender-diverse people?

- Do the laws apply in the same way to different kinds of relationships (e.g. casual, long-term, heterosexual, homosexual)?
- What laws – other than age – need to be considered as well?

7. Remind students of the key message from the law of consent: The law is there to protect people who may have less power in a relationship. In relation to persons aged under 18, the person who is older and/or with professional responsibility has to make sure they are not breaking the law. It's also important to remind students that consent law isn't just about the age of consent but about taking active steps to seek consent.

Option

This task could also be run as a movement-based activity (for example, 'move to one side of the room if your figure can have sexual contact with the figure on the board and to the other side if not').

Inform students that sexual assault will be covered again in the next session using the Sam and Anh case studies. You may want to carry out a quick survey of your students to find out how they want to be grouped to learn about and explore issues of sexual assault.

Reflection entry

Session 5 reflection questions

Finish the following stems with at least 3 lines for each stem:

- I was surprised that I...
- I learnt that others...
- My legal responsibility is...
- I could consent to have...
- I could not...
- Showing respect in a sexual relationship means I...



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[Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson](#)

13 years old

14 years old

15 years old

16 years old

17 years old

18 years old

19 years old

20 years old

21 years old

Stepbrother

Brother

Stepfather

Basketball
coach

Same-age
boyfriend

Same-age
girlfriend

Doctor

Sister

Parent

Mum's
boyfriend

Spiritual or
religious Leader

Teacher

Sports
coach

**Learning outcomes**

- Students will identify the barriers and social pressures to consent and communication.
- Students will recognise the advantages of seeking consent.
- Students will recognise the gendered nature of sexual expectations and the impact these can have on communication.
- Students will practise active listening.
- Students will develop an understanding of how personal feelings and conflicts may affect our responses to other people's violence.
- Students will explore feelings, ideas and strategies about conflict and develop ideas to help them deal with conflict.
- Students will identify how they and others could respond in a range of gender-based violence situations.

**Activities**

- Doing consent
- Communication rating
- More than a bystander!

**Time Required**

- 100 minutes

**Handouts**

- **H9** Anh and Sam (from Session 4)
- **H13** Doing consent
- **H14** Doing consent – teacher's copy
- **H15** Aggression rating
- **H16** More than a bystander!

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this session contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. [See the Introduction on page 10](#) of this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

About this session

This session is designed to look at the pressures and difficulties of ensuring there is mutual, affirmative consent in sexual relationships. It is one thing for young people to know they should communicate about their needs, wishes and desires, yet another for them to do this in an intimate situation that may involve an unequal distribution of power. Refer to the consent ad campaigns that students developed in Activity 1. What were the key message in these campaigns?

Following on from discussions about the laws of consent, in this session students explore their ideas about consent, free agreement and the strategies and practises that enable it to happen. A 2016 study conducted by the University of South Australia and Deakin University of 2,500 students aged 13 to 16 found that they wanted more information about violence in relationships, including issues of consent and how to start and end relationships.⁷³ The 'Teach us Consent' campaign has been the catalyst for mandating consent education in Australian curriculums. The campaign's origins are in over 6,000 testimonials provided by young women students who detailed their experience of sexual assault by male students.

This session aims to prevent sexual assault by encouraging young people to engage in respectful behaviour that includes communicating and gaining consent. The focus of the discussion is on the importance of expressing needs and wishes freely and the difficulties of expressing dissent in the face of coercion, fear or violence.

As well as providing content advice to students, it is important that family and kinship groups are aware that students are learning about sexual assault. They need to be informed that there are strategies in place to support students and reduce trauma, including modified participation options, opportunities to pre-read learning materials and the use of 'Talk to a teacher' slips. Aboriginal and Torres Islander families, kinship groups and families with spiritual or belief systems about how and who they learn about sex with, may require single-gender groupings and same-gender teachers. If you are unsure about this requirement, consult with families. Consultation builds positive relationships and trust and gives families and kinship groups an opportunity to prepare their children and talk to wellbeing staff about what support can be offered to students, while ensuring that this important content is covered.

It is important to remind students ahead of time that the focus of this session is on sexual assault, ensuring that students have access to 'Talk to a teacher' slips prior to the class.



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Activity 1: Doing consent

Group: Small group, whole class or single-sex group

Time: 35 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handouts:
 - [H9 Anh and Sam](#)
 - [H13 Doing consent](#)
 - [H14 Doing consent – teacher's copy](#)



[Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson](#)

Background

This activity has historically been done in single gender/sex groupings in acknowledgement of the level of sexual assault women and girls experience as victim-survivors which is perpetrated by men and boys. Young women have talked about the importance of a safe environment to discuss sexual assault, stereotypes, expectations and the power dynamics young people experience. However, this can be exclusory for trans, gender-diverse and non-binary students. Research conducted with students in Melbourne clearly showed that gender and sexually diverse students did not want to have to choose groups on the basis of gender.⁷⁴ The gender of the young people in the Anh and Sam case study has been updated to be more inclusive. This enables students to explore their assumptions about gender as well as unpack the reality of violence against women.

If you feel it would be beneficial for your class to examine the issues in gendered groups, consult with your students. As adults we often make assumptions about the sensibilities of our students instead of consulting with them directly. To gauge their thoughts and feelings about this, carry out a short anonymous survey such as the one below.

You know your students best and may have experience that shows students would benefit from some discussion in single-gender groups. This can often be possible by small groups within a mixed class.

In addition, consideration needs to be given to the cultural context. For example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people may prefer to work in single-gender classes with a same-gender teacher. Establishing a relationship with your school's Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO) will help you to support your Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

An easy way to consult with students is to give them a short, anonymous survey such as the one on [page 143](#). Ask them to complete it privately. This is a way of consulting with students while also preparing them for the content of the next class, which looks closely at sexual assault and consent.

If you find students do want to do this activity in groups such as single-sex and gender identifying, you will need to get another experienced teacher to work with you. The student wellbeing leader or school nurse may be able to give you some assistance if they have been involved in the RRE curriculum. If possible, having a trained male teacher to work with boys would be ideal for communities that prefer working in single-gender groups. However, if you find you are unable to separate students for the whole class, modify the steps and ask them to work in these groups during the session.

As well as providing content advice to students, it is important that family and kinship groups are aware that students are learning about sexual assault. They need to be informed that there are strategies in place to support students and reduce trauma, including modified participation options, opportunities to pre-read learning materials and the use of 'Talk to a teacher' slips. Aboriginal and Torres Islander families, kinship groups and families with spiritual or belief systems about how and who they learn about sex with, may require single-gender groupings and same-gender teachers. If you are unsure about this requirement, consult with families. Consultation builds positive relationships and trust and gives families and kinship groups an opportunity to prepare their children and talk to wellbeing staff about what support can be offered to students, while ensuring that this important content is covered.

It is important to remind students ahead of time that the focus of this session is on sexual assault, ensuring that a students have access to 'Talk to a teacher' slips prior to the class.

Procedure

1. Acknowledge that we've just learnt about the laws of consent but that, in real life, it's a bit more complicated because of power and gendered expectations and the difficulties of communicating. Explain that we're going to go back to the story of Sam and Anh from last week. Hand out copies of the story (H9) to help students remember it and ask the group: Was there consent in that story? How do you know there wasn't?

2. Discuss as a group: What assumptions was Sam making (about themselves, about Anh)?

For example that:

- Anh is communicating by dress or actions instead of words
- Anh wants sex and is comfortable

- women want men to take responsibility for sex (this is likely to arise if students make gendered assumptions about Sam and Anh)
- men start sex, women stop it (this is likely to arise if students make gendered assumptions about Sam and Anh)
- Anh would speak up if they wanted to
- Sam has a right to get what they want
- Sam is more powerful and can get what they want
- silence means consent.

3. Discuss as a group: Where do these ideas come from? Are they common? Do a lot of young people make these assumptions?
4. Give out 'H13 Doing consent'. Break students into pairs or small groups and explain they have 10 minutes to complete the first side of the handout, 'How does consent really work?' Circulate among the groups to ensure they are answering all the questions.
5. Now ask students to get into groups of 4 by joining 2 sets of pairs. Explain that the groups now have 5 minutes to complete the other side of the handout, 'Checking for consent'.
6. Call all groups back into a large group discussion. Ask groups to report back with their answers to the question 'How does consent really work?'
 - Question 1: What could Anh have said to convey how they were feeling in that moment?
 - Question 2: What stopped Anh from speaking up?
 - Question 3: What non-verbal signs was Anh giving to indicate discomfort?
 - Question 4: What could have Sam said to Anh to check they were consenting?
 - Question 5: What stopped Sam from asking if Anh was comfortable?

Acknowledge that by asking Anh if they are comfortable, Sam runs the risk of not getting 'sex' that night. However, we need to look at the consequences of their actions in a little more detail. Ask students to consider and contribute their answers to 'Checking for consent' while you discuss these questions and record answers on the whiteboard:

- What are the risks/consequences of asking? (Column 1)
- What are the risks/consequences of NOT asking? (Column 2)

Write 'What made it hard for Anh to speak up?' on the white board and record their answers to Question 2 underneath it.

If the group is comfortable enough, you may want to ask them to add to the list by thinking

about situations where they have not felt in control of the situation or where they wanted to speak up but couldn't.

Emphasise that Anh had a whole range of fears and feelings that made it hard for them to tell Sam to stop, and this often happens, particularly to girls when boys are not reading or listening to the messages and body language. It is never the fault of the person who is assaulted.

Ask the group: What should Sam have done in this situation to make it easier for Anh to speak up?

7. What are the benefits of asking for consent? (Column 3) Record their answers in 3 columns on the whiteboard (as per handout)

Discuss:

- What do you notice about the difference between the risks of asking and of not asking? (such as long-term vs short-term, impact on themselves/others, friends vs partner.)
- How do the risks of asking compare with the benefits of asking?

Having agreed that asking for consent is a better thing to do, get feedback from small groups about what they wrote in response to Question 4:

- Question 4: What could Sam have said/asked to check what was going on?

Also discuss how Sam could have had a conversation with Anh before the party about their relationship and their different expectations.

Discuss:

- How would it feel to ask your partner these kinds of questions?
- Would you be comfortable? Would it be better to communicate with your partner about sexual choices before 'that moment'?
- Would that be difficult? What would the benefits be?
- What difference would it have made to this story if Sam had sought consent?
- Would Anh (or young people in general) feel comfortable expressing themselves in situations like this?
- How could Sam have had a conversation with Anh before the party about their relationship and their different expectations?

Reinforce the session's key messages

- There are lots of reasons why it can be hard to speak up in a situation like this. The reason we have had this discussion is because even though asking someone whether they're comfortable or want sex can be very embarrassing and might mean sex doesn't happen that time, asking is incredibly important for preventing sexual assault.
- Young people have a right to be asked if they are comfortable about having sex rather than being forced or just putting up with it.
- By asking or checking, a person is taking responsibility for consent and is also showing respect for their partner's choices and feelings.
- Students have made some suggestion for ways to affirm consent or not give consent, such as, Sam could have asked 'Would you like to have sex?', 'Do you like that?' or 'Does that feel nice?'. Anh could have said 'I only want to cuddle', 'I don't want to have sex', 'That doesn't feel comfortable' or 'Could we just kiss and cuddle?' Students also noted how asking for consent can help prevent sexual assault and potentially lead to much more enjoyable sex.⁷⁵



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How does consent really work?

Question 1:
In that moment in the story, what could Anh have said to Sam to express what they are thinking and feeling and to make Sam stop?
Write down some things Anh could have said.

Question 4:
What could Sam have said to Anh to check what was going on with them?
Write down some things Sam could have said or questions Anh could have been asked.

Question 2:
What would have stopped Anh from speaking up?
Write down what gets in the way of Anh expressing themself (e.g. feelings, what’s going on around them).

Question 5:
What makes it difficult for Sam to say these things?
Write down what stops Sam from speaking up.

Question 3:
What non-verbal signs was Anh giving to show they were uncomfortable? What would the non-verbal signs have been if they were comfortable?
Write down the ways Anh showed they were uncomfortable without using words.

Checking for consent = respectful relationships

Think about Sam and Anh’s story and write your ideas in each box.
Think about what each person could gain or lose if Sam had checked for consent.

Risks of Sam... <i>Asking</i> for consent	Risks of Sam... <i>Not Asking</i> for consent	Benefits of Sam... <i>Asking</i> for consent

How does consent really work?

Question 1:

In that moment in the story, what could Anh have said to Sam to express what they are thinking and feeling and to make Sam stop?

Write down some things Anh could have said.

Stop it *You've got the wrong idea*
Get off me *Not now*
*F*** Off!* *You're hurting me*

Question 4:

What could Sam have said to Anh to check what was going on with them?

Write down some things Sam could have said or questions Anh could have been asked.

Is this what you want? *Are you enjoying this?*
What's wrong? *Are you comfortable?*
Do you want me to stop? *Is this OK?*
How are you feeling? *Are you OK? Do you like this?*

Question 2:

What would have stopped Anh from speaking up?

Write down what gets in the way of Anh expressing themselves (e.g. feelings, what's going on around them).

Scared *Didn't want to look stupid*
Embarrassed *Didn't want to hurt Sam's feelings*
A bit drunk *Shocked or panicking*
Confused *Lots of people in the next room*
Afraid of what Sam would do

Question 5:

What makes it difficult for Sam to say these things?

Write down what stops Sam from speaking up.

Didn't care about Anh's feelings *Horny/aroused*
Wanted sex *A bit drunk*
Wanted control of the situation *Embarrassed*
Assumed Anh wanted sex too *Didn't know what to say*

Question 3:

What non-verbal signs was Anh giving to show they were uncomfortable? What would the non-verbal signs have been if they were comfortable?

Write down the ways Anh showed they were uncomfortable without using words.

Tried to fight *Body language*
Grumbled *Facial expression*
Stopped speaking *Didn't take clothes off*

Checking for consent = respectful relationships

Think about Sam and Anh's story and write your ideas in each box.

Think about what each person could gain or lose if Sam had checked for consent.

Asking for consent, Sam risks...	Not asking for consent, Sam risks...	Asking for consent, Sam ensures...
<i>Feeling rejected</i> <i>Feeling embarrassed</i> <i>Making things awkward with Anh</i> <i>Getting teased by friends</i> <i>Having Anh say no</i> <i>Losing control of the situation</i> <i>Not having sex that night</i>	<i>Committing sexual assault/rape</i> <i>Breaking the law</i> <i>Going to jail and other consequences</i> <i>Losing the relationship</i> <i>Losing Anh's trust</i> <i>Getting a bad reputation</i> <i>Hurting Anh</i> <i>Having sex but it not being enjoyable because Anh is not into it</i>	<i>They are both happy and participating as they want</i> <i>They are preventing sexual assault</i> <i>They are improving the communication and understanding in their relationship</i> <i>There are no painful consequences for Anh</i> <i>They show respect</i> <i>They avoid any negative consequences including being charged or going to jail</i> <i>They avoid getting a bad reputation</i> <i>They're both into it</i> <i>They are both set up to have better sex in the future, when both people are into it</i>

Activity 2:

Communication rating

Group: In pairs and whole class

Time: 35 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handout:
 - **H15** Aggression rating

Procedure

1. Give each student a copy of 'H15 Aggression rating'. Ask students to rate each of the statements from 1 to 5:
 - 1 = Definitely not my belief or action
 - 2 = Not often my belief or action
 - 3 = I sometimes think or act like this
 - 4 = Typical of my belief or action
 - 5 = Very typical of my belief or action
2. In pairs discuss your results:
 - What sort of communicator are you?
 - What conclusion can you draw about your level of aggression?
3. Write the 3 types of communication on the board. Ask students to indicate with a show of hands which rating they had the highest score for.

Discuss:

- Are there any differences with groups of students, such as age, gender or something else?
- What type of communication would facilitate respectful relationships? Why? Was there a group of students that had a higher rating of assertive behaviour?
- What impact would aggression, confrontation and avoidance/withdrawal have on intimate relationships?
- Which group of students had these as their highest ratings?
- What can we do to improve communication and make it more assertive rather than aggressive or submissive?
- Think back to Anh and Sam. What communication style did Anh and Sam use? What would have benefited them? Why?
- How do you feel about conflict?

4. Ask students what makes a good listener. Write these on the board. Ask students to think about a person they know who is a good listener. Get them to call out the qualities they have noticed about people they know who are good listeners and write them on the board. They should include:

- Doesn't interrupt
- Good eye contact
- No fidgeting
- Makes sympathetic noises
- Checks they understand what is said
- Shows interest.

5. Explain the concept of self-listening.

Self-listening is when you think you are listening but all the time you are thinking about what you'd like to say, or what you think the other person should do. The chronic self-listener simply waits for the first pause in the other person's story and leaps in with a story of their own or with comments and advice about what the other person should do. Self-listening effectively stops one person from hearing what the other person is saying. It is extremely common.

6. Working in pairs, ask students to remember a time when they felt powerless. An example might be when an older brother or sister was giving them a hard time, or they were accused of something they didn't do, and people didn't believe them when they told the truth. Perhaps they got into trouble at school and were unjustly punished. Remind students about the importance of ground rules to keep us safe. Each person has 2 minutes to describe the incident and share how they felt at the time. The other person must listen carefully without interrupting or making comments. When the two minutes are up, they swap.
7. Ask students to give each other feedback on their listening skills.
8. Discuss as a large group:
 - Was it easy to be an active listener? If not, what prevented it and what can you do to improve?
 - Think back to Anh and Sam, who were introduced in Session 4. Was Sam active as a listener?
 - Sam committed a sexual assault. How could Sam have ensured they had consent?
 - How could Anh be supported to assert their right not to consent?



Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

Rate each of the statements below with a number from 1-5.

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely not my belief or action	Not often my belief or action	I sometimes think or act like this	Typical of my belief or action	Very typical of the way I believe and act

1. If somebody hits me, it's fair enough to hit that person back	
2. The majority isn't always right	
3. If you listen to me, I'll listen to you	
4. Anything goes - it's dog eat dog in this world	
5. Don't rock the boat	
6. People who can't back up their opinions aren't worth listening to	
7. Nothing's so important that you should fight for it	
8. Always say what you really think	
9. Don't be nosey where it doesn't concern you	
10. The strongest arguments carry most weight	
11. You have to stand up for your rights	
12. Angry words take a long time to sort out	
13. The advantage always lies with the person who gets in first	
14. You have to yell if you want to be heard	
15. A quick pair of heels will keep you out of trouble better than a strong pair of fists	
16. In a violent world, only the violent will survive	
17. Trying to make peace with someone who is arguing with you	
18. I'll give in a bit if you give in a bit	

These questions provide examples of the three basic strategies used in dealing with conflict.

A. Aggression/Confrontation (quite violent)

1	
4	
6	
13	
14	
16	
Total	

B. Negotiation/Compromise (assertive, involved)

2	
3	
8	
10	
11	
18	
Total	

C. Avoidance/Withdrawal (submissive)

5	
7	
9	
12	
15	
17	
Total	

High in any strategy is 30, low is 6. What conclusions can you draw about your level of aggression?

Activity 3: Dear Conflict

Group: Whole group or small group

Time: 40 minutes

Preparation and materials

- A circle or hoop on the floor in the centre of the room. Chalk is an easy alternative.
- Slips of paper (1 to 2 per person) or a small postcard each.
- Pens, felt-tip markers, pencils etc.



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Background

Understanding how we deal with conflict is important in building skills in respectful relationships. For example, issues such as avoidance, keeping the peace, yelling, calm negotiation and body language can result in different outcomes when trying to deal with a conflict situation with different people and in different situations. In addition, gender expectations in the public arena, such as expecting girls to smile and agree with decisions, whereas boys are expected to be assertive and aggressive about their needs, may differ to that associated with negotiating in an intimate relationship such as Sam and Anh, when the media and public gaze is not involved. Both can result from a number of factors including a lack of communication, power imbalances, gendered expectations and stereotypical ideas about rights, responsibilities, sexuality, spirituality, age, ability, race and ethnicity.

This activity is designed to help students to think about and explore these issues in a role-play in a safe way that explores the challenges of having open discussion to deal with conflict in relationships.⁷⁶

Students will also be encouraged to come up with some ideas about how to make dealing with conflict easier. These include thinking about what could be done prior to a situation becoming a conflict and how to manage a conflict which escalates. Advise students that in this session they will be focusing on conflict and communication and how we feel about conflict. Remind students about class ground rules or agreements about respectful behaviour.

Procedure

1. Ask students to move to a space in the room where they're alone and where they can write in private.
2. Inform students that they are going to meet 'Conflict' (provide assurance that they will not be involved in an actual conflict). Ask them

to think firstly about a conflict situation such as Sam and Anh or a situation they may have been involved in.

3. They are now required to write 3 different things in a letter/postcard, that they would like 'Conflict' to know about how they see and deal with conflict. These things could be strategies they use to avoid conflict, strategies they find useful in negotiating conflict, things that will dissipate conflict or make a conflict situation easier. Let students know they don't need to write their name on their work.
4. Ask them to start it with 'Dear Conflict I would like you to know...'
5. Place all the pieces of paper inside the circle. Instruct students to stand around the circle.
6. As the leader, the teacher stands inside the circle. Tell students that you are Conflict, and you are going to read their letters/postcards (don't read them out yet). Ask students to move to a place in the room that represents their comfortable distance away from or close to Conflict. Ask students to be expressive in the way they move away, ensuring safety in the room.
7. Once students have taken their position, read out some of the letters, one at a time. If students want to tell you the issues are theirs and what they were thinking, let them know they are welcome to. Make sure that you use the strategy of protective interrupting to prevent students disclosing personal or sensitive information. Otherwise keep the discussion general for all and use the information to come up with strategies to deal with conflicts. You may want to swap being Conflict with a student and see where the conversation leads. Ensure that students who have been protectively interrupted are followed up and offered appropriate support after the class has concluded.
8. Bring students back into a group to discuss.

Debriefing

1. Discuss how students felt knowing they were going to meet Conflict. Ask students:
 - How did they position themselves away from the conflict circle? (were they close to conflict or a long way back? Why?)
 - Do they think body language, such as where you stand, ever has an influence on how a conflict plays out?
 - How did they feel when discussing some things that helped in a conflict situation?
 - Did they agree with the statements of others or not?
 - Did gendered expectations feature in the strategies and feelings about conflict?

2. Brainstorm examples of conflict situations that may happen in an intimate relationship. Write them on the board. Ask students:
 - Would strategies differ in intimate relationships to other conflict situations for example at school, or at marches or protests where there are groups with differing opinions present? How? Why?
 - What makes it difficult to negotiate or deal with conflict in intimate relationships?
 - What strategies can we use?

Bringing it all together

After the group discussion you could identify a few students to summarise the things that might help in a situation of conflict.

Ask students how their initial reaction to conflict has changed if at all. Perhaps a new position in relation to conflict could change the outcome, or even the confidence in dealing with conflict?

Assessment idea

Place students into pairs or groups of 3 and ask them to select one of the following protests by young people, or they can select others that they may be aware of or interested in.

- The marriage equality campaign in Australia which led to the Marriage Equality Act
- The task for the group is to research why young people are protesting.
- What are the issues and why are important to young people?
 - What has been the media response to the issue? Try and find articles with comments.
 - What conflict has arisen and how it has been understood?
 - What assumptions are being made about the young people involved, or those they are in conflict with?
 - What strategies have been used to deal with the conflict?
 - Has there been any resolution?
- Allow each group time to create a media report which they will present to the rest of the class. This could be done as a podcast, video or written report. Include recommendations on communication and dealing with conflict.
- The 'Teach us Consent' petition by Chanel Contos in Australia, which was the catalyst for changes to the Australian curriculum to include consent education
 - 'Together Yes' Campaign, which worked towards Indigenous voice to Parliament
 - Grace Tame and Nina Funnell's #LetHerSpeak campaign, which led to an amendment in Tasmania's Evidence Act to enable survivors of sexual assault to speak out
 - Australia's SEED mob, an Indigenous youth-led climate change network designed to continue the work of the oldest living culture in the world in protecting Country
 - India's Aditya Mukarji, who campaigned to get people to stop using plastic straws
 - Indigenous Ecuadorian activist Nina Gualinga, who works to protect the nature and communities of the Amazon
 - Autumn Peltier, a member of Canada's Wiikwemkoong First Nation people, who advocates for clean water
 - Uganda's Leah Namugerwa, a climate change activist leading the 'Fridays for Future' strikes
 - The Black Lives Matter movement, which was instigated in the United States but quickly spread to other countries to recognise the impact of racism on the lives of black young people
 - Student protests on global inaction around climate change

Activity 4: More than a bystander

Group: Small group and whole class

Time: 15 minutes

This activity is designed to get students to reflect on how they would react to a range of gender-based situations as a bystander. How they might deal with potential conflict in this situation. The activity requires students to explore their own feelings, values and attitudes before comparing these to community attitudes. It also aims to assist students to identify what they think they could and couldn't do to assist in the situation.

Preparation and materials

- Prepare the cards from 'H16 More than a bystander!'

Background

Introduce this activity by explaining that there is often conflict between our rational thoughts about violent situations and our feelings about them. As we saw in the previous activity this conflict between thoughts and feelings can affect the way we respond.

Procedure

1. Divide students into groups of 3 or 4. Either give each group a different situation card from 'H16 More than a bystander!' or give each group the same set of cards. One person in each group is to read the card to the others and students are to use the 3 questions to guide them in their discussion. For example:

You're sitting with some friends at a shopping centre and a girl you know from school walks past. One of the boys says, 'Look at that 'hoe' she wants it, and her skirt is so short you can see her arse'. Everyone laughs.

I think: *I think that is sexual harassment.*

I feel: *I feel embarrassed in this situation.*

I do: *I tell them to shut up*

2. As a class, go through each of the situation cards again, asking for general responses from the groups. Explore the responses by addressing the following questions with students:
 - How might each of their responses affect the person or people involved? What do you think the impact and outcome of the violence would be on all the people involved?
 - What might be going on inside the person who acts violently towards others, such as the boys in the third situation card?
 - Do people have a responsibility to get involved?
 - What risks are there in getting involved?
 - What advantages are there in getting involved?

3. Round off the discussion by stating the value of self-awareness – that is, being able to acknowledge and assess our thoughts and feelings and how these contribute to the way we react to others.
4. As a class, discuss where people get messages about how to act (e.g., billboards, social media, watching shows, family, media advertising etc.). Ask students to think of examples of slogans or campaigns that encourage certain kinds of behaviour or choices (e.g., 'If you drink and drive, you're a bloody idiot', 'Speeding kills', 'Quit', 'He just did it cause he likes you', 'Stop it before it starts').
5. In small groups, come up with 4 or 5 slogans that could be used to encourage respectful behaviour towards others or respectful choices made in relationships. For example:
 - Intervene if they see violence.
 - Treat their partner with respect.
 - Show support for victims/friends.
 - Role model respectful behaviour.
6. If there is time, put the slogans together and discuss the following:
 - Who are these slogans directed at?
 - Are they intended to be used before or after violence occurs?
 - Who do they suggest is responsible for stopping violence and showing respect?
7. Ask students to complete the journal entry below and hand it in.

Journal entry

Session 6 journal questions

Finish the following stems with at least 3 lines for each stem:

- I was surprised that I...
- I learnt that others...
- Doing consent means...
- Being an active listener requires me...
- As a bystander I feel I could...
- As a bystander I feel I could not...
- Showing respect in a sexual relationship means I...



You must follow the department's [PROTECT guidance](#) and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the [introduction page 12](#).

Extension activity

Advise students that in this session they will examine bystander behaviour through a potential sexual assault. The video implies that sexual assault may occur without intervention.

The video for the ad campaign 'Who are you?' is an excellent resource to explore how and when bystanders can become upstanders and intervene. It's essential that you watch it first before showing it to your class. The video shows a lack of sexual consent and young people drinking alcohol in a club setting.

- Show the video. Stop it at 5.53 minutes when the assault is stopped by an upstander.
- Ask students to think about when at other points in the video people could have stepped in as bystanders. Why didn't they do anything? What could they have done?
- Show the rest of the video to illustrate what upstander behaviour might look like.

The video can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUj2OHLAG3w>.

You come from a large family. Your best friend is one of your cousins and over the years you have spent a lot of time with him and his family. If their family goes on a holiday then you go too, and if your family goes on a holiday your cousin comes. Over the last year, every time you stay at your cousin's house or go somewhere with the family, your uncle is really nasty to your aunt. You hear him yelling at her all the time and you've overheard him swearing at her, telling her she's a 'useless bitch'. You were sure you heard your aunt crying last time you went. You've never been scared of your uncle, in fact you have always had a great time going to the footy with him, but the last time you were there he said to you that he hoped you understood that what goes on in their house is the family's business and nobody else's.

**What are you thinking? What are you feeling?
What would you do?**

Zoe, a very good friend, has been very unhappy lately and missing a lot of school. She used to be the happy one, captain of the netball team and everyone's friend. She is so quiet lately and she never wants to go out anymore. You walk home with her after netball training and she tells you that her boyfriend has been hitting her.

**What are you thinking? What are you feeling?
What would you do?**

A group of Year 10 boys at your school have started waiting outside the Year 9 locker area and harassing Cal, a kid in your Year 9 drama class. Cal seems really cool to you and ignores the comments. However, yesterday as you were leaving drama, 2 of the boys were laughing and asking Cal whether he was a girl or a boy. Cal seemed a bit upset.

**What are you thinking? What are you feeling?
What would you do?**

You are out at the movies with friends. Two of the friends, EJ and Lou, are going out and they seem really happy. But on this occasion Lou puts EJ down in front of everyone, basically saying they are stupid because they didn't understand a part in the movie.

Even though they often joke with each other and make fun of weaknesses, you can tell this is a different story and EJ is upset and humiliated.

**What are you thinking? What are you feeling?
What would you do?**

Adril and several of his friends were invited to their friend Sean's house for the afternoon on Saturday. Not long after he arrived Adril noticed that Steve was watching pornography on his laptop. Most of the other boys there laughed and cheered and the girls went quiet as he put it on and settled in to watch it. Adril, didn't find it funny and said he was leaving because it was not how he wanted to get off. Sean turned and said to Adril, 'Go then, what are you, gay?'

**What are you thinking? What are you feeling?
What would you do?**

Your friend Kym-ly tells you that her partner wants her to send a picture of her naked breasts. The partner says they will keep it to themselves but would love to be able to have a nude pic of her to look at. She says she doesn't really like this idea and doesn't want to, but the partner persists, asking her all the time and saying how much it would mean to them. The partner tells her other girls do it and it's no big deal. Her partner suggests if she loved them she wouldn't hesitate and would see it as a compliment.

**What are you thinking? What are you feeling?
What would you do?**

Chaz has been going out with Dom for a few months. They're really into each other. You've been friends with Chaz all your life and know that they bind their breasts, which developed at puberty. They always thought they were a boy until then because they were raised as a boy and have a penis. Dom has been putting a lot of pressure on Chaz to send them a nude. Chaz is thinking of doing it. They think this might be a way to tell them they are intersex and you are worried.

What are you thinking? What are you feeling? What would you do?

The implications of gender-based violence



Learning outcomes

- Students will identify changing community attitudes to violence.
- Students will compare their own attitudes to prevailing community attitudes.
- Students will look at the implications of a lack of consent.
- Students will identify strategies that can be used to assist and support victims and survivors of violence.
- Students will reflect on the impact and outcome of gender-based violence.



Activities

- Changing attitudes
- What's the harm in it?
- Stepping out against gender-based violence



Time Required

- 100 minutes



Handouts

- **H17** Have community attitudes changed?
- **H18** NCAS findings on consent
- **H19** Harm cards
- **H20** Stepping out situation cards
- **H21** What can I do to help a friend?

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this session contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. See the Introduction on page 10 of this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

About this session

Advise students that this session examines the implications of gender-based violence, including family violence, community attitudes and lack of consent. Remind students about class ground rules or agreements about respectful behaviour. The session begins by looking at changing community attitudes and the impact of how violence is understood and responded to. It is hoped that by doing the activities, students will develop an understanding of the effect violence has on the lives of victims and survivors as well as developing some strategies to act. Reading the latest data on Australian attitudes (and in particular young people's attitudes) will give you an excellent understanding of how attitudes have changed over time, but also where we need to focus our education.⁷⁷

Key findings from the 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS).

- 46% of respondents mistakenly believed that domestic violence is equally committed by men and women, a significant increase from 23% of respondents in 2009.
- Even though 91% of respondents believe violence against women is a problem in Australia, only 53% of respondents believed it is a problem in their own suburb in Australia.
- Australia's overall rejection of domestic violence plateaued between 2017 and 2021.

- Australia's rejection of sexual violence significantly improved between 2017 and 2021. For example, 85% of respondents in 2021 disagreed that women find it flattering to be persistently pursued, even if they are not interested, compared to 68% in 2017.

With this information in mind, it should concern all of us that:

- Too many Australians are willing to excuse violence as part of a 'normal' gender dynamic in a relationship.
- 1 in 5 Australians believe family violence is a normal reaction to stress and that sometimes a woman can make a man so angry he hits her without meaning to.
- 1 in 8 Australians believe that if a woman is raped while she is drunk or affected by drugs, she is at least partly responsible.
- 1 in 3 Australians believe that if a woman does not leave her abusive partner, then she is responsible for the violence continuing.
- Nearly 1 in 5 Australians do not believe financial control is a serious problem.
- 2 in 5 Australians believe that women make up false reports of sexual assault in order to punish men.
- Many Australians hold attitudes suggesting that sexual aggression can be attributed in part to men's 'natural sex drive'. (33% of Australians believe that 'rape results from men being unable to control their need for sex' and 28% believe that, when sexually aroused, 'men may be unaware a woman does not want to have sex'.)⁷⁸

Activity 1: Changing attitudes

Group: The whole class

Time: 20 minutes

Preparation and materials

- A large enough space for students to move about.
- Read the 'Young Australian's attitudes to violence against women and gender equity' findings from the 2021 NCAS available at: <https://ncas.au/>.⁷⁹
- Print off 'Attitude cards'. Create a set of cards with the following positions: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree. (Note: you may already have the attitude cards if you created the [continuum cards](#) in Session 1, Unit

1, which included identical text).

- Provide students with a copy of the following handouts:
 - **H17** Have community attitudes to domestic violence changed?
 - **H18** NCAS findings on consent
- Display the 'Data to guide discussion of attitudes' infographic.
- Teacher copy of the question prompts to ask students.
- Provide copies of the Know the Facts PDF from Respect Victoria which is available at: https://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/202008/Resource_5_KnowTheFacts_CardSet.pdf. These cards are used to play a game that looks at myths and facts.

Background

A study similar to the NCAS was first conducted by the Federal Office for the Status of Women (OSW) in 1995 and then again in 2010, 2013, 2017 and 2021. Although there have been shifts in attitudes, the 2017 study indicated there remains a lack of understanding about violence against women. 'The survey results also demonstrate the need for a key focus on young people' writes ANROWS. This has led to new policy frameworks to address violence against women and gender equity including the National Action Plan to reduce violence against women and children 2022 to 2032 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2022) and Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence (ANROWS, VicHealth, Our Watch 2015). A summary of these findings can be accessed here: <https://www.anrows.org.au/NCAS/2017/home/>.

These studies highlighted the need to develop community campaigns and education to reduce misinformation and improve the understanding of the causes and consequences of gender-based violence. Activity 1, 'Changing attitudes', is designed to get students to compare their own attitudes to those of the community and examine the impact of attitudes to gender-based violence and how this has changed over time. This focus is revisited in Unit 3.

Although this activity uses the community attitudes to violence against women data, it is important to acknowledge that this violence also happens against gender and sexually diverse people, often on the basis of non-conforming gendered behaviour.^{80,81,82} Rates of intimate partner violence within lesbian, gay and queer relationships are as high as the rates experienced by cisgender women in intimate heterosexual relationships.⁸³

Procedure

1. Set up room with one of the attitude cards in each corner: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree and a large neutral space in the middle.
2. Inform students that you are going to read out a statement and in response they have to go to the corner or space that best reflects their attitude.
3. Read out the first statement from the following list and ask students to move to the corner that reflects their attitude or understanding:
 - Family and intimate partner violence includes preventing your partner from seeing family or friends.
 - Family and intimate partner violence includes repeated criticism of a partner to make them feel bad or useless.
 - Family and intimate partner violence includes slapping or pushing a partner to cause harm or fear.
 - Coercive control only happens in intimate heterosexual relationships.
 - Violence against women is common in Australia.
 - Violence against women is an issue of serious concern.
 - Yelling abuse at a partner is serious.
 - Forcing a partner to have sex is serious.
 - Rape occurs because men cannot control their sex drive.
 - Physical force can be justified when a current wife, partner or girlfriend argues or refuses to obey their partner.
 - Gender and sexually diverse young people experience high levels of harassment at schools.
 - I would intervene if a family or close friend were a victim of domestic violence.
4. When they are all positioned, ask students to reflect on why they chose this position. Then ask them to turn to another student in the same space and explain why they are in that space.
5. Students then move into the middle of room and explain to a person from a different corner why they placed themselves where they did.
6. Inform students that they are to move back to a corner following discussion. Tell students they will be able to change corners following the discussion. If you notice students changing corners, ask for a few volunteers to say why they changed. If students remain in the same corners, ask for volunteers to say why they remained. Use the teacher notes provided to ensure students have accurate

information about the statements they have taken a position on.

7. Using the information provided in H17, go through the information, encouraging discussion about the concerning aspects of the attitudes identified in the report as well as changes in attitudes over time.
8. As a class discuss: why have some attitudes changed while others have not?
9. Display or provide a copy of 'H18 NCAS findings on consent'.
10. Explain to students that this diagram represents young people's attitudes to consent in 2 different situations. Use the following question prompts to ask students:
 - Are you surprised at the attitudes of young people? Why/why not?
 - Do you think the data would be different if the data looked at the attitudes of other groups of young people such as LGBTIQ+, culturally diverse young people etc.
11. Brainstorm the implications of these attitudes under the following headings: victim/survivors, people using violence, the broader community.
12. As a class discuss: What are the effects of these attitudes on victim/survivors, people using violence and the broader community? (See 'Data to guide discussion of attitudes' below.)

You can prompt discussion by asking the following questions:

- If people hold this attitude (give example), is violence likely to continue or to stop?
- What does this attitude say about who is responsible for violence?
- What does this attitude say about whether violence is acceptable or not?
- If people hold this attitude (give example), how likely are they to be able to have respectful relationships?



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[Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson](#)

What are attitudes supportive of violence against women?

These are attitudes that:



Excuse the perpetrator and hold women responsible by shifting responsibility for violence from the perpetrator to the victim by holding women responsible for the violence occurring, or for not preventing it. Attitudes excusing the perpetrator suggest that there are factors that make some men unable to control their behaviour, and that these make the violence excusable.



Disregard the need to gain consent by denying the requirement for sexual relations to be based on the presence and ongoing negotiation of consent. These attitudes rationalise men's failure to actively gain consent as a natural aspect of masculinity (e.g. men's uncontrollable sexual drive), or are based on stereotypes of female sexuality (e.g. that women are passive or submissive in sexual matters).



Minimise violence against women by denying its seriousness, downplaying the impact on the victim or making the violence and its consequences seem less significant or complex than they really are.



Mistrust women's reports of violence by suggesting women lie about or exaggerate reports of violence in order to 'get back at men or gain tactical advantage in their relationships with men. Such attitudes have been referred to as part of a backlash.

Individuals who hold such attitudes are not necessarily violence prone or would openly condone violence against women. - However, when such attitudes are expressed by influential individuals or are held by a large number of people, they can contribute to a culture in which violence is at best not clearly condemned, or at worst, is actively condoned or encouraged.



What are attitudes that undermine gender equality?

These are attitudes that:

Undermine women's independence and decision-making in public life by suggesting men make better leaders, decision-makers or are more suited to holding positions of power and responsibility.

Undermine women's independence and decision-making in private life by agreeing that men should have greater authority to make decisions and control in the private realm of intimate relationships, family life and household affairs.

Promote rigid gender roles, stereotypes and expressions by reflecting the idea that men and women are naturally suited to different tasks and responsibilities, and have naturally distinctive - often oppositional - personal characteristics (eg women are emotional and are therefore better childcarers, while men are rational and are therefore better politicians)

Condone male peer relations involving aggression and disrespect towards women by accepting it as normal or harmless for men to encourage negative aspects of masculinity among one another (eg. aggression and not showing one's feelings) and to talk about women in ways that are sexist and disrespectful (e.g. locker room talk).

Deny gender inequality is a problem through denial that gender inequality, sexism or discrimination against women continue to be problems in society. These attitudes often reflect hostility towards women and are sometimes referred to as reflecting a 'backdash towards women's advancement.

There have been studies into community attitudes about family and intimate family violence (1985 to 2003 OSW), violence against women and most recently, gender equity and family violence in LGBTIQ+ families (2013, 2017, 2021 ANROWS; ARCSHS 2000) for over 20 years. Attitudes have changed but there is still room for improvement.

- 46% of respondents incorrectly believed that domestic violence is equally committed by men and women. There was no significant difference in this misunderstanding between 2021 and 2017. However, the misunderstanding was more prevalent in 2021 compared to both 2009 and 2013.¹
- Even though 91% of respondents believe violence against women is a problem in Australia, only 53% of respondents believed it is a problem in their own suburb.
- Australia's overall rejection of domestic violence plateaued between 2017 and 2021.
- Australia's rejection of sexual violence significantly improved between 2017 and 2021. For example, 85% of respondents in 2021 disagreed that women find it flattering to be persistently pursued, even if they are not interested, compared to 68% in 2017.²
- 1 in 5 Australians believe family violence is a normal reaction to stress and that sometimes a woman can make a man so angry he hits her without meaning to.
- 1 in 8 Australians believe that if a woman is raped while she is drunk or affected by drugs, she is at least partly responsible.
- 1 in 3 Australians believe that if a woman does not leave her abusive partner,

then she is responsible for the violence continuing.

- Nearly 1 in 5 Australians do not believe financial control is a serious problem.
- 2 in 5 Australians believe that women make up false reports of sexual assault to punish men.
- Many Australians hold attitudes suggesting that sexual aggression can be attributed in part to men's 'natural sex drive'. (33% of Australians believe that 'rape results from men being unable to control their need for sex' and 28% believe that, when sexually aroused, 'men may be unaware a woman does not want to have sex'.)
- Intimate partner violence has predominately been understood from within a heteronormative framework where men feature as perpetrators and women as victims. Therefore, violence by women within gender-diverse and lesbian relationships is rarely recognised.³

So, what can you do? Campaigns may help change attitudes, but what about personal and social change.

Watch the videos about respect available at Respect Victoria: <https://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/campaigns>.

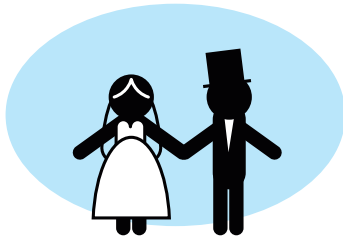
Inform students that these have been used to build understanding about respect in the community. While watching each video, ask students to identify actions that increased respectful behaviours. Support students to identify listening, communication skills, bystander behaviour, inclusion, calling out behaviour etc.

1 In Australia, the 2021–2022 Personal Safety Survey confirms that men experience lower rates than women of domestic violence and sexual violence. Furthermore, the perpetrator was a man in the overwhelming majority (97%) of cases of sexual violence experienced by women after the age of 15 years (ABS, 2023c). A recent population-level analysis of homicide cases involving intimate partners in Australia similarly demonstrated the gendered nature of domestic violence. Approximately three quarters of these cases (77%) involved a male offender murdering a female (current or former) partner (Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network & Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety [ANROWS], 2022). Only a minority of cases (21%) involved a female offender, and most of these female offenders were known to be the primary victim of domestic violence in the relationship (71%; Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network & ANROWS, 2022).

2 Coumarelos, C., Weeks, N., Bernstein, S., Roberts, N., Honey, N., Minter, K., & Carlisle, E. (2023). Attitudes Matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Findings for Australia (Research report 02/2023). ANROWS

3 Campo C. and Tayto, S (2015) *Intimate partner violence in lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer communities*. Australian Institute of Family Studies.

≡ IMAGINE ≡



A **married couple** have just been at a party

When they go home the man kisses his wife and tries to have sex with her. She pushes him away but he has sex with her anyway.



A man and a woman who **just met** at a party

They get on well. They go back to the woman's home and when they get there he kisses her and tries to have sex with her. She pushed him away but he has sex with her anyway.

Do you agree that the man is justified in his behaviour?



What if **she** had taken him into the bedroom and started kissing him before pushing him away?

Do you agree that the man would have been justified in having sex with her anyway?



Impact of situational factors on attitudes towards consent among respondents aged 16-24 years, 2017

Activity 2:

What's the harm in it?

Group: Whole class

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Set of 'H19 Harm cards' – one card for each student.
- A large enough space for students to move about.



[Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson](#)

Background

This activity is designed for students to explore how harm is gauged and how the definition of harm can differ according to class, gender, sexuality, religion, culture, age and ability and so on, noting that all the behaviours listed are harmful. This is one of the key messages of the activity.

Advise students that in this session they will focus on the harm associated with gender-based violence such as sexual, emotional, physical, spiritual and financial harm. Remind students about class ground rules or agreements about respectful behaviour.

Procedure

1. Make a set of 'Harm cards' using the H19 handout so that you can give one to each student.
2. Set up a continuum of harm by placing a large sign saying 'Most harmful' at one end of the room and a sign saying 'Least harmful' at the other end.
3. Give each student a card with a form of violence written on it. Let students know that their task is to organise the behaviours from what they consider the most harmful to least harmful. Inform them that they will be asked to form a line across the width of the room, ranging from what the group decides is the most harmful to the least harmful. This means that people will have to talk to each other and agree on where their cards are placed.

Teacher note: one of the harm cards contains the term 'f-word'. Students have advised that this term is often used by young people to avoid repeating a common homophobic slur beginning with the same letter. Be clear with students that the use of homophobic language is not acceptable.

4. Once they have a line, ask them to put the card on the ground and move away.
5. Ask if anyone wants to change the placement of any behaviour on the continuum, and why? You might need to move a few cards around based on the discussion.
6. Discuss the questions listed below. It's important in this discussion that students get the idea that we need to consider the impact and outcome of violence as well as the violent act. Although there is a continuum of violence, it affects people in different ways. What one person might consider a not very harmful comment might be extremely offensive and harmful to another person. For instance, a behaviour such as being wolf-whistled at might make one woman react in a particular way (for example, embarrassed or angry) but might not affect another. Can you think of any other examples?
 - Why do people have different views about how harmful behaviours are?
 - Is everyone affected by particular behaviours in the same way? Why? Why not?
 - What makes some behaviour more harmful than others? Why?



[Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson](#)

**Sexual assault
by a stranger**

**Sexual assault
by a partner**

**Sexual assault
by a father**

**Not allowing a
woman to practice
her religious beliefs**

Hitting a partner

Calling a girl a 'slut'

**A man looking in a
teenager's bedroom window
while they are changing**

**A boy having his
testicles grabbed**

**Sending nude
pictures to someone**

**Being locked in the
house by a partner**

Being called a 'dyke'

**A woman being told by a
male partner 'I will hit you if
you don't clean the house'**

**A group of boys
yelling out 'hoe' to
a girl in the street**

**A man flashing his
penis at a girl in
the street**

**A boy kissing and touching
a girl he has just met at
a party who is drunk**

Yelling at a partner

**Being forced to
watch pornography**

**A girl being rubbed
up against in
the corridor**

**Notes being left on a
locker telling someone
they're hot**

**Calling someone's
mother a 'bitch'**

**A girl being watched
by a boy every time
she plays netball**

**A person being
wolf-whistled
at in the street**

**Being forced to give a
partner oral sex**

**Abusive phone calls
to a partner**

**Threatening emails
to a partner**

**A man stalking
a woman**

**A group of girls yelling out
the f-word to a boy
in the street**

**A woman being restricted
in when she can see her
family or friends**

A girl forwarding private sexually compromising pictures, such as a boy's penis, to her friends

A person being told they are ugly by a partner

A woman's nude photo being posted on social media

A girl being constantly asked for sex by one of her workmates

Someone being constantly asked out by another person when they have made it clear they don't want to go out

A person expecting his/her partner to pay for everything

A person telling their partner that they shouldn't wear a particular item of clothing

A person telling their partner they want sex by saying 'you'd do it if you loved me'

**A girl calling
another girl a 'slut'**

**A person giving a girl
lots to drink so she
might sleep with them**

**A video of a girl and
her partner kissing
being messaged to
the girl's friends**

**A girl grabbing
a boy's butt
at a party**

**A boy kissing and touching a
girl he has just met at a
party who is drunk**

Activity 3: Stepping out against gender-based violence

Group: Whole class

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Find a large enough space to enable students to move around easily.
- Provide students with a copy of the following handouts:
 - **H20** Stepping out situation cards – one per student
 - **H21** What can I do to help a friend?

Determine the number of students and make enough 'H20 Stepping out situation cards' from the list provided. Ensure that one out of 4 scenarios depicts some form of empowerment, in other words that it shows young people whose lives have not been affected by violence or who have been able to overcome the impact of violence and find some positive aspects, such as the scenarios in cards 1 to 4. There are more scenarios than you will need, so select the number according to the number of students.

It is important that 2 students have the same scenario to enable students to see the diversity in how the situations and questions are interpreted. You may even want to select fewer scenarios and have more people interpreting them.

Ensure that there is enough working space for easy movement. You will need to have a space such as a classroom in which the furniture has been moved. Do not attempt to do it in an open space that others can walk through.

As this activity involves some role-play, it is important for teachers to familiarise themselves with briefing and debriefing techniques.



Background

This activity follows on from the previous activities. It enables students to move from acknowledging assumptions about gender-based violence and how they have developed to looking more closely at the implications of violence on the everyday lives of young people. Students will have the opportunity to experience someone else's situation and build an awareness of what it might be like to live with the fear, insecurity and restrictions that can result from violence. If students have not considered the impact and outcome of violence before this, it can be personally challenging. It is therefore crucial that a supportive classroom environment be developed and maintained.

Advise students that in this session they will focus on gender-based violence such as sexual, emotional, physical, spiritual and financial abuse. Remind students about class ground rules or agreements about respectful behaviour.

Procedure

1. Inform students that the aim of this activity is to gain awareness of the impact and outcome of violence.
2. Ask students to clear a space in the centre of the room and then form a line across the middle of the room, facing the teacher. The line should stretch across the width (not the length) of the room, as students will need space to move backwards and forwards. It doesn't matter if they are a bit squashed at the start, as they will soon spread out.
3. Explain to students that you will give them each a scenario card and that they are to imagine they are the person in the scenario. They are not to show their card to other students. Later in the activity the teacher will reveal that there has been a doubling up as several people have the same cards – this will provoke interesting discussions during debriefing.
4. Explain to students that you will ask a series of yes/no questions. Students will have to decide if they can answer yes or no in reference to their scenario. Students will not have all the information for each scenario, so they will have to make their response based on assumptions.
5. Ask students to shut their eyes and imagine the position of the person in their scenario. Then tell them to open their eyes and answer the questions listed below. Those who answer 'yes' can take a step forward. Those who answer 'no' must take a step back. Those who don't know stay put. Emphasise that the questions must be answered according to what is likely to really happen, not what they feel should happen.

Question prompts:

- Do you feel good about yourself?
- Have you got a lot of confidence?
- Are you able to sleep well?
- Do you want to go to school?
- Could you talk about your needs and desires openly?
- Would you feel comfortable to tell people about your situation?
- Can you move about the community freely, without fear?
- Can you see your friends easily?
- Are your family likely to support and recognise your situation?

- Do you feel safe?
- Would your family treat you the same regardless of the situation?
- Will your friendships still be the same regardless of the situation?
- Are you able to achieve your potential at school?
- Can you go to school without harassment or without feeling unhappy?
- Would people who knew about your situation feel comfortable?
- Could you continue with your social activities in this situation?
- Could you easily find people who had the same situation?
- Can you be fairly confident you won't get put down or physically hurt by others?
- Could you talk to the leader of your club (for example your community or cultural club, sporting club, church youth group) if you were having problems?
- Could your situation improve with help? Would you know where to go for help?

Debriefing

1. When all the questions have been asked, begin the debriefing process by asking those students closest to the front to reveal their character. Do the same with those students furthest to the back. Compare the outcome for other students who had been given the same scenario.
2. Ask students, one at a time and from the front to the back of the class, to reveal their character in their scenario. Ask them how they felt doing the activity. Did they feel they had any power? As there are a few copies of each card, debrief the same cards first and note where they are in the room.
3. Ask students how they felt about the characters represented and seeing others move ahead of or behind them. Draw out differences for those that had the same scenario. It is important to manage the time for this exercise so that all questions are asked and all students can give their responses. It is essential to leave enough time to discuss this activity with the class. The following questions may be used to guide discussion:
 - Why do you think we did this activity?
 - Were the experiences the same for any two people?
 - What did you learn from your participation in this activity?
4. Discuss where the people in these scenarios might go to for help. It is likely that young people will first turn to their friends for help, so it's important to think about how you might respond to a friend who has experienced gender- based violence.
5. Give out the 'H21 What can I do to help a friend?' handout and discuss:
 - Why is it important to listen to and believe the person?
 - Are there are any situations in which you might need to let someone know about your friend (i.e. where their safety is at risk)?
 - Who might you go to for help?
 - How might you feel about responding to a friend and what can you do to look after yourself?

Reflection entry:

Session 7 reflection questions

Finish the following stems with at least 3 lines for each stem:

- I was surprised that I...
- I learnt that others...
- I felt that...
- Someone who has experienced violence may...
- I could help a friend by...



You must follow the department's [PROTECT guidance](#) and [Four Critical Actions](#) if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the [introduction page 12](#).



[Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson](#)

1

You are a 16-year-old girl who lives with her parents and younger brother. You play a lot of sport, have a great group of friends and were recently made school captain. Next year you are going on the school exchange program to Germany.

2

You are a 16-year-old who has just started going out with a 19-year-old who used to go to your school. You think they are sweet, but they make you pay for everything because you have a part-time job. They always want you to come out with their friends and don't like it when you want to hang out with your friends without them. You feel a bit uneasy about having sex with them, but they keep asking and telling you how much they love you.

3

You are a 17-year-old girl and have just started going out with a really nice guy who lives in the next town. You're very popular and the other kids spend lots of time at your place. Most Saturday nights at least 6 girls would sleep over. You plan to leave school at the end of the year and do a hairdressing apprenticeship with your mum. You live with your mum but have a great relationship with your dad. Your family is great.

4

You are a 15-year-old girl who was sexually assaulted by a close male friend when you were 13. You had really good support from your family and friends, and now feel comfortable being around boys again. You think you might like a relationship in the future, but right now you want to concentrate on doing well at school and have fun hanging out with your friends.

5

You are a 15-year-old boy with 2 sisters and a lot of friends. Your family has lived in the same house your whole life and you know everyone in your street. You have a strong kinship group with lots of Aunties and Uncles who support you. Your dad wants you to be a lawyer but you're not sure. You would prefer to play AFL football.

6

You are a 16-year-old girl who was sexually assaulted by her boyfriend. You don't want to see your boyfriend but he goes to the same school. You don't want to go to school and your grades are really suffering.

7

You are a 14-year-old boy who gets verbally abused every night on the way home from school by a group of boys who use homophobic slurs against you. Last night they pushed you up against the wall of the supermarket and ripped your school shirt. You don't know how much more you can take and have started to feel really anxious.

8

You are a 15-year-old boy who has been forced to give your uncle oral sex. You are so ashamed but are scared that he will hurt you if you say anything. You have been getting into a lot of trouble at school for fighting. Last week one of your friends called you gay and you got into a fight with him. You feel like you are going mad.

9

You are a 15-year-old girl who is always late for school because your father often hits your mother and you have to help her to clean up the mess and look after your little sister. You don't do very well at school because you can't sleep at night worrying about your mum and your sister. You hoped to become a teacher but worry that you will never be able to study.

10

You are a 17-year-old girl who is being harassed online by an ex-boyfriend because you told him you didn't want to go out with him anymore. He constantly sends you text messages calling you a slut. He also posts disgusting things on social media about a girl he used to go out with. Although he doesn't name you, you know it is directed at you. He has followed you home a couple of times. You have stopped going to school.

11

You are an 18-year-old boy who has just moved to a country town to start university. When you were in school, your family had a lot of problems, your dad was always angry and sometimes hit you and your mum. When you finished school and moved away, you were worried about what was happening back home but kind of glad to be away.

12

You are a 15-year-old girl with a mild intellectual disability and you go to specialist school. Recently, a boy in your class came up to you at lunchtime and showed you his penis, and asked you to touch it. You were scared and ran away. When you told a teacher a few days later, she didn't believe you because you used to be friends with this boy and the teacher thought you were pretending to be upset.

13

You are an 18-year-old who is non-binary. When you were at school people referred to you as a girl. You have just started at TAFE. When you were in school you had a partner who was really controlling and you were a bit afraid of them. When you finished school they moved away and now you miss them a bit but are kind of glad it's over and don't really know how they would react if they knew you were non-binary.

14

You are a 15-year-old who moved to Australia 2 years ago. Your partner is 18 and doesn't go to your school. You've had sex with them twice before. You didn't want to and it really hurt, but your friends tell you that it always hurts and that you shouldn't break up with them just because they want sex.

15

You are a 16-year-old boy with Autism.

The man who volunteers at your youth autism support group stroked your hair the other day, and tried to touch you on the butt. You got really upset and angry and started yelling loudly, and one of your friends went to get the support worker. She looked after you and believed your story. The volunteer doesn't work with the group any more, and your mum and dad are helping you to talk to the police about what he did.

16

You are a 13-year-old assigned male at birth and the best friend you grew up with is a girl. The other day you told her that you want to be a girl and live like a girl. She wasn't surprised because you do lots of things together. The problem is her family. They are very traditional and you have heard them make homophobic and nasty comments about transgender people. Your friend's dad is always going on about the two of you getting married one day. You're a bit afraid of her dad, because he's always being nasty to his wife and one day when your mum came to pick you up from your best friend's house, he called your mother a slut because you don't know who your dad is.

17

You are a 16-year-old girl who has just moved to Australia. Recently, your new boyfriend sexually assaulted you but your parents and your boyfriend's parents are really excited that you're together and you don't want to disappoint them. You can't tell them you have had sex because they think girls should wait until they're married. You tried talking to a teacher at school, but had trouble finding the right English words. She said the best thing to do if you're upset is talk to your parents but she didn't understand how much trouble you'd get in.

18

You are a 16-year-old girl who has been going out with the same boy for the past year. After much encouragement from your boyfriend, you sent him a couple of nude photos of yourself in pretty explicit sorts of poses.

He showed one of his friends who then messaged them to someone else and now everyone has seen them. You feel sick in the stomach. You're so embarrassed that you have stopped going out. Your mum has seen them and is so disappointed in you. You wish you could just curl up and die.

It can be pretty full-on when someone tells you they've experienced harassment and violence. You'll probably have feelings of your own to deal with and might not think there's much you can do to help. The good news is that your friend trusts you enough to talk about their experience and there are heaps of things you can do to support them. Here are some of the most important ones.

Listen

Hear what they say and try not to interrupt. Let them talk at their own pace. Show them you are listening by making eye contact and nodding. Don't worry if they stop talking for a while – silences are OK.

Believe

Try not to overdo the questions, as this can make it seem like you doubt their story. It's important that your friend sees you're on their side and that you support them.

Validate

Tell your friend that what they're feeling is right. Let them know you think their feelings are real and normal, by repeating the feeling word they've used (for example, 'it's OK that you feel scared'). Acknowledge that you have feelings about it too, but try to keep the focus on your friend.

No blame

In our society, it's common for victims to be blamed for their experience of violence. Try to avoid questions such as 'Why did you go there?' and 'Why did you go out with him?' because they might make your friend think they're responsible for what happened.

Ask

Ask your friend what sort of help they'd like from you. They're not expecting you to solve the problem, and you've already done heaps just by listening. Asking will also help your friend think about what to do next.

Trust

It's important that your friend trusts you and feels like they're in control of the story. If you think someone else needs to know (like a teacher or another trusted adult) tell your friend first. You can think together about who can be trusted, but don't tell them until your friend is OK with it.

Get help

Talk with your friend about what they need or want. Encourage your friend to tell a trusted adult who can do something about it, such as a relative, a teacher or a school wellbeing leader.

The links below may provide additional information about the laws around sexual abuse and harassment and advice about where to go for help:

http://www.lawstuff.org.au/vic_law/topics/

<https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/sexual-harassment>

<https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/sexual-assault>

<https://www.casahouse.com.au/>

<https://kids helpline.com.au/teens>

<http://www.headspace.org.au/>

Common emotion	Thoughts and feelings of victim/survivors
Powerlessness and loss of control	I feel so helpless. Will I ever be in control again?
Emotional numbness	I feel so numb. Why am I so calm? Why can't I cry?
Shock and denial	Was it really sexual harassment? I'm OK. I'll be all right. Maybe he didn't mean to rub up against me...he's not a bad person...
Guilt and shame	I feel as if I did something to make this happen. If only I hadn't...
Loss of confidence	I feel I can't do anything anymore...even the simplest things.
Embarrassment and shame	I feel so dirty, like there is something wrong with me now. Everyone has seen me naked. What will people think? I should never have let him take a picture of me – everyone thinks I'm a slut. I can't be a 'normal' teenager.
Mood changes	I feel like I am going crazy!
Low self esteem	I feel disgusted by the memories. I'm just worthless. I don't know why I didn't say anything – there must be something wrong with me.
Loss of trust	I don't feel safe anywhere, with anyone.
Depression	How am I going to go on? I feel so tired and hopeless.
Fear	I'm constantly jumpy. A sudden noise, an angry voice, moving bushes and I'm afraid.
Anxiety	I feel so tense. I'm a nervous wreck.
Hostility and anger	I hate him, everyone and everything. I want to kill him.
Loss of sexual confidence and comfort	I just can't bear to be touched.
Entrapment	I feel so vulnerable. I can't leave the relationship.
Isolation	I'm so alone. I just want to hide within myself.



Learning outcomes

- Students will identify what effective communication is.
- Students will identify the impact of differing forms of communication on relationships.
- Students will practise effective communication and negotiation.



Activities

- It all comes down to respectful negotiation



Time Required

- 30 minutes



Handouts

- **H22** Negotiating our way through
- **H9** Anh and Sam from Session 4, Activity 2

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this session contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. See the [Introduction on page 10](#) of this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

About this session

In this final session students explore how to build respectful relationships. It is designed to recap what we mean by a respectful relationship and why it is important. Much of the focus of this session is on communication skills in intimate relationships.

Activity 1: It all comes down to respectful negotiation

Group: Whole class and in pairs

Time: 25 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Post-it notes.
- Large felt-tip pens.
- Provide students with a copy of the following handouts:
 - **H22** 'Negotiating our way through'. Alternatively, you can make a class set and laminate the handouts for future use.
 - **H9** Anh and Sam
- The 'Attitude cards' you created in Session 7, Activity 1



[Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson](#)

Background

Advise students that in this session they will focus on the Anh and Sam story used in previous activities to look at how communication and practising seeking consent can help to prevent sexual assault. Remind students about class ground rules or agreements about respectful behaviour.

Procedure

1. Write on the blackboard, 'A respectful relationship is...'. Then give each student a post-it note and a pen and ask them to complete this statement on the note.
2. Ask them to make sure the writing is large enough to be read from the back of the room. Once completed, students stick the post-it notes on the board.

3. As a class, discuss the key elements identified:

- What is similar in people's ideas and what is different?
- How do we ensure that respect is maintained in a sexual relationship?

Students will likely identify the importance of communication. If not, you will need to raise this as a key issue.

4. Ask students if they can recap on the communication skills we have been looking at in this and other sessions. They should include:

- affirming statements
- reading non-verbal communication
- active listening
- assertiveness.

5. Point out that it is one thing to learn these skills but that it is very different to put them into practise in intimate relationships. Ask students to brainstorm what can affect a person's ability to do this. Responses should include:

- power based on age, ability, gender, cultural traditions and beliefs, position and so on
- gendered expectations.

Even so, it is still important to develop negotiation skills to help with the sort of situation that, for example, Anh and Sam found themselves in. Negotiating sexual needs and wants is possibly the most difficult area of social life for young people.

- In Session 4, students examined the issues of consent and the types of things Anh and Sam could have said and done. In this activity the issue is revisited to explore whether negotiation can be used in this situation. This activity gives students an opportunity to work in mixed pairs in a role reversal.

6. Write the following phrases on the board:

Argue to win (aggressive)

- Loud or angry voice tone
- Interrupt/self-listen
- Insult/put-down/sarcasm
- Blaming, exaggeration
- Threatening body language
- Faking it if you aren't sure
- Changing the subject if you think you are losing

Communicate (assertive)

- Calm voice
- Let the other person finish/listen
- Respect and friendliness

- Careful, non-blaming language

- Open body language

- Saying you don't know if you aren't sure
- Sticking to each point till you've worked through it

7. Give students 'H22 Negotiating our way through' on negotiation skills and go through the 6 key components, giving examples of what they mean.

8. In mixed pairs, one person is A and the other is B. Tell them that they have to negotiate the following problem: 'Both people want to go to the movies, but they want to see different films.' Give them 5 minutes to see if they can negotiate a solution using the 6 components.

9. As a whole class, ask students to state the solutions they came to and discuss the difficulties they had in resolving the problem.

10. In the same pairs, students are now to role-play the negotiation between Sam and Anh. Once they have undertaken the role-play. Ask students to swap roles.

11. Ask for volunteers to say how they interpreted the gender of 'H9 Anh and Sam'. You are likely to find that they make gendered assumptions that Anh is female and Sam is male, which may not be the case.

12. As a whole class, ask students to state the solutions they came to and discuss the difficulties they had in resolving the problem. Some points to add to the discussion include the following:

- What can prevent this negotiation from taking place?
- What strategies can we use to deal with it?

13. Finish the session by redoing the continuum activities carried out in Unit 1, Session 1 and Unit 2, Session 7 (Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree). Select about 5 statements from the following list.

- The most important ingredient in a relationship is trust.
- It is easier for boys to end a relationship than it is for girls.
- If a person doesn't say they don't want sex then it is OK to try to pressure them.
- Sexual assault only happens to girls.
- Coercive control is a form of violence.
- Sending abusive messages on electronic bank transfer references is a common form of harassment.
- Family and intimate partner violence includes preventing your partner from seeing family or friends.
- Family and intimate partner violence includes repeated criticism of a partner to make them feel bad or useless.
- Family and intimate partner violence includes slapping or pushing a partner to cause harm or fear.
- Coercive control only happens in intimate heterosexual relationships.
- Violence against women is common in Australia.
- Violence against women is an issue of serious concern.
- Yelling abuse at a partner is serious.
- Forcing a partner to have sex is serious.
- Rape occurs because men cannot control their sex drive.
- Physical force can be justified when a current wife, partner or girlfriend argues or refuses to obey their partner.
- I would intervene if a family or close friend were a victim of family violence.

Journal entry

Session 8 journal questions

Finish the following stems with at least 3 lines for each stem:

- I was surprised that I...
- I learnt that others...
- I felt that...
- Communication is all about...
- Negotiating about sexual intimacy is...
- Showing respect in a sexual relationship means I...

This gives students and the teacher an opportunity to see how understandings and attitudes have shifted. Following each statement, ask students if their position has changed since undertaking Units 1 and 2.

Assessment: writing tasks

Using the information covered in the unit and additional research if necessary, students are required to develop a 500-word short story or newspaper article.

Think about and reflect on the following sources of information and concepts covered in the unit to give you ideas about what to include:

- Journal reflections
- Understanding about gender and power
- Understandings about the nature of violence
- The nature of consent
- Legal information on consent
- Bystander responsibilities
- Community attitudes
- Personal attitudes

Option 1: Write a short story: How Kit got their respect back!

Option 2: Write a newspaper article titled 'Mount Newport teenagers march for respectful relationships.'



You must follow the department's [PROTECT guidance](#) and [Four Critical Actions](#) if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the [introduction page 12](#).

Using the negotiation model, evaluate the situation in which Sam and Anh negotiate their sexual relationship.

1. Define the problem

Everybody involved in conflict needs to agree on a definition of the problem before the problem can be tackled. This means describing the problem in terms of each person's feelings.

2. Identify what each person wants

It could be one person wanting a more intimate relationship, having a partner who respects your opinion, or a mutually agreed best solution to a particular problem. In this case, the solution would involve more than having sex or saying no to sex.

3. Separate feelings from the problem

Feelings can get in the way and even though it is important to have strong feelings they need to be separated from the problem. Use 'I' messages and avoid blaming. It's necessary to see yourself working alongside the other person to solve the problem – attack the problem, not the person.

4. Brainstorm the options for mutual gain

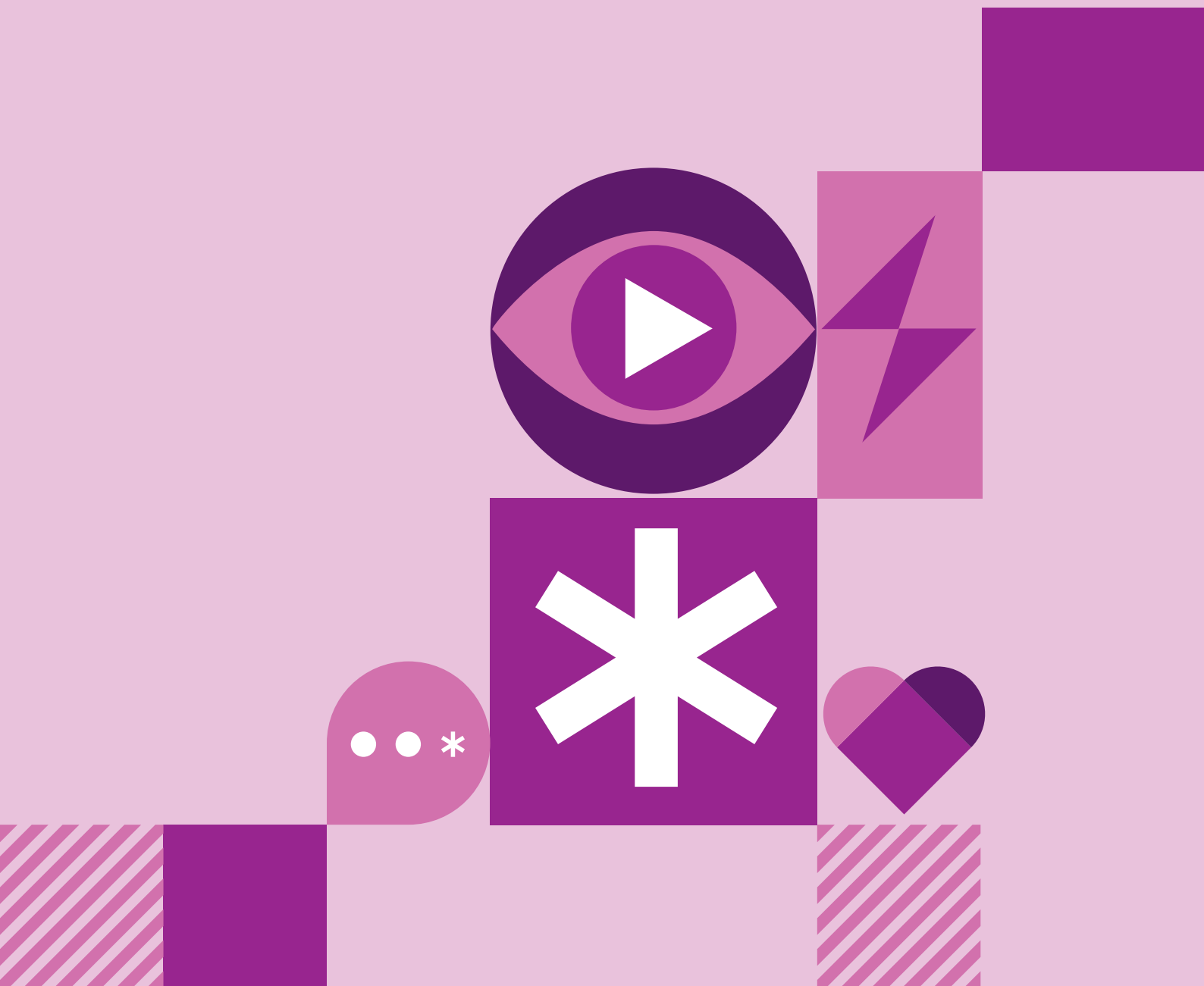
There might be several solutions to the problem which could work for those involved. Don't get stuck on one solution just because it's the first one you think of. Be creative about the possibilities available to you and look for common ground. You can decide on the best options later.

5. Evaluate solutions

You have to sort out the pros and cons of each option based on standards that are external to each individual, such as the law, research, mutual benefit or religious beliefs. Both parties need to agree on the criteria used. Be open to reason but closed to threats.

6. Decide on a mutually acceptable solution

Make sure each person takes responsibility for agreeing with the decision.



Building Respectful Relationships

Stepping out against gender based violence

Unit 3: Gender, power and media

Unit 3

Session 1: Setting the context and boundaries

Session 2: Getting a picture on sexualisation

Session 3: A deeper look at sexualisation

Session 4: Developing a common understanding of explicit sexual imagery

Session 5: Real-life strategies

Session 6: Idealworld

Session 7: Developing skills to build respectful relationships

Introduction

Unit 3: Gender, power and media is designed for Year 10 students. However, student readiness is dependent on your cohort or class and their prior engagement with respectful relationships education (RRE) and sexuality and relationships education.

Unit 3 is designed to be delivered as an extension for students who have completed units 1 and 2 and have developed an understanding of issues related to gender, power, consent and violence. Schools will be at differing points in their readiness to cover sexual content in RRE or in their sexuality education programs. Moreover, students will be at differing points in how much education they have undertaken about digital safety.

The YeS Project delivered by Australia's eSafety Commissioner provides an excellent all-round approach to building student understanding of online safety. The resource was developed by a team under the leadership of Dr Natalie Hendry, which included Deakin University pre-service teachers. Many of the activities are linked to issues of RRE. 'Activity 2: Online images – the good, the bad and the ugly' in Session 6 gives you a sense of their approach. The YeS Project resources are available on the eSafety Commissioner's website at <https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/classroom-resources/yes-project>. You may like to use their other classroom resources, which are available at <https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/classroom-resources>.

Unit 3 is designed to address the link between media, gender, sexualisation of bodies, power, consent and respectful relationships. The pace of technological change and everyday access to the internet means that, by the time students are in Years 8 and 9, it is likely that many of them have already been exposed to sexualised images, including sexually explicit or pornographic materials. They may also have been the target or victim, perpetrator or bystander of online sexual and image-based abuse and harassment. This can occur accidentally or intentionally, with little or no chance for young people to make sense of the messages and content contained within media posts or websites. Feelings of shame, embarrassment or harassment may prevent them from seeking help.

This unit builds on the material covered in the 2 previous units, *Unit 1: Gender, respect and relationships* and *Unit 2: The power connection*. It assumes that students have covered key issues on gender, power and consent and that they have looked extensively at building respectful relationships. Unit 3 has a strong emphasis on building media, digital and health literacy, understanding consent, and building skills in line with the following:

- recommendations of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority report *National report on schooling in Australia 2022*
- updates to the Australian Curriculum (version 9.0) to include comprehensive consent education⁸⁴
- the Victorian Government mandate to teach consent education in an age-appropriate way in all Victorian government schools.

Current research shows that sexualised images and exposure to pornography is shaping young people's sexual expectations and practises in a range of sexual health areas like body image, sense of self and safe sex practises.⁸⁵

School-based RSE in conjunction with RRE and online safety are therefore a very important means of counteracting the unrealistic, sexist and sometimes violent images that young people may be observing in the media and in pornography. According to current research,⁸⁶ pornography is normalising sex acts that most women do not enjoy and may experience as degrading, painful or violating. This raises serious implications for young people's capacity to develop a positive sexuality that incorporates mutual pleasure, respect, and the negotiation of free and affirmative consent.

Timing of activities

There are 7 sessions in Unit 3, and there are several additional extension, assessment and reflection tasks that could be completed in class if time permits. The timing is only a guide, and it will depend on the students, their level of maturity, prior learning and student interest. The issues covered in this unit can create a great deal of discussion, debate and student interest.

Setting the context and boundaries



Learning outcomes

- Students will identify the issues covered in the unit
- Students will identify what is needed to provide a safe and trauma informed classroom.
- Students will develop an understanding that people hold different attitudes to gender, power and violence.



Activities

- Setting the context and boundaries



Time Required

- 40 minutes

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this session contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. See the Introduction on page 10 of this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

About this session

It is important to remind students ahead of time that the focus of this session is on sexual assault. Ensure that students have access to exit slips prior to the class.

As with units 1 and 2, it is assumed that before starting Unit 3 students have worked together previously and have experience in developing classroom rules or agreements to ensure that the learning environment is safe and respectful. However, some classes may be coming together for the first time. For these classes, it is essential that ground rules or agreements be established to provide a structure to improve classroom management, keep students and staff safe and supported, and ensure the class works effectively.

Consultations with young people to inform this resource have reinforced the importance of the tried and tested 'question box' as a means of asking questions or providing feedback. Ask all students to participate in the process, even if they only submit a drawing or blank piece of paper. This universal approach provides safety for students who want to post questions or comments anonymously. Another way to enable young people to ask questions and make comments anonymously is by using the *What jars you?* activity developed by Professor EJ Renold (2019) from Cardiff University in the United Kingdom for the online resource *Agenda Online* (agendaonline.co.uk/what-jars-you/). *What jars you?* is a novel way to elicit student feedback and enable students to talk about the questions or issues that might upset or challenge them. This activity was used with students during consultations to gain a sense of how they were feeling and enable them to express anger, fear, discomfort or frustration, or to provide positive feedback. It also provides students with an ongoing record of their experience of RRE. Students may wish to have their own jar that they bring to class each session. It is important that students contribute to a safe classroom space, which in this instance involves respecting the privacy of each other's jars. Agenda Online is available at <https://agendaonline.co.uk/download-agenda/>.

Students will be dealing with potentially sensitive issues focusing on relationships, violence, consent and sexuality, and so a structure that allows discussion of differing opinions is essential to the success of the curriculum. Reinforce content advice and remind students that the jar is there for them to ask questions, say how they are feeling or raise anything else related to the content.

Advice to families and carers and kinships groups

As well as providing content advice to students, it is important that family and kinship groups are aware that students are learning about sexual assault. They should be informed that there are strategies in place to support and reduce trauma, for example, through modified participation options, pre-reading of learning materials and the use of exit slips. Aboriginal and Torres Islander families, kinship groups and families with spiritual or belief systems about how and who they learn about sex with, may require single gender groupings and same gender teachers. If you are unsure about this, consult with your families. Consultation builds positive relationships and trust and gives families and kinship groups an opportunity to prepare their children and talk to wellbeing staff about what support can be offered to students, while ensuring that this important content is covered.



You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction page 12.

Activity 1: Setting the context and boundaries

Group: The whole class

Time: 25 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Access the 'Where to go for help' handout. Student diaries may already provide school support information, so check that students know where the information is. If they don't, check with the school or wellbeing leaders to ensure that students are able to access this information anonymously.
- A large jar to act as a 'question box' or supply individual jars that students can use as a reflective 'journal'.
- Butcher's paper to note down ground rules that can be placed on the wall at the end of the class. You might also want to record the rules in your class's online space if this is available.
- Pens for writing
- 4 A4 continuum cards with the following positions:
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree

- Strongly disagree
- Piece of rope, string, or chalk (optional).



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Background

This activity is designed to provide a safe space for students and for the introduction of issues to be covered in the unit. This activity involves setting ground rules or agreements and providing an opportunity for students to practise using the ground rules while they gain a sense of the focus of the unit of work. This activity appears in all 3 units, with tailored questions relevant to each unit.

Procedure

1. Explain to students that this unit covers issues that may be sensitive for some people. It looks at issues about sexuality and relationships. This means that people are likely to hold opinions and views that not everyone may agree with. However, it is important that the class be safe for everyone and that everyone feels they can contribute freely without fear or embarrassment. A way to ensure this is to set some ground rules or agreements about how the class runs.
2. Ask students to list key supports from the 'Help-sources' tool they can access if something that is covered in class triggers feelings that are difficult to deal with.
3. Ask students what they think the class needs to make sure it is a safe space for everyone. List these suggestions on the board or butcher's paper. You will need to transcribe these onto permanent posters or display them as a visible reminder to students. If students have difficulty coming up with ideas, you may like to start with some of the following suggestions for discussion:
 - Listen to different ideas without 'put-downs'.
 - Everyone has the right to speak.
 - Each person is responsible for their own behaviour.
 - What other people say in class is confidential.
4. Ask students if they are happy with the list and if there is anything they would like to add.
5. Place the 4 continuum cards on the ground using a 2, 3 or 4-point continuum (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree), and explain to students that you're going to read out a list of statements and they need to move to the card that most accurately reflects their view.

6. Select between 3 or 4 statements from the following list:
 - There are more sexualised images of women than men.
 - Consent is common in intimate relationships.
 - People should be able to play sport in their underwear.
 - Most influencers on social media are valued for their sexual appeal or behaviour.
 - A person's physical attractiveness is judged narrowly by how 'hot' they are considered to be.
 - It is very uncommon for young people to send sexual images to each other.
 - Sexuality can be imposed on a person.
 - Seeing sexually explicit material doesn't harm anyone.
 - Young people should be protected from finding explicit sexual images online.
 - It is easy to access pornography.
 - Music videos sexualise men and women equally.
 - Women watch as much pornography as men.
 - In a respectful relationship, pornography can play a useful role in exploring how to have sex.
 - Pornography reflects what real sex is like and what most people want.
 - Pornography is harmless fantasy (it doesn't affect people's reality).
 - Pornography is not a good sex educator.
 - Pornography will help teach you how to be a good lover.
7. Read out one statement at a time and ask students to physically move to the position that best reflects their view. If necessary, use a piece of rope or string, or draw a chalk line across the room and ask students to stand on that line. The area can also be set up as 4 corners, depending on the space you have available.
8. Ask for volunteers from the different points on the continuum to share reasons for choosing their position. Alternatively, each student can discuss their choice of position with another student who has chosen a different position on the continuum. It is important to inform participants that there are no right or wrong answers in this exercise. The purpose of the activity is to allow students the opportunity to appreciate that people hold different views.

9. Inform participants that they may move at any time if they find that a reason given by another person changes the way they think about the statement. The following questions provide a useful focus to encourage students to think about the range of positions people hold towards gender and relationships. They can be used either at the end of the activity or after each statement:
 - How do you think you developed your position on this statement?
 - If you asked your parents, carers or Elders to do the same activity, which position do you think they would choose?
 - What differences do you think there would be if this activity was done in groups of different genders?
 - What else do you think might affect where we would position ourselves?

Journal, podcast or reflection entry

This unit uses a range of assessment techniques to help students demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in advocacy and their digital, media and health literacy. Many of the assessment activities involve forms of advocacy and the application of knowledge and skills to authentic situations young people are likely to face. The reflective journal or jar has also been included in this unit to give young people some time to think about the issues raised. Teachers may also like to use an online journal tool. Alternatively, students could create content for a podcast on their reflections and ideas which could be developed into an assessment tool for the unit.

Where to go for help

Parents/carers

Parents and carers aim to look after you, care for you and support you. Often this makes them the best people to go to for help. However, that may not always be the case for everyone, or for every issue you want help with.

If you decide to talk with them about a concern, find a suitable time and place. Tell them if privacy is important to you, but understand there may be times they need to tell others to help keep you safe, to get additional help or advice or to work out with you what might be a good way forward.

Parents and carers can provide reassurance and advice. However, they aren't always experts in health or legal matters. Sometimes their advice may not be enough, or not quite what you need, and sometimes it might be hard to give them the full picture about what is going on for you. Parents and carers may also be dealing with a lot themselves and may not be able to respond exactly as you hope. However, they may be able to help you start looking for help from another family member, a counsellor, doctor, school nurse, teacher, parent, psychologist or helpline. Parents and carers might also be able to provide practical support, like getting you to appointments or providing the financial support you need to get help. If money is a problem, they may be able to seek support from agencies who can help. See below for more information about the cost of different options for professional help.

Friends

If you let a trusted friend know you want to talk, they might be able to encourage and reassure you if you decide to seek professional help.

Friends can make you feel better and give you advice. They may know you well, which helps, but friends aren't experts in health or legal matters. Sometimes their advice may not be enough, or not quite what you need, and sometimes it might be hard to give them the full picture about what is going on for you. However, if you decide to ask them for support, friends can help you look for help from a counsellor, doctor, school nurse, teacher, parent, psychologist or helpline.

It's important to remember that some friends may not feel comfortable discussing what is bothering you.

Teachers

A teacher you trust can play an important role in guiding you to get the help you need. They might ask you some questions to understand what you need help with. Teachers can encourage you, help you stay connected to learning and to school, and apply special consideration.

Arrange a time to talk with your teacher when they aren't teaching or busy. If they think you need more specialised or ongoing help, they'll connect you to the school counsellor or wellbeing support services. Teachers and other school staff will listen and respond to your concerns. They will respect your privacy, but they can't promise to keep a discussion confidential and they may need to act if you tell them about harm or abuse. There may also be times they need to talk to school leaders, or report to other authorities like the police to help keep you safe, to get additional advice or to work out with you what might be a good way forward.

As mandatory reporters, teachers must make a report to Victoria Police or DFFH Child Protection if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- a child has suffered or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse or sexual abuse
- the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

School mental health practitioner, counsellor or wellbeing leader

Your school may have a mental health practitioner, counsellor or wellbeing leader available for you to speak to. You can ask a trusted teacher to refer you to them. A trusted parent, carer or friend may also help you to access this support. School counsellors will listen to what's going on and help you to deal with the issues you're facing, or help you to find a more useful way of thinking about issues. They can talk with parents or carers on your behalf if you need them to. They can talk with your teachers if you need help with workload or deadlines. They may be able to direct you to sources of financial assistance if needed.

The services provided by your school's wellbeing team are free. Mental health practitioners, counsellors and wellbeing leaders are skilled at working with young people. They understand the kinds of things you may need help with. If they think you need more specialised or ongoing help, they can help you to access this. They may refer you to other agencies to get more support. Your school's wellbeing team will also continue to play a role in supporting you and your educational needs.

If you feel there is a risk to your safety (for example, you require the support of the police), your school's wellbeing team can help to ensure you get the support you need.

Doctor (GP)

Doctors are trained in supporting people who are having difficulties with their mental health. They can connect you to a psychologist or psychiatrist and should know about the kinds of services available in your area. There are no laws that stop you from seeing the doctor without your parents or guardians. However, if you plan on going alone, you should contact the doctors' office beforehand to confirm you want the appointment to be kept private. When you are under the age of 18 you are considered a 'mature minor'. Health professionals working with children can decide that you are capable of making your own decisions if they're satisfied that you have 'sufficient maturity, understanding and intelligence' to grasp the nature and effect of your decision.

If you go to a bulk-billing clinic, Medicare will cover the entire cost of your appointment with a doctor. At other clinics, you may have to pay a 'gap' fee. As a student, ask for bulk-billing when you make an appointment. Some schools participate in the Doctors in Secondary Schools program and have a doctor at the school on certain days of the week. Seeing this doctor is free.

Doctors will respect your privacy. However, if they reasonably believe a person under the age of 16 is in need of protection from physical injury, family violence, sexual abuse or suicide risk, they will engage other support services in a respectful way to keep you safe and get you the help you need.

Psychologist

Psychologists have specialist training in diagnosing, treating and preventing mental health problems. They will help you manage your mental health. They often specialise in different areas and approaches, so sometimes you have to find the right person for your needs. Some schools have a psychologist on staff that you can see for free. A local GP can also help you to connect with a psychologist.

If you get a referral from your GP, you may be covered by Medicare to visit a psychologist for up to 10 sessions in one year. Depending on which psychologist you go to, Medicare may cover the whole fee. However, sometimes there will be a gap that you will have to pay. It's okay to ask questions about how much a service might cost before you make an appointment. Medicare is not available for all international students, so international students should check which services they are eligible for.

Your privacy will be protected when you see a psychologist. However, psychologists are mandatory reporters who must make a report to Victoria Police or DFFH Child Protection if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- a child has suffered or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse or sexual abuse
- the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

A psychologist who reasonably believes that you are in need of protection from physical injury, family violence, sexual abuse or suicide risk, may engage other support services in a respectful way to keep you safe and get you the help you need.

Helplines

Headspace

Hours: Available 9am-1am 7 days a week

Call: 1800 650 890

Visit: <https://headspace.org.au/online-and-phone-support/>

You can have a confidential chat with Headspace professional counsellors over the phone or on their online WebChat. You can also email Headspace and someone will respond to you within 2 days. Headspace focuses on support for people aged 12 to 25. It's a safe space if you are unsure of what help you need, if you want advice, or maybe just want to talk things through. Young people or family members must register to use the service. You don't need to provide a full name, but you will need to provide an email address. You don't need to provide your name on the phone either.

A call to Headspace is free from a landline, payphone and most mobile phones. However, some mobile phone providers charge for the call, so you might need to check with your provider. Let Headspace know if you are calling from a mobile and they can call you back.

If you go to a local Headspace office for follow up, services are either free or low cost. Some services require you to have a referral from a GP, but Headspace can help you with this too. You can also create a Headspace account for instant 24/7 access to a range of online tools and support for your mental health. It is possible to build connections in a community of like-minded young people, join group chats, create your own personalised space, and get professional one-on-one support, all online and for free.

Headspace also offers *Strength in my roots* resources with mental health information and resources for multicultural young people: <https://headspace.org.au/our-impact/campaigns/cultural-identity/>

1800RESPECT

Hours: Available 24/7

Call: 1800 737 732

Visit: <https://www.1800RESPECT.org.au/>

1800RESPECT provides free information, counselling and support services for people of all genders who have experienced sexual assault or family violence (past or recent), as well as their friends and family. It provides a 24-hour crisis response for people who have experienced a recent sexual assault.

1800RESPECT also offers support groups, professional consultations, and education and training.

Calling 1800RESPECT is free from a landline, payphone and most mobile phones. However, some mobile phone providers do charge for these calls, so you will need to check with your provider.

Note that the 1800RESPECT telephone number will appear on your mobile phone bill. This means that anyone who can see your mobile phone bill will be able to see that a call was made to 1800RESPECT.

There is no charge for using the 1800RESPECT online chat.

Safe Steps

Hours: Available 24/7

Call: 1800 015 188

Visit: <http://www.safesteps.org.au/>

Safe Steps provides free specialist support services for anyone in Victoria who is experiencing or afraid of family violence. Their family violence specialists can support people to find safety.

Sexual Assault Crisis Line

Hours: Available from 5pm to 9am weeknights, weekend nights and public holidays

Call: 1800 806 292

Visit: sasvic.org.au

The Sexual Assault Crisis Line, provided by Sexual Assault Services Victoria, provides crisis counselling for victims of sexual assault. Sexual Assault Services Victoria can help you decide what to do and work with you to recover from the effects of sexual assault. There are locations throughout Victoria. Visit sasvic.org.au to locate the nearest centre.

Helplines

Rainbow Door

Hours: Available 10am to 5pm, 7 days a week

Call: 1800 729 367

Text: 0480 017 246

Visit: www.rainbowdoor.org.au

Rainbow Door is a free specialist LGBTIQ+ helpline providing information, support and referral to all LGBTIQ+ Victorians, their friends and family.

Qlife Victoria

Hours: Available 3pm to midnight 7 days a week

Call: 1800 184 527

Visit: www.switchboard.org.au

Webchat

Qlife Victoria provides free, peer-based telephone and online chat support to LGBTIQ+ people of all ages. Qlife's online Webchat uses a small amount of data if you are not connected to wi-fi, but is otherwise free.

Yarning SafeNStrong

Hours: Available 24/7

Call: 1800 959 563

Email: ysns@vahs.org.au

Facebook: @YarningSafeNStrong

Visit: <https://www.vahs.org.au/yarning-safenstrong/>

Yarning SafeNStrong is a free and confidential counselling service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and families who need to have a yarn with someone about their wellbeing. They have culturally suitable counsellors who can yarn safely and who 'get it', no matter how big or small the challenge. They offer support for social and emotional wellbeing, financial wellbeing, as well as medical support and drug and alcohol counselling and rehabilitation services.

Djirra

Hours: Available 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday

Call: 1800 105 303

Visit: <https://djirra.org.au>

Djirra provides free telephone and face-to-face legal and non-legal support to Aboriginal people of all genders who are experiencing or have experienced family violence. Their work is predominantly designed by and for Aboriginal women.

Elizabeth Morgan House

Hours: Available 24/7

Call: 1800 364 297

Visit: <https://emhaws.org.au>

Elizabeth Morgan House is an Aboriginal-led peak body providing family violence services and advocacy for Aboriginal women and children in Victoria. They offer culturally safe, holistic family violence support to Aboriginal women and their children, as well as to their partners and ex-partners. They also assist with housing, financial difficulties, child protection matters, school matters, and they provide referrals and advocacy to services like legal services, medical and healthcare services, drug and alcohol counselling, financial counselling and children's services.

All times mentioned above are based on Victorian standard times (Australian Eastern Standard Time and Australian Eastern Daylight Time).

You can find more support and information about mental health in the Students – mental health and wellbeing toolkit: <https://www.vic.gov.au/students-mental-health-toolkit>

LGBTIQ+ students can find more support on the LGBTIQ+ Student Support site: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/resources>

If you need an interpreter to speak with any of the help services, the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) is available on 131 450. More information is available on the TIS National website: <https://www.tisnational.gov.au/>

Getting a picture on sexualisation



Learning outcomes

- Students will identify the nature of sexual imagery in the media i.e. sexist, homophobic, transphobic, racist, ableist etc.
- Students will begin to develop skills in media literacy and understanding consent.
- Students will reflect on the impact of sexual imagery and pornography on young people's understanding of and ability to develop respectful relationships.
- Students will begin to develop an understanding of the link between discrimination, sexualisation and pornography and its effect on gender-based violence and power.



Activities

- Guess what I'm selling or saying



Time Required

- 115 minutes



Handouts

- **H1** What am I selling?
- **H2** What do you see?
- Printed advertisements and headlines content sourced online required for the four activity components, as detailed below.

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this session contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. See the Introduction on page 10 of this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

Activity 1: Guess what I'm selling or saying

Group: Small groups and the whole class

Time: 100–150 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Post-it notes
- Copies of 'H1 What am I selling?'
- Printed advertisements and headlines sourced online required for the 4 activity components, as detailed below
- Provide students with a copy of the following handouts:
 - **'H1** What am I selling?
 - **'H2** What do you see?
- A space for a 'bus stop' activity
- Printed advertisements and headlines: collect a set of advertisements or media images that use sexual imagery. Consider using a website like *shEqual* for this purpose. The website is available at <https://shequal.com.au/>. You could also source hard copy or online magazine covers intended for audiences of different genders to highlight what is considered relevant or important for people of that gender. Ensure that images collected for use in the lesson are age appropriate.

Be mindful of any cultural sensitivities. For example, only use publicly available images of

Aboriginal people. Also, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students should be advised if materials used in the lesson could contain images, voices or names of deceased persons in photographs, film, audio recordings or printed material.

One example of an advertisement is provided in the 'H1 What am I selling?' handout. You will need to collect 9 examples of advertisements and headlines that explore the sexualisation and gendered nature of advertising for use in this activity. In addition to shEqual, social media is a great source of material.

Consider including examples in the lesson of homophobic, racist or ableist ads that sexualise the actors or models used in them.

Remove any reference to what the ad is selling by covering it up with a sticky note or blank piece of paper, as has been done in the example provided in the handout 'H1 What am I selling?'

Procedure

1. Ask students to form groups of 3. Give each group a copy of Page 1 of the handout 'H1 What am I selling?', which excludes the image of the laptop. Alternatively, you can make 2 A3 versions, one version with the laptop and one without. Display the version without the product being sold and ask groups or individual students to add a sticky note to guess what is being advertised.
 - Discuss what aspects of the picture prompted their guess.
 - Does what the picture depicts bear any resemblance to the way a laptop would likely be used?
 - Why do you think they may have taken this approach?
2. Set up 9 'bus stops' with advertisements and images you have sourced on 9 tables or locations around the classroom so that students can move between them.
3. Give each student enough sticky notes so they have one to post at each bus stop. Ask students to post a guess at what the ad or image is designed to sell or say. Once all the notes are posted, go to each bus stop and show students the entire advertisement or image in order to reveal its purpose, as per the example in the handout 'H1 What am I selling?'
4. Ask students discuss the following questions in groups:
 - How were the bodies in the ads used to sell the product(s)?
 - Was the use of the body relevant to the product?
 - Was there a difference in how men and women's bodies were used?
- Were there different messages and ideas for different groups (men, women, non-binary teenagers and so on)?
- What groups of young people are missing from the ads or magazine headlines? Why do you think this is the case?
5. Ask for a volunteer from each group to report back.
6. Ask students to think about the way bodies are presented in the advertisements, media, headlines and social media posts you have used. List the answers on the board. Ask students the following:
 - Are there any differences based on gender, sexuality, age, ability, culture and so on?
 - Who is missing?
 - Why are they missing?
7. Using student responses to the images in the 'bus stop' activity explore the following questions:
 - How are bodies represented in the media for different groups (women, men, non-binary, teenagers and so on)?
 - Look at the headlines on the online magazine covers. Discuss the differences and similarities.
 - Do you find any of the images offensive? Why or why not?
 - Think back to the activities covered on power in Unit 2; is there a difference in the power different groups seem to have? Why or why not?
 - Would you say any of the images are sexist? Why or why not?
 - Would you say any of the images are respectful? Why or why not?
 - Would you say any of the images are violent? Why or why not?
 - Do any show consent?
 - Could there be any harm associated with the representations?

What do you see?

8. Inform students that people can view the same situation or an image differently. This can vary due to gender, sexuality, age, cultural background, ability and so on. Ask students what else might influence how we see an image or read a headline. Students are likely to respond with things like 'what we value', 'what we have been taught to look for', and so on.
9. Use the image from 'H2 What do you see?' or search online for similar visual illusions. Cut and paste the image(s) into a document and print off to present to the class. Alternatively, post the image(s) on a classroom webpage. Each image has 2 different images embedded

within it and can be seen in 2 different ways. Ask students what they see. Students will likely see 2 different images depending on their individual perception.

10. Discuss with students whether what we see is reality, and what influences what we see and how we interpret it, for example, our values, experience, gender, sexuality, age, culture, ability race and so on.
11. Show students the following YouTube clips from the Dove Self-Esteem Project:

Toxic influence <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sF3iRZtkyAQ>

Reverse selfie <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2T-Rh838GA>
12. Discuss the impacts that altered and sexualised representations of women have on young people's perceptions of women and men. In what ways could this have an impact on respectful relationships?

Journal, jar or podcast entry

Session 1 journal or podcast questions

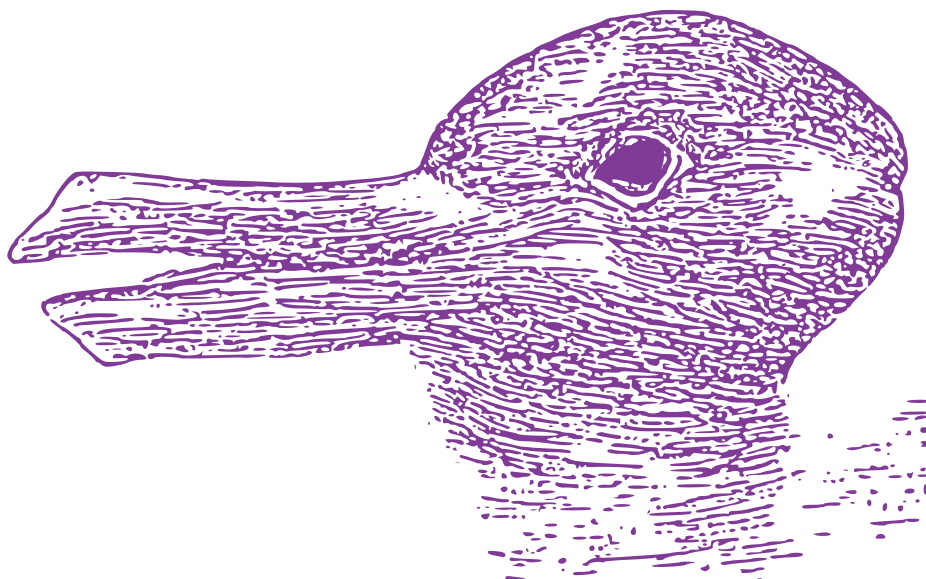
Finish the following sentence stems with at least 3 lines for each stem:

- I was surprised that I ...
- I learnt that others ...
- I felt that ...
- Sexualisation is ...
- Respectful relationships would be improved if the media ...

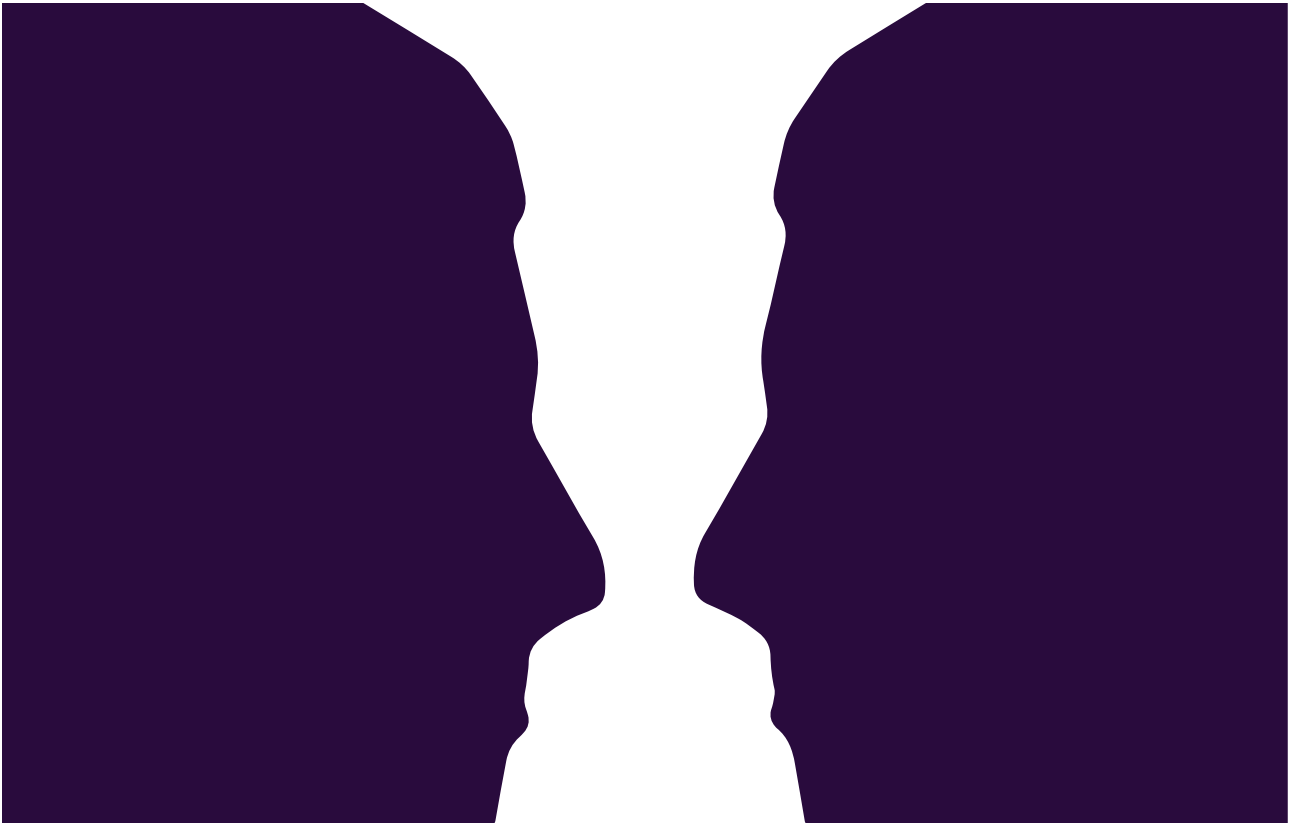


Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson



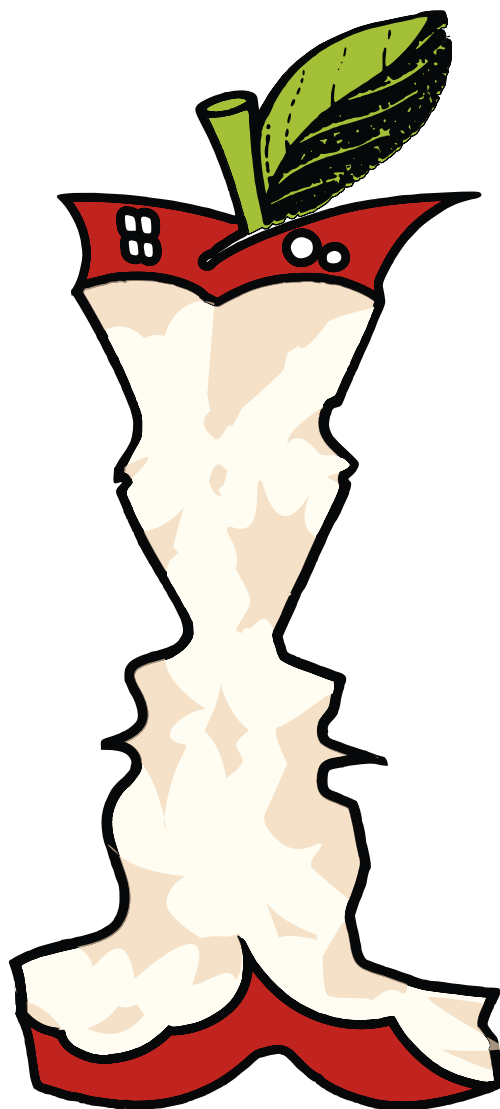
Duck/rabbit

Duck/rabbit visual illusion image available free at <https://freesvg.org/duck-rabbit-visual-illusion-image>

White vase/profiles

White vase/profiles visual illusion image available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Two_silhouette_profile_or_a_white_vase.jpg

Apple/faces



Apple/faces visual illusion available at <https://freesvg.org/apple-illusion>

A deeper look at sexualisation



Learning outcomes

- Students will identify the sexist nature of sexual imagery in the media.
- Students will develop skills in digital and media literacy.
- Students will explore the impact of sexual imagery and pornography on young people's understanding of, and ability to develop, respectful relationships.
- Students will increase their understanding of the link between sexualisation and pornography and its effect on gender-based violence and power.



Activities

- Finish the sentence
- Bodies, gender and the media
- Developing advocacy



Time Required

- 100 minutes



Handouts

- **H3** Bodies, gender and the media
- **H4** Lingerie Football League
- **H5** Teach us consent
- [Help-sources Tool](#)

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this session contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. [See the Introduction on page 10](#) of this resource for further guidance on providing content advice

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

About this session

This session is designed to build on Session 1. It uses the popular medium of music videos to help students see the link between explicit sexual imagery and the gendered messages represented in relation to sexuality. It requires students to explore a media example of sexualisation in sport, and the 'Teach Us Consent' campaign, and to develop some advocacy around building gender equality. The activities in this session are interrelated, and the whole session should take approximately 100 minutes to complete.

This session also looks at testimonies related to sexual assault of girls by boys.

It is critical that you read the handouts for this session before using them with students, particularly the content in the handout 'H5 Teach us consent'.

Activity 1: Finish the sentence

Group: The whole class

Time: 20 minutes

Background

This activity is designed as an introductory activity to get students thinking about the issues covered in the previous session. It also helps teachers to gain a sense of what students have taken away from the previous session.

Procedure

1. Ask students to reflect on what was covered in the last session. Think about what they learnt about the way the media represents sexuality and gender. Who is represented? Who is missing?
2. Tell students they are going to play a game of 'Finish the sentence'. To do this the teacher will start by saying 'When something is sexualised, it ...' In turn each student continues the dialogue until everyone has had a turn.
3. Talk about the themes and issues raised by students.

Activity 2: Bodies, gender and the media

Group: Small groups and the whole class

Time: 40 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handout:
 - **H3** Bodies and the media
- Access to the internet to show students the video clips used in this activity. Ensure that you view all clips prior to use.

Video clips for the activity

The clips listed below explore the connection between sexualisation and gendered positioning of woman's bodies. However, they also explore men's bodies, privilege and power, and the link to gender-based violence. Some are subtle, while others are hard-hitting and draw out the issues under examination in the commentary.

It is important that you preview all of the material prior to use in the classroom.

The content used in these lessons is drawn from international sources due to a lack of Australian material that focuses on these issues for children and young people. Although a couple of the clips were produced in the early 2000s, young people have told us they still see them as relevant. As we know, the extent and nature of gender-based violence remains basically unchanged, with the exception of the online environment.⁸⁷

Killing us softly 4: advertising's image of women [trailer] by ChallengingMedia

In this update of the *Killing us softly* documentary series, Jean Kilbourne takes a fresh look at how advertising traffics in destructive ideals of femininity. The film marshals a range of new print and television advertisements to lay bare a pattern of damaging gender stereotypes and challenges a new generation of students to take advertising seriously, and to think critically about popular culture and its relationship to sexism, eating disorders, and gendered violence. The trailer is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ptlmho_RovY.

Sexualizing women in media by Maria Castillo

This video uses excerpts from film, film posters, music clips and advertisements to highlight the way women's bodies are objectified and sexualised in the media. It includes videos of girls talking about the importance of challenging gendered stereotypes about girls and women. The video is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wheGGv7qoBQ>.

Dreamworlds 3: desire, sex & power in music video by Sut Jhally

The critically acclaimed *Dreamworlds* series takes a look at the world of music videos, uncovering an industry preoccupation with reactionary ideals of femininity and masculinity and how these ideals have glamorised a deeply sexist worldview. The film challenges young people to think seriously about how forms of entertainment that might seem innocuous and inconsequential can be implicated in serious real-world problems like gendered violence, misogyny, homophobia and racism. The film is free and embedded at <https://shop.mediaed.org/dreamworlds-3-p86.aspx> and can also be accessed for free via Kanopy (registration required). <https://www.kanopy.com/en>

You can preview the trailer for the film at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6qZYOxszbM>.

Liberated: the new sexual revolution | official trailer (2018), Magic Lantern Pictures

This trailer previews a documentary by filmmaker Benjamin Nolot about coming of age within a young adult hookup culture. Following the journey of college students on spring break, the film provides shocking insight into attitudes and behaviours regarding sex, the normalisation of sexual violence, and the struggle against conceptions of gender and sexuality shaped by the media. It is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTClhVvqoR8>.

Being a man | Liberated: the new sexual revolution, Magic Lantern Pictures

Don McPherson, a former quarterback from the National Football League in the United States explains how men are socialised to view women as sexual objects and use them to gain status among their male peers. It is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sdRn4d9EGOs>.

Masculine insecurities | Liberated: the new sexual revolution, Magic Lantern Pictures

In this video, social experts Tony Porter, Sut Jhally and Robert Jensen shed light on the anxieties men often experience regarding their sexuality. It is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDWfi4Q64Gc>.

Women's pseudo-empowerment | Liberated: the new sexual revolution, Magic Lantern Pictures

Caroline Heldman and Gail Dines expound upon the concept of female empowerment in hookup culture. The video is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzrb_Vus3sA.

What inspired you to make Liberated?

In this video Benjamin Nolot, maker of *Liberated: the new sexual revolution* answers insightful questions about the documentary. It is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELInkpgx3SU>.

Background

This activity forms part of a sequence of activities designed to build knowledge, understanding and skills in deconstructing explicit sexual imagery and explore the potential impact of this imagery on respectful relationships. This activity builds on the previous one exploring the types of gendered messages the media portrays about bodies and sexualisation. The documentary clips used in this activity explore a range of related issues, including the impact of the content in terms of how we understand gender, sexuality and sexualisation. A number of clips draw on the history of the media's use of gendered bodies and link to gender-based violence using the drivers of gender-based violence⁸⁸ examined in Unit 2. Students will need to be provided with content advice.

In this lesson students will be looking at clips that deal with the way sexualised bodies are used in powerful ways to define gender. Some of the content could be confronting to some students. The trailer of the documentary *Killing us softly 4: advertising images of women* examines the media's portrayal of women in a more visual and interactive way. Although this clip is over 10 years old, it is evidence-based and still relevant, and can be used to explore what has changed over time, if anything. A more recent clip by Maria Castillo, *Sexualizing women in media*, is also excellent but is not informed by the same academic evidence base.

Similarly, music videos clips are a powerful source of gendered expectations and their relationships to the drivers of gender-based violence. The Media Education Foundation has several compelling critiques of gender, power and violence. The documentary film *Dreamworlds 3: desire, sex & power in music video* by Sut Jhally makes a clear link between sexualisation, gender and violence. The official trailer is all that is needed and provides a stimulus to discuss women's bodies, power and violence. It is available at <https://shop.mediaed.org/dreamworlds-3-p86.aspx>. Note you will need to scroll just below the login icon on the page to find the link to the trailer.

Alternatively, students could analyse music videos they currently watch. If students have access to computers, they could do this in groups. However, active supervision will be required to help students select material that is appropriate for use.

Procedure

1. Inform students that you will be using a few short clips to illustrate the use of sexual imagery in the media. Remind them that you talked about this in the last session.
2. Give each student a copy of the handout 'H3 Bodies and the media'. Inform them that they are to watch each short clip and respond to the questions. You can do this in small groups to promote additional discussion.
3. On the board, write 'Media messages' and the headings in the table (Examples are in the table on the next page). As students respond, summarise their ideas about the messages.
4. Groups can report back or display responses using an online collaboration tool.
5. Discuss the following questions:
 - What is the link between portrayals of gender in the media and violence?
 - What do we need to do to address these issues?
6. Give each student a copy of the '[Where to go for help](#)' handout and ask them to bring it to the next session. Inform them that in the next session they will be looking at some real-life case studies of young people's experience of sexual assault by peers. The 'Where to go for help' handout provides information to young people so they know where to go for help. It will be useful in developing help-seeking strategies in the next session.

Media messages

Violence	Power	Women	Men	What or who is missing
Music videos mirror sexual harassment and assault that women experience in real life. There is a link between gender-based violence and attitudes to men's and women's bodies.	Women get power by using their sexuality.	Women's bodies are used to sell everything. Women are defined by sex appeal. Only able-bodied people have sex appeal.	Men's bodies define them, but in opposite ways to women. All men want is sex.	Non-binary young people Women who do not fit traditional notions of beauty

Jar, podcast or journal entry

Session 1 journal questions

Write a paragraph in response to the following: 'If I could change anything about the way the media represents young people and sexuality, it would be ... because ...'



You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction page 12.

Activity 3: Developing advocacy

Group: Small groups and the whole class

Time: 20 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handouts:
 - **H4** Lingerie Football League
 - **H5** Teach us consent
- 'Australian schools to teach consent to all students from 2023' available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OusAeF-_wA
- Online petition about the Lingerie Football League available at <https://www.change.org/p/stop-the-lingerie-football-league-in-australia>.



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

This activity is designed to allow students to explore instances of young people advocating for social change, and to give students the opportunity to consider how they might advocate to change the gendered representation of women in social life.

Procedure

1. Explain to students that in this lesson they will be looking at case studies that examine the sexual assault of young women in Australia.
2. Divide students into groups of 4 and set them the task of developing an advocacy strategy designed to try to change the representation of women in social life. Students present their strategy to the class with a rationale for the approach taken. As a means of introducing the task, ask students if they have heard of the Lingerie Football League, which played in Australia between 2012-2019. Canvas students' opinions on whether this league should have been allowed to play. Why or why not?
3. The second page of the handout 'H4 Lingerie Football League' includes a letter on this topic sent to *The Age* and published in on 8 May 2012, which will be a useful resource.
4. Students and teachers from the Southern Teaching Unit, a former school in Melbourne, set up a petition against the introduction of the Lingerie Football League, which was being supported and promoted by a number of media and sporting organisations. The petition received 5,967 signatures. Explore the petition with students and explain that it was inspired by classroom activities that resulted in students writing to then prime minister of Australia Julia Gillard AC. The handout 'H4

Lingerie Football League' includes letters sent by students to then prime minister Gillard. The petition is available at <https://www.change.org/p/stop-the-lingerie-football-league-in-australia>.

5. Ask students if they have heard of Chanel Contos and the 'Teach Us Consent' campaign, which is another example of a petition started by a young person to advocate for social change. Ask students to read the short article on the 'Teach Us Consent' campaign⁸⁹ available in the handout 'H5 Teach us consent'.
6. Continuing to use the handout 'H5 Teach us consent', view and discuss the segment 'Australian schools to teach consent to all students from 2023' from television program *The Project*, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OusAeF-_wA.
7. Ask students to work in their groups of 4 to discuss the strategies that Chanel Contos used in her campaign. Noting that content advice has been provided for this lesson, ask students to read the 'Teach Us Consent' campaign testimonies and:
 - discuss their reaction and response with their group
 - identify the incidents of sexual assault or other forms of sexual harassment in the testimonials.
8. Discuss the strategies that Chanel Contos used in her public campaign to improve respectful relationships, sexuality and consent education.
9. In a large group, ask students to identify the strategies used in both campaigns and any other strategies that could be used in their group's public campaign.
10. Students present their campaigns to the class. This could be used as an assessment task.



You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the [introduction page 12](#).

This series of clips explores the way gender is portrayed in media, social media and music clips and the connection to how we understand gendered attitudes that reinforce and challenge the drivers of gender-based violence.

Instructions

Individually or in groups respond to the following prompts using the questions.

1. ***Killing us softly*** is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWKXit_3rpQ

- What was Jean Kilbourne trying to say?
- What messages did she argue were being given about women and men?
- Why did she argue there was a link between gender and violence?
- Can you think of examples you have seen?

2. ***Sexualizing women in media*** by Maria Castillo, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wh7GGv7qoBQ>

- Did anything surprise you?
- What are the key messages that this clip is portraying?
- Do you agree with the argument? Why or why not?
- How does this differ from Jean Kilbourne no 1?

3. ***Dreamworlds 3: desire, sex & power in music video*** by Sut Jhally makes a clear link between sexualisation, gender and violence. It is available at <https://shop.mediaed.org/dreamworlds-3-p86.aspx>.

- Did anything surprise you?
- What was Sut Jhally trying to say?
- What messages did he argue were being given about women and men?
- Why did he argue there was a link between music videos, pornography and gender-based violence?
- Who is missing in these clips?
- Can you think of any music clips that are more inclusive? i.e non-binary young people.
- Do they still present similar understandings about gender, violence and real life?

4. ***Liberated: The new sexual revolution / official trailer (2018)*** by Benjamin Nolot, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTCLhVvqoR8>

- Did anything surprise you?
- What are the key messages that this clip is portraying?
- Do you agree with the argument? Why or why not?
- How does this differ from the argument about music videos?
- Is the argument inclusive of all young people?
- Who is missing?

5. ***Being a man / Liberated: the new sexual revolution***, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sdRn4d9EGOs>

- What is the key message about being a man?
- Do you agree? Why or why not?
- Is this different to any of the previous clips?
- Is there a link to gender-based violence?

6. ***Masculine insecurities / Liberated: the new sexual revolution*** available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDWfi4Q64Gc>

- What is the key message about masculine insecurities?
- Do you agree? Why or why not?
- Is this different to any of the previous clips?
- Is there a link to gender-based violence?

7. ***Womens pseudo-empowerment' / Liberated: the new sexual revolution*** available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzrb_Vus3sA

- What is the key message about positive and negative aspects of female body empowerment (women taking control of their bodies and making decisions)?
- Do you agree? Why or why not?
- Is this different to any of the previous clips?
- Is there a link to gender-based violence?

8. ***What inspired you to make Liberated?*** available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELlnkpgx3SU>

- Why was the film made?
- Did this surprise you?

Southern Teaching Unit response to the introduction of the Lingerie Football League into Australia

Inspired by a passionate and intelligent 14-year-old male student and his letter (originally to Julia Gillard), my Southern Teaching Unit colleagues, students and I have started a petition. We would be very appreciative if you could support this and share it with your friends and colleagues if you agree with us. We're really keen to do our best to stop the introduction of Lingerie Football into Australia because of the messages it sends to young men and women. The petition will explain it to you .

Signatories' comments explaining why they signed the petition are available at <https://www.change.org/p/stop-the-lingerie-football-league-in-australia>.

Vincent*
c/o Southern Teaching Unit
PO Box 2073
Moorabbin 3189
17 April 2012

Dear Right Honourable Gillard,

I am writing this letter to protest the Lingerie Football League coming to Australia.

I beg you, I plead to you, please do not let this horrible, pornographic, dehumanising non-sport come to our country. I am a heterosexual adolescent male and I am appalled that this should even be considered. The entire life of every child born in modern day is bombarded with pornography in every media form seen or heard. Because of this their whole view on life is being sexualised. But this is going too far. Speaking personally for a moment, as you are a woman I cannot imagine that you are actually in favour of this. Of all the pornographic things flooding life, this is the most objectifying, dehumanising and foul representation of women that I have seen. As our Prime Minister, you cannot allow this to happen. This will represent our country in perhaps the worst way possible. I am 14 years old and I have only barely managed not succumb to the crude and sexist thinking towards women but with this in the world the next generation will not be able to steer their thoughts otherwise.

PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE!!! Reconsider your decision on this. For our children, for our society and for our country.

*Yours sincerely,
Vincent (formerly proud Australian.)*

Lewis*
 c/o Southern Teaching Unit
 PO Box 2073
 Moorabbin 3189
 17 April 2012

Dear Prime Minister Gillard,

I would think that you would have put your foot down by now and said, 'I don't want Lingerie Football League (LFL) brought to Australia'.

I think it is a disgrace that people are thinking of starting LFL in Australia because of the following reasons:

- *LFL is a bad influence on children as they might think that is how they should act and how they should dress.*
- *I truly believe that LFL is so disrespectful and dehumanising towards women that by having a league in Australia it will encourage more sexualisation and exploitation of women. This in turn could see a rise in sexual harassment and violence towards females.*
- *Exploitation of women in this way encourages men to treat women like objects and even toys.*
- *Not only are they wearing inappropriate underwear whilst they are playing sport they also have garters and suspender ribbons that promote the sexualisation of these women.*
- *It feels to me like LFL comes straight from the porno- graphic imagination.*

Can you please make sure that this 'sport' does not come to Australia, because I think it will make more trouble for our community? We already have unhealthy issues surrounding body image, femininity and masculinity and this kind of league would further blur the lines.

Yours sincerely, Lewis

**Names have been changed*

Letter to The Age

from Jan Dunlop (teacher) 8 May 2012

The American grid-ion Lingerie Football League (LFL), as promoted by Triple M, is showcasing games in Brisbane and Sydney in June, aiming to introduce it permanently across Australia in 2013. The LFL players must be lingerie clad, to better explore and titillate – the objectification, the obvious attraction of the game.

LFL relies on the pornified image of big breasted, scantily clad women, replete with suspender belts and garters, doing battle. Promos highlight the voyeurism and violence. For us to argue that the League values women's sexuality above athleticism, is a poor role model for our girls and that it undermines existing female athletes, is superfluous as, cynically, those bringing this travesty to an arena near you, already know this. And they care not! They nevertheless will mouth platitudes about it being a real sport.

This mockery will compound the negative impact of the overwhelming sexualisation of women and girls that is already rampant in our popular culture. Emphasising women's sexual attributes rather than any of the other dimensions of personhood, such as intelligence and creativity, has implications for the escalating depression, anxiety and eating disorder statistics among young women.

Ask yourself, who will be harmed and who will profit from this introduction?

‘Teach Us Consent’ campaign testimonies

The following testimonies⁹⁰ of sexual assault were voluntarily sent to the *Teach Us Consent* website by those who emphatically believe that inadequate consent education was the reason for the sexual abuse they experienced during or soon after school. Please note dates are the graduating years. Victims and perpetrators will remain anonymous – Chanel Contos

Read the following 4 testimonies selected from the almost 7,000 testimonies posted to the *Teach Us Consent* website, mostly by young women during their teenage years.

They are very distressing, so only read them if you feel you can. They may make you feel uncomfortable and upset. You may know someone who has had a similar experience or has participated in having sex with someone without consent. Unfortunately, as the thousands of testimonies indicate, it is a very common experience. It is one that Chanel Contos wants to improve through education.

Once you have read the testimonials:

- discuss the feelings, reactions and responses within your group
- identify the incidents of sexual assault or other forms of sexual harassment in the testimonies
- discuss the strategies that Chanel Contos used in her public campaign to improve respectful relationships, sexuality and consent education.

‘Consent education has reached an “important milestone” in Australia. Here’s what experts want to see next’, SBS News

Available at: <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/consent-education-has-reached-an-important-milestone-in-australia-heres-what-experts-want-to-see-next/puicfwjti>

Activist Chanel Contos’ campaign for better consent education has been lauded as an ‘important milestone’ by experts, who now say the focus should turn to implementation.

This article contains references to sexual assault.

About one year ago, Chanel Contos asked her Instagram followers if they or someone close to them had been sexually assaulted when they were at school. Within 24 hours, over 200 people replied ‘yes’.

The testimonies kept coming – and would reach over 6,700 – prompting Ms Contos to launch a petition calling for more holistic and earlier consent education in Australian schools that has received more than 44,700 signatures.

Now, she is one step closer to her goal, after education ministers from around the country unanimously agreed consent should be included in the national curriculum from foundation until Year 10.

It’s been lauded as an ‘important milestone’ by experts who have long worked in the field of relationships and sexuality education (RSE). But they and Ms Contos agree much more needs to be done to implement improved education in schools across the country.

Making consent education ‘a national priority’

Ms Contos is the first to acknowledge her work is not ‘revolutionary’. She attributes the success of her ‘Teach Us Consent’ campaign so far to catapulting the issue into a ‘national priority’.

‘This campaign is simply built off the work people around the world and around Australia, especially women of colour, have been doing for decades,’ she said.

‘Consent education is not revolutionary ... But I think it really was the thousands of people who posted their testimony simultaneously that catapulted it into a priority for the government.

'And of course, [there were] the interactions with other women working in this space, and the dominating discourse around sexual assault and respect.'

Consent education will be mandatory across Australian schools from next year

Honorary Professor Deb Ollis, from Deakin University, has worked in the field for more than three decades – as a secondary school teacher, policy officer, curriculum writer and researcher.

She says consent education has been an integral part of RSE for more than four decades, but that this has in more recent years 'fallen off the agenda'.

'There have been resources on consent in Commonwealth and state-funded sexuality education resources for the last 30 years,' she says.

'I think what we've seen now, which is wonderful, is some activism by young people, and young women, to raise the issue again, and remind us about how important addressing issues around sexual consent is, and I think that's absolutely imperative.'

Katrina Marson is a criminal lawyer who has researched relationships and sexuality education both in Australia and overseas. She is also the lead for primary prevention at Rape and Sexual Assault Research and Advocacy (RASARA).

Ms Marson said the community is now recognising the connection between education, the protection against sexual violence and the safeguarding of sexual wellbeing.

'That's a really positive thing. It's not something that I think has been widely understood or recognised as important,' she says.

'But in the past 18 months or so, we have really seen an increased understanding at the broader community level of the importance of this education and what it can achieve.'

Through Ms Contos' petition, she said young people drew that connection 'between the deficiency in their education and their experiences of sexual violence and harassment'.

'Hearing that in the thousands was very compelling for the community, and it garnered a lot of media attention,' she said.

'We've seen a few moments in Australian history where we've talked about this. But it was something about the petition and just the numbers of young people coming forward – and that getting so much media spotlight – that meant the community became newly alive to the issue.'

Professor Ollis agreed Ms Contos' work has amplified the voices of young people – and made them public.

'These testimonials are rich insights into where young people are at,' she said.

'And what has been wonderful about Chanel's work is that it has become very public and we've had politicians and education departments listen to those voices.'

What will this unanimous decision mean?

Ms Marson said the delivery of relationships and sexuality education in Australia – of which consent is one part – is largely 'inconsistent' across jurisdictions.

'There are certainly jurisdictions and schools within them that are doing better than others. But the reality is no young Australian can be guaranteed comprehensive relationships and sexuality education. It will depend on the jurisdiction they're in, the school they go to and the teacher that they have,' she said. Ms Marson said some states and territories take on the national curriculum, while others are 'guided' by it.

Sexuality and consent education is part of the Victorian Curriculum, mandated for government and Catholic schools, while all NSW students are taught about consent as part of its curriculum. Queensland launched a review of consent education in its state, independent and Catholic schools last year.

She said she understands that traditional ideas of sex education have always been part of the national curriculum, but recent developments would increase discussions about consent and how much that features at different age levels.

Following a meeting with state education ministers on a new national curriculum last month, Acting Education Minister Stuart Robert said there is 'wide and unanimous agreement from all jurisdictions about including [that] consent-based education within the curriculum under health and physical education'.

He said all ministers will return in April to go through that curriculum.

In practise, Ms Contos said this will mean age-appropriate consent education will be mandated in the Australian curriculum from foundation level to Year 10. She said each state and territory will update their state curriculums, while independent schools will refer to the national curriculum as a 'minimum standard'.

'That starts off being very core concepts of consent, so asking for permission, denying permission, help-seeking strategies for any sort of harassment or inappropriate behaviour,' she said.

'As students get older, the curriculum will start to introduce to them concepts of gender stereotypes, and harmful power imbalances in our community, and what they might look like in different situations and scenarios.

'That means by the time children reach high school, and sexual consent is taught to them in a very legal sense – and also from the perspective of empathy and respect – that they have these foundations ideas they can build on to ensure that makes sense to them.'

Experts say implementation is key.

'Teach Us Consent' campaign testimonies:

When I was 7 years old (year 1) a boy in my class of the age of 7/8 ask me to be his 'girlfriend.' Of course, the excited young spirit I was I said yes. He told me to come to the back of the bathrooms for some 'privacy,' where he proceeded to take my tights and underwear off, instructing me to lie face down on the floor, because I was only 7 I had no idea what this all meant, so I was very confused. He then proceeded to take his penis out, and placed it on my behind, sitting on me so I couldn't move. I became really scared, so of course I struggled a bit trying to get up. He wouldn't get off for a few minutes, but eventually he gave in. Over the course of that year (year 1) he continued to do this to multiple girls, and we were all aware. It took a while before the school took proper action after my mum had informed them.

I was 14 when I got super drunk at a party and my ex-boyfriend took me to a tree outside and penetrated me while I was going in and out of consciousness, he was 16 at the time. That was how I lost my virginity. At school the next week he convinced me that I said I love you to him and we dated for the next year and then I broke up with him. I only realised it was rape in 2018 when the same thing happened to me again and have suffered from severe trauma since.

I was raped the year after I left school in another country and not by a Sydney private school boy. Something that I struggled with so much, and it seems like a lot of these other girls struggled with, is realising that it wasn't just 'weird' or 'uncomfortable' and he's not just 'creepy'; it was rape and he raped me. I kept punishing myself that I was too drunk (and I'm sorry to hear that some girls experience torment and shame too) but it took me a while to realise that actually I did nothing wrong. It is him who did something so horrific and disgusting and him who should be shamed. The term 'don't ruin that boys life' makes me so angry. It's our lives that have been messed up by this. And that boy probably won't even remember it. When the topic of sexual assault is brought up, girls often shudder at how horrifying it is, but I feel like many boys have no where near the same idea of how terrible it is and how much it impacts the rest of someone's life. Boys need to be taught this, and consent needs to be at the forefront of sexual education for everyone.

I was 15 and my boyfriend was a similar age. We were at his house, and he had an open door policy from his parents. I was not sexually active and did not want to rush into things, especially having the door open. A few months in, he took out his erect penis and made me hold it, forcing me to give him a hand job. I didn't feel comfortable but did it anyway. On a different day he kept trying to go down on me but I told him no repetitively. Finally he took my underwear down and did it, with the door open even when I didn't want it. He told me I should let him do it if I liked him, guilt tripping me. When we eventually broke up it was because I didn't want to have sex with him, he then told my next boyfriend that since breaking up with me he'd had great sex and that I'd never put out. I was a waste of time. Worst part was that it made my new boyfriend rush me into having sex when I wasn't ready.

I witnessed so many problematic encounters during my time in both primary school and high school. There are too many to list here but here is one story:– One of my best friends was shamed for not having had any sexual experiences at the age of 16. She was called a lesbian in the school yard and consistently harassed by boys. That weekend we frequented a beach party (which were very common in the far south coast and were basically just teens going to a deserted beach and drinking). The boys would stand in packs and watch groups of girls get drunker and drunker, while they built up the confidence to approach one of us. My friend was asked to 'go on a walk' with a guy a few years older, which was code for 'let's go make out'. He took her into the bushes and they kissed and then she tried to leave and froze when he tried to keep her there. He then had penetrative sex with her. Her back was scratched and bruised from the dirt and he used no protection. Later he returned to his mates who all had a laugh and when she passed them. He yelled out and said 'you should probably get the morning after pill aye'. His friends laughed some more. The response of some of the girls was also disturbing when she came to school on Monday. When she was distressed and upset in the following days, mainly around a pregnancy scare and worry about an STI people called her attention seeking and dramatic. I'm ashamed that I didn't step in more when I saw things happening. I wish we had the vocabulary and understanding of what constitutes assault, rape and consent. This kind of thing happened all the time in high school. The way boys talked about girls was incredibly sexually violent and the culture was toxic. I think the education around sexuality, gender and consent needs to start very young. I work with boys as young as 8 and even the language they use to talk about girls at school is concerning.

When I was 19 I worked with a guy from a school I know. He and an older guy at work began to tease and sexually harass me. He'd also call older female managers 'dirty whores' and 'sluts' for literally no reason. He always said I was overreacting, and it was just 'banter'. I ended up reporting it, along with his poor work ethic, to 2 female managers. They told me I needed to be nice to him because he was 'going through a hard time'. After I quit, I saw him out at a club, and I wanted to repair our friendship. He invited me to his place nearby to smoke, so I went (intoxicated) where he sexually assaulted me. I didn't even realise it was rape (until sometime later) so I brushed it off, but I never felt the same again. Randomly, a couple of years later, he tried to get in contact, even though I'd deleted/blocked him on all social media. He began to cyber stalk me, finding random ways to contact me including messaging my sister. He'd call me on blocked numbers and just breathe on the phone when I picked up. This is where it got really bad – I became agoraphobic. I couldn't leave the house except for work because I'd have random panic attacks all the time. I believe it was the above incidents that caused a deep scar on my subconscious. I am doing better now with medication after suffering for years.

Developing a common understanding of explicit sexual imagery



Learning outcomes

- Students will reflect on their understanding of sexualisation.
- Students will develop some common understanding of what is generally referred to as 'sexually explicit media', including pornography.
- Students will continue to develop skills in media and health literacy to critique the ways in which gender, sex and consent are portrayed in the media.
- Students will explore the impact of sexual imagery and pornography on young people's understanding of, and ability to develop, respectful relationships.
- Students will continue to build an understanding of the link between sexualisation and pornography and its effect on gender-based violence and power.



Activities

- Developing a common understanding
- Making a judgement
- Mediaworld vs. Realworld



Time Required

- 100 minutes



Handouts

- **H6** Developing a common understanding
- **H7** Mediaworld vs. Realworld

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this session contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. See the Introduction on page 10 of this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:



Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson



Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

About this session

This session is designed to develop some common understanding of what is generally referred to as 'sexually explicit digital media', including pornography. It is also designed to continue to build students' digital and media literacy skills to help them make sense of what they are exposed to online. The previous activities were designed to develop a sense of what is meant by sexualised imagery. In this activity, students explore the implications of sexualised and sexually explicit images on respectful relationships. While doing this, the issue of pornography is likely to be raised and can be categorised under the umbrella of 'sexually explicit imagery'. This will help students to know what is commonly understood as pornography, without accessing pornography.

You want to avoid spending too much time defining pornography. You just need to make sure students have a common understanding. The important aspect of these activities is to provide students with the opportunity to deconstruct the gendered nature of sexualisation and explicit sexual imagery.

Some useful definitions and background information are included in the handout 'H6 Developing a common understanding'. Using the definition of the term 'explicit' provides a simple way to assist students to understand what is classified as sexually explicit. Although many young people have encountered this material, there will be students who have not.

It is not appropriate to show explicit sexual images under any circumstances.

Activity 1: Developing a common understanding

Group: Small groups

Time: 50 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Large sticky notes and butcher's paper for graffiti sheets. Alternatively, you could use a whiteboard or online collaboration platform. Write the headings 'Sexualised images can ...' and 'Sexually explicit imagery is often ...'
- Provide students with a copy of the following handout:
 - **H6** Developing a common understanding

Procedure

1. Give each student 4 large sticky notes. Ask them to write 2 words (one on each note) that represent their understanding of 'sexualised images' and 2 words that represent their understanding of 'explicit sexual imagery'. Instruct them to post these on graffiti sheets, on a whiteboard or online under the following headings:
 - Sexualised images can ...
 - Sexually explicit imagery is often ...
 - Consent in sexually explicit imagery is ...
 - Consent in films shows ...
2. You could use an online collaboration or 'sticky note' site if you wanted to do this online. Make sure the headings are visible to students to help them to formulate their ideas.
3. Remind students about the ground rules about respect.
4. Analyse the notes. Identify themes (practises, attitudes and effects), differences and similarities.
5. Work through the handout 'H6 Developing a common understanding' with students, explaining what self-regulation is and the standard the Australian Association of National Advertisers (AANA) has outlined in terms of advertising aimed at children. Ensure that the self-regulatory code is covered. For example, ask students why they think it includes the following:
 - prohibit harmful gender stereotypes.
 - prohibit the focus on body parts where not relevant to the product or service being advertised.
 - prohibit the use of overtly sexual images in outdoor advertising or shop front windows or where the image is not relevant to the product or service being advertised.
6. Ask students if they think that it is possible for an industry to regulate itself. What are the benefits and risks?
7. Clearly outline what is meant by a ban on sexual appeal involving minors.

Review of children's advertising codes

'The Australian Association of National Advertisers (AANA) is the peak national body championing the interests of Australia's advertisers. They exist to inspire and promote responsible, innovative and respected marketing.'⁹¹

In 2012 the Australian Medical Association (AMA) called for new Inquiry into the sexualisation of children in advertising. At the time, the then AMA President, Dr Steve Hambleton, said advertising 'features young children in images and with messages that were disturbing and sexually exploitative'.

'These are highly sexualised ads that target children, and the advertising industry is getting away with it,' Dr Hambleton said. 'There is strong evidence that premature sexualisation is likely to be detrimental to child health and development, particularly in the areas of body image and sexual health,' Dr Hambleton said. 'The current self-regulatory approach through the Advertising Standards Bureau is failing to protect children from sexualised advertising. Stronger action is needed to stop this practise of pushing adult themes to young children, especially pre-teen girls'⁹².

As a result of the Australian Senate's 2008 Inquiry into the sexualisation of children in the contemporary media⁹³ and ongoing community complaints, 10 years later the AANA reviewed the Children's Advertising Code, to ensure that it provided a robust framework for the self-regulation of advertising and marketing communication to children. The new AANA Children's Advertising Code took effect on 1 December 2023⁹⁴.

The objective of the Children's Advertising Code is to ensure that advertisers and marketers maintain a high sense of social responsibility when advertising and marketing to children in Australia.

AANA Code of Ethics

The AANA Code of Ethics regulates how people are portrayed in advertising and also the need to ensure that advertising is obvious and distinguishable from genuine editorial, user-generated content or product reviews, so that consumers know when they are seeing advertising.

The AANA currently manages the advertising code of ethics. Three of these codes are :

- prohibit harmful gender stereotypes
- prohibit the focus on body parts where not relevant to the product or service being advertised
- prohibit the use of overtly sexual images in outdoor advertising or shop front windows or where the image is not relevant to the product or service being advertised.

Some useful definitions

Sexualisation

The American Psychological Association (APA) defines sexualisation as occurring when one of 4 conditions is present:

- a person's value comes from his or her sexual appeal or behaviour, to the exclusion of other characteristics
- a person is held to a standard that equates physical attractiveness (narrowly defined) as being 'sexy'
- a person is sexually objectified, that is, made into a thing for others' sexual use, rather than seen as a person with the capacity for independent action and decision-making
- sexuality is inappropriately imposed on a person (APA 2010).

Explicit

- Clearly expressed and leaving nothing to implication
- Sexually graphic, open and direct

'Explicit' describes things that are clear, leave nothing implied, and need no explanation. The term 'explicit' is commonly used to describe profane or sexual content, probably as a shortened version of 'sexually explicit'. When something is done explicitly, it is done clearly, specifically and openly.

Usage examples

- The radio wouldn't play the song, as it contained explicit (profane) lyrics.
- He was not explicit (specific, clear) about when he needed it done.
- The issues were explicitly (clearly, specifically) explained in my email.
- Our coach was quite explicit (direct, specific, clear) about her expectations of the team, and we all know what we need to do to win today.

Pornography

A commonly accepted definition of pornography is 'sexually explicit media that are primarily intended to sexually arouse the viewer' (Malamuth et al. 2000).

'Mainstream' pornography refers to the sort of material that is widely available on the internet and easily accessible via other mediums (Dines 2010).

Homework or whole-class task

Using the APA definition of 'sexualisation', and the AANA code of ethics, find a public image that meets at least 2 of these criteria.

- Advertising shall not employ sexual appeal.
- Must not include sexual imagery.
- A person's value does not come from their sexual appeal or behaviour to the exclusion of other characteristics.
- A person is not held to a standard that equates physical attractiveness (narrowly defined) as being 'sexy'.
- A person is not sexually objectified (made into a thing for others' sexual use, but seen as a person with the capacity for independent action and decision-making).
- Sexuality is not inappropriately imposed on a person.

Bring the image to class for analysis. As a class you must decide how you will share this data with others, for example, in a podcast, blog or graph. Do not source these images from explicit media. They should be sourced from mainstream and public media, like the images we looked at in Session 3.

Activity 2: Making a judgement

Group: In pairs and the whole class

Time: 20 minutes*

* The time required for this activity is 20 minutes if the collection of images is carried out for homework. Otherwise, the activity will take 40 minutes.

Preparation and materials

- Read the background in the handout 'H6 Developing a common understanding'
- Access to the Australian Association of National Advertisers Code of ethics, available at: <https://aana.com.au/self-regulation/codes-guidelines/code-of-ethics/>
- Provide students with a copy of the following handouts:
 - **H1 What am I selling?** from Session 2, Activity 1
 - **H6** Developing a common understanding
- Enough space to display images.

Procedure

1. Inform students that there has been a great deal of community debate and discussion about sexualisation and explicit sexual imagery (pornography) over the past 15 years, particularly as it relates to children and the media. The Australian Senate Inquiry into the sexualisation of children in the contemporary media environment delivered its final report in 2008. In 2012 the Australian Medical Association (AMA) called for an Inquiry into sexualisation and the media. In 2016 an Australian Senate Inquiry into the harm being done to children through access to pornography on the internet delivered its final report.
2. Refer to the handout 'H6 Developing a common understanding'. Ask students to read (individually or as a group) the advice given by the AMA and the AANA Code of Ethics.
3. In groups of 4, students select 3 words from the lists to develop a description of sexualisation, sexual imagery and their impact. This can be in the following formats:
 - a written statement like a submission to an inquiry
 - an article for the school newspaper or magazine
 - a postcard
 - a rap
 - a poem
 - a role-play
 - a song
4. Each group performs their description to the class. Follow this with a discussion of the commonly accepted definitions provided

in the handout 'H6 Developing a common understanding'. Compare the key elements with their own descriptions. Discuss the following:

- Why it is important to analyse sexually explicit imagery and sexualisation?
 - How does it relate to respectful relationships?
5. Discuss the following :
 - Why was the AMA concerned?
 - Why were they calling for another Inquiry?
 - Do you think this call was realistic?
 - Do you think that the bans the AMA suggested would work?
 6. Inform students that they are going to complete a whole-class media analysis task, making judgements about whether images or advertisements in the media are sexualised. This will be done using the criteria set by the AMA and the AANA codes. The criteria are outlined in the handout 'H6 Developing a common understanding'. To assist students, you could use the images from the handout 'H1 What am I selling?' to clarify what the APA and AANA criteria mean and how you would use them.
 7. Ask students to reflect on who was missing from the ads and images in the previous activity, and list them on the board. The list might include people from diverse races and cultures, Aboriginal people, people with disability, LGBTIQA+ people, older people and so on.
 8. Ask students to form pairs. Allocate each pair one of the cohorts from the list the students have just drawn up. Ask them to find images of advertisements on the internet that are inclusive of the cohort they've been assigned. Students should consider the following questions:
 - How are they represented?
 - Are any sexualised?
 - What messages are being communicated about the cohort?
 - Why are these groups often excluded from advertising campaigns?
 9. Each pair is to select a media image, either an image they have sourced themselves or one from the 'bus stop' activity in Session 2, Activity 1. If students have found their own image, they will need to download and print it, or photocopy it for display. This could be done for homework if class time is limited.
 10. Display the images in a way that allows students to move around the room. Ask students to remain in their pairs and assess which of the APA and AANA criteria was most often achieved. Each pair must present and share this information in a graphical way, for example, by making a postcard, podcast or blog.

Activity 3: Mediaworld vs. Realworld

Group: Small groups and the whole class

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Enough category cards from the handout 'H7 Mediaworld vs. Realworld' to provide 4 copies to each group of 5 or 6 students.
- A wide selection of statements from the handout 'H7 Mediaworld vs. Realworld' – enough for each group to have a minimum of 6 statements covering a range of issues.

Background

This activity is likely to elicit a range of attitudes about gender, sexuality, sexualisation, consent and pornography. It is important that you take time to reflect on your own position and any associated concerns, fears or reactions you may have to the list of issues raised in the statements that students will use.

The activity builds on knowledge, skills and understanding developed in previous sessions on respectful relationships, gender, power and consent. It is designed to continue developing skills in critical media analysis. The activity is adapted from one that looks at the way pornography and pornographic insignia have been mainstreamed, for example, when utilised by clothing brands. The issue of pornography is likely to arise during this activity, so you should be prepared to help students explore the impact that pornography has on the sexualisation and objectification of women in mainstream culture. The video *Dreamworlds 3: Desire, sex & power in music video*, used in Session 2 of this unit and available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDMo5cIJN3A>, presents a compelling critique of the music video industry and the way images have shaped the sexualisation of culture on billboards, fashion, music, entertainment and behaviour.

In this activity students are required to distinguish between statements that are accurate in the real world and those that reflect the world created by the media. They may decide that certain statements are reflective of both worlds, or of neither. Note that media's influence on the real world may make some of the responses more contested than might otherwise be expected.

This activity is not about students categorising the statements 'correctly'. Rather, it aims to create discussion about a range of issues that have potentially significant implications for young people's healthy sexual and social development.

Procedure

1. Divide the class into groups of about 6 students and give each group a set of the category cards from the handout 'H7 Mediaworld vs. Realworld'.
2. Explain to students that they have a selection of statements about gender and sex and 4 category cards:
 - 'Mediaworld' (the world created by media, or what the media portrays)
 - 'Realworld' (the world of real life)
 - Both
 - Neither.
3. Ask students to read through the statements one at a time in their groups. After each statement they should discuss whether the statement belongs to 'Mediaworld', 'Realworld', 'Both' or 'Neither'. They should take care to listen to different opinions within the group. When students decide where each statement belongs, they should place it with the appropriate card, continuing until they have worked their way through all the statements.
4. When the groups have finished this task, invite one of the groups to read out one of their statements and tell the rest of the class in which category they placed it in and why.
5. Work your way through the statements, reading a few at a time from each group and stopping to discuss statements that were subject to disagreement or were of particular interest to the group.
6. This activity provides an opportunity to highlight many of the unrealistic and harmful messages that can be conveyed through mainstream media in relation to sexuality, gender, consent, sexualisation and pornography, and to emphasise the ways in which these differ from respectful relationships and sexuality. The following questions can be useful for drawing out some of the important themes from this activity:
 - When you look at the statements under Mediaworld, how respectful and pleasurable does Mediaworld seem?
 - What sorts of risks are there to young people if they are learning about sex and consent from the media?
 - Are there any advantages to learning about sex and consent through the media? Why or why not?
 - Which of the statements would you put under a title of 'Idealworld'?
 - Are there other statements you would want to include?
 - Where can we access information about sex, sexuality, consent and gender without using the media?

- Is information accessible for all groups of young people? Why or why not?
- What sources of information can we trust? Why or why not?

Extension task

- Ask students to write their own list of statements about gender, sex and consent that they would include under the category of 'Idealworld'.
- Students should report back to the group.
- Bring the session together by emphasising the elements of positive constructions of gender and sex (equality, mutuality, respect, consent, sexual safety, non-violent relationships and so on). Encourage students to see that it is possible to develop a healthy and fulfilling relationship.

Messages you may want to reinforce

- Media portrayals of gender, sex and consent often are not realistic.
- Many of the media's messages about gender and sex can be harmful and conflict with respectful relationships. These may include messages about:
 - body image
 - sexual health
 - sexual pleasure
 - lack of sexual consent
 - particular sex acts
 - gender stereotypes
 - male sexual aggression
 - female sexual availability and subservience.

Journal, jar or podcast entry

Session 3 journal questions

Ask students to view *Objectification.mov*, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QlZpLWgJoqs>. They should answer the following questions and complete the following sentence stems in their reflection.

- How did the film leave you feeling?
- What messages was it giving about how the women were portrayed?
- What messages was it giving about the way men are portrayed?
- I was surprised that I ...
- I learnt that others ...
- I felt that ...



You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction page 12.

Mediaworld

The world we see in places like films, social media, television, advertising, pornography, music videos and gaming ...

Realworld

The world we see around us in real life in places like our homes, schools and neighbourhoods ...

Both**Neither****Most people
are white****Most people
are happy****Most people
are beautiful****Things go wrong
but it all ends up good
in the end**

**Good people get
what they want, bad
people get punished**

**People usually
have sex with a
partner they have
just met**

**Most people are
cisgendered**

**Intersex people are
not represented**

**People's complexions
appear to be perfect**

**It's common for
women to have
cosmetic surgery on
their faces, breasts
and genitals**

**Men are entitled
to get sex when
they want it**

**All men have
very large penises**

**All men want sex
all the time**

**Women's value is
based on their looks
and sexuality**

**Women are for
men's sexual
gratification**

**Sexual decision
making is not
complex or
difficult**

**Heterosexual
sex almost always
includes anal sex**

**Women don't
have body hair**

**Most women
are thin**

**Sex often occurs
between more than two
people at once**

**Violence seems
to be sexy**

**People with
disabilities are
missing**

**There is no need
to be concerned
about engaging in
unprotected sex with
multiple partners**

**Women always
want sex, even if it
doesn't seem this
way initially**

**Women orgasm
easily from whatever
men do to them**

**Women love to
be called abusive
names**

**Men are controlling
and dominating**

**Sex needs to be
negotiated with
consent**

If sex occurs without the consent of one party it is sexual assault, which is a serious crime and a violation of human rights

Most women enjoy touching and kissing in the lead-up to sex

Women and men come in many shapes, sizes and colours

Diversity, such as sexuality and gender, is missing

Non-binary and trans people are rarely presented as sexual

Most people want to please their partners

People want sex to be pleasurable for themselves

Most people want sex to be mutual and respectful

**Men do not always
want to have sex**

**Women do
not always want to
have sex**

**Sex can be
creative, tender, loving
and genuinely pleasurable
for everyone
involved**

**Most heterosexual
sex does not include
anal sex**

**Unprotected
penetrative sex is
a health risk**

**Sex usually occurs
between two people**

**People like to be
– and are entitled to be –
spoken to respectfully**

**Sex often occurs
in the context of a
relationship**

**Sex can be
difficult to
negotiate**

**Consent is
crucial to
good sex**

**People are
multidimensional human
beings with diverse skills
and interests. While they
are all sexual beings, they
are much more
than that, too**

**Learning outcomes**

- Students will continue to develop an understanding of the link between sexualisation, pornography, gender-based violence, consent and power.
- Students will develop skills in analysing issues raised in porn-related scenarios.
- Students will practise making respectful, reasoned and consensual choices.
- Students will continue to develop skills in digital, media and health literacy.
- Students will continue to reflect on the impact of sexual imagery and pornography on young people's understanding of, and ability to develop, respectful relationships.

**Activities**

- Finish the story
- 'Jess – I thought it was deleted!'

**Time Required**

- 100 minutes

**Handouts**

- **H8** Finish the story
- **H9** Jess – I thought it was deleted

About this session

Access to technology means that young people are very likely to be exposed to pornography, accidentally or deliberately, by the age of 16.⁹⁵

According to researchers, pornography is having a negative impact on sexual interactions and expectations among young people.^{96, 97} This session is designed to explore common situations that young people find themselves in and gives them the chance to explore and practise decision-making. The activity is also designed to create an opportunity for students to consider alternative actions that can enhance respectful relationships in the context of social pressure to do otherwise.

Activity 1: Finish the story

Group: Small groups and the whole class

Time: 80 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Two copies each of the 4 scenarios from the handout 'H8 Finish the story'
- Butcher's paper for taking notes in the group discussions
- Pens.

Procedure

1. Divide the class into 6 groups and give each group a copy of one of the 4 scenarios from the handout 'H8 Finish the story'.

Although this resource provides relevant scenarios, you may like to develop your own in line with the experience and needs of students and the cultural context in which you will be teaching. You may even give students the task of developing scenarios.

2. Ask the groups to read the scenario together and discuss possible endings to the story. Ask students to answer the questions provided and share their answers with the rest of the group.
3. Ask each group to read their scenario to the class and report back on their discussions, describing the possible endings to the story, and the risks and benefits for each.

4. Depending on the level of comfort and students' skill in role-play, students could role-play the endings for each other. The audience can participate by providing advice on what could be said. Discuss the following questions:
 - Do these scenarios seem realistic for the young people you know?
 - Which options do you think the characters would choose? Why?
 - What gendered assumptions are being made in the chosen endings?
 - How do power relations have an impact on the endings?
 - What role does consent play in these situations?
 - How easy would it be for the characters to make choices other than what their partner, peers and cultural context expect?
 - How might young people feel if they don't feel free to make the choice they really want to make?
 - Can you think of anything that could make it easier for the character to freely choose what they would like to do? Examples could include a positive sense of self, supportive friends and family, and being prepared to lose relationships to stand up for what they want.
5. Bring the activity together by discussing the role of consent, gender and power in situations like this. It can be very difficult to voice an objection that sits outside gendered expectations and gives young people social power. Discuss how different people might be comfortable with different responses, yet may still be using their personal power. For example, if Jack didn't want to challenge his friends, but didn't want to watch porn, he could say he didn't feel well and go home. He is still exercising some personal power. If he is feeling in a position to challenge his friends, he may choose to tell them that he doesn't want to watch it and explain his reasons. Getting consent would mean that Rafael would need to ask Jack if he wanted to watch porn and Jack would need to say yes.
6. Emphasise that it is appropriate for people to respond in the ways that seem best for them. Young people want honest discussion of these issues – they do not want judgement, which increases their feelings of shame. It is therefore important to acknowledge that the digital world is part of sexual intimacy for young people.⁹⁸



You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction page 12.

Jack

Jack and several of his friends are invited to Rafael's house for the afternoon on Saturday. Not long after Jack arrives Rafael gets his computer and accesses a porn site. Most of the other guys there laugh and cheer as he puts it on, and they settle in to watch it. Jack feels uncomfortable as his friends are laughing at what is being done to the women by the men.

Jack doesn't find it funny at all. To Jack it looks painful and awful and, although he can feel himself getting aroused, it's not what he wants to find sexy.

Finish the story

Option A: Jack stays at Rafael's house.

Option B: Jack leaves Rafael's house.

Discuss what each of these options could look like. What kinds of things might Jack do or say in each scenario? Write your own ending to the story for each option.

What would be the risks and benefits for each of the endings you describe?

How could seeking consent be introduced? What would Rafael need to do before he showed the porn material?

Harmi

Harmi is asked by her partner to send them a sexual image via text. They say they will keep it to themselves but would love to be able to have a nude of her to look at. Harmi doesn't like this idea, not because she doesn't like being intimate, but because she feels uncomfortable. She tells her partner she doesn't want to do it, but they're persistent, asking her often and saying how much it would mean to them. They say that other people do it and it's no big deal. They suggest that if she loved them she wouldn't hesitate and would see it as a compliment.

Finish the story

Option A: Harmi sends her partner a picture.

Option B: Harmi doesn't send her partner a picture.

Discuss what each of these options could look like. What kinds of things might Harmi and her partner do or say in each scenario? Write your own ending to the story for each option.

What would be the risks and benefits for each of the endings you describe?

How would it look if consent was introduced?

Sam

Sam's partner wants to have the kind of sex that is common in porn. To Sam, this sex looks like it would be painful, and certainly not enjoyable. Sam thinks sex should be pleasurable for both partners and doesn't want to try this kind of sex. Sam's partner asks often, regularly shows Sam more porn, and encourages Sam to 'loosen up' about it.

Finish the story

Option A: Sam has the kind of sex shown in the porn.

Option B: Sam doesn't have the kind of sex shown in the porn.

Discuss what each of these options could look like. What kinds of things might Sam and Sam's partner do or say in each scenario? Write your own ending to the story for each option.

What would be the risks and benefits for each of the endings you describe?

How could Sam's partner confirm if Sam consents to the kind of sex shown in the porn? What would Sam's partner need to do before he showed the porn material and what would Sam need to do?

Cam

Cam has been going out with their partner for a year but because they've been unwell with the flu they haven't been able to see each other. They really like being together and fooling around with sex. Both of them are 16. They start fooling around sexually online and really enjoy it. Cam's partner asks if they can record it. Cam doesn't know what to do.

Finish the story

Option A: Cam enables their partner to record their intimacy.

Option B: Cam says no to recording their intimacy.

Discuss what each of these options could look like. What kinds of things might Cam and their partner do or say in each scenario? Write your own ending to the story for each option.

What would be the risks and benefits for each of the endings you describe?

Activity 2: Jess – I thought it was deleted

Group: Individuals, small groups and the whole class

Time: 20 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handout:
 - **H9** Jess – I thought it was deleted

Background

Periodically, newspapers Australia-wide feature the repercussions of decisions made by young people about their sexual activity and technology use.

In the case of 16-year-old Jess, although she shared images of herself by sexting in the past, she discovers that someone she trusted videoed her undressing without her consent and shared it on social media without her consent. She says she shared her story because it's 'something private that happened to me in public, and because I don't want someone else – even younger than me – to go through something similar and think it's normal or OK.' Jess felt humiliated because the video was shared and she lost control of her right to share or not share her own images. This situation resulted in very negative feelings for Jess, breaking her trust in others. If she had not sought help it may have resulted in her leaving the school.

This is an example of image-based abuse.

By legal definition, a naked or sexually explicit picture or video of a person under the age of 18 years is child exploitation material, and the making, transmission and possession of such images can result in serious criminal charges.

To ensure that young people under the age of 18 years who engage in consensual sexting are not treated legally in the same way as a child sex offender, there have been amendments to the law in Victoria to protect young people from criminal charges in circumstances when:

- there is no threat, fear, coercion, threat to share or sharing of the image
- there is not more than 2 years difference in age between the teens
- no adult is involved
- no other criminal act is depicted in the image.

If these 4 circumstances are present, police can use an educative response rather than the criminal justice system. This means that young people are taught what the laws are and how they apply to them.

Once a person turns 18, the exceptions listed above no longer apply, even if the person

obtained the image when they were under 18 years of age. Penalties for making, possessing and/or transmitting child exploitation material are very serious and can result in imprisonment and registration on the sex offenders register.

Two other offences relate to this behaviour: distributing an intimate image and threatening to distribute an intimate image. These offences are applicable to everyone, not just young people. This is where an intimate image is shared or threatened to be shared without the consent of the person depicted in the image.⁹⁹

This activity is designed to look at the role that all actors play in this situation and to explore how this relates to gender and violence and respectful relationships. Read the following excerpt from an *ABC News* article about Jess¹⁰⁰ to help you to unpack the story with your students.

Background information for the handout 'H9 Jess – I thought it was deleted'

What is image-based abuse?

Image-based abuse occurs when intimate, nude or sexual images are distributed without the consent of those pictured. This includes original images and digitally altered images, as well as drawn pictures and videos.

If you have been a target, the most important thing to remember is that it is not your fault and you are not alone.

For more information and help, head to the eSafety Commissioner website at <https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-topics/image-based-abuse>.

'It's a big problem'

Image-based abuse is an umbrella term encompassing a complex array of behaviours. It can refer to the sharing of intimate images or videos that were taken with the consent of a person – often called nudes – to third parties, or the capture or creation of images and videos without consent, like in Jess's case, or say, by a stranger in public. It also refers to threats to release such images.

RMIT Professor Nicola Henry has spent the past decade researching the phenomenon after she began to notice it was increasing in frequency with the rise of smartphones and social media.

'It's a big problem,' she says. 'And it definitely has increased, which is not surprising really.'

To convey the scope of the issue she refers to a survey she conducted in 2016 and again three years later; in the first, one in five Australian respondents between 16 and 64 years old said they had experienced having a nude or sexual image or video of them taken, shared or threatened to be shared without their consent. By 2019, the number was one in three.

But, she adds, it's difficult to get a true picture of how widespread the abuse is because many victims do not realise they've been targeted.

'What we know in relation to image-based abuse is that a lot of it is happening without the victim's knowledge,' she says. 'So the one in three figure we have could actually be an under-estimate of the true prevalence of image-based abuse.'

Acting eSafety commissioner Toby Dagg also says they've seen a 'concerning increase' in reports of image-based abuse from young people between 13 and 24, with the number almost doubling in the period of January to March compared to the same time last year.

While the personal toll of image-based abuse varies drastically among people who experience it – from life-changing to a slight annoyance – Dr Henry says women and girls are more likely than men to suffer severe repercussions when their images are shared. And in closed communities like schools, the harm of the violation is often compounded by bullying.

One woman interviewed as part of Dr Henry's research told her what happened after her boyfriend shared an intimate video of her with other students when she was at school was almost as harmful as the abuse itself. 'She had this awful bullying experience, and then it went online, so she had to move schools but the students there had also heard about it,' she says.

'For some people, that can be the icing on the cake of what has already been a really horrible experience of someone breaching your trust and violating your bodily integrity.'

Misplaced shaming and blaming

Importantly, image-based abuse does not include consensual 'sexting' – the act of voluntarily sharing nude or intimate photos with someone. While research shows young people do engage in this practise, Mr Dagg says its prevalence is often perceived to be higher than it actually is.

According to an eSafety Commission survey, 5 per cent of 14 to 17 year olds have actually sent a nude or semi-nude image of themselves to someone. For girls specifically, the number grows to 7 per cent.

Despite this research, Dr Henry says educational campaigns in schools are often what she calls 'anti-sexting' instead of focused on the consequences of sharing such images without consent.

'They tend to focus on the lifelong and disastrous consequences that will befall women, particularly young women, when they share nude or sexual images with someone they trust,' she says.

'And that is really problematic because it relies on messages of abstinence and fear ... The messaging needs to be around consent and respect.'

Mr Dagg acknowledges that this is a 'relatively new and emerging issue' for schools to tackle, but encourages school leaders to draw on resources

in the Health and Physical Education curriculum and eSafety education guides.

The [eSafety toolkit for schools](#) says all staff members should be trained to recognise image-based abuse and refer any instances to a designated staff member or principal as soon as they become aware of it.

'Remain calm, reassuring and non-judgemental,' it reads. 'Do not say or do anything to blame or shame any students involved.'

What can you do if your image is shared?

In addition to telling parents and school staff what has happened, the eSafety Commission urges young people who have fallen victim to image-based abuse to make a report to eSafety, so they can help with getting the images or videos removed from social media platforms.

This involves taking screenshots or photos of any messages or accounts posting the material. 'As part of an investigation, we might also speak with schools if they can help address the problem and police if they are already involved or ought to be involved,' Mr Dagg says.

While all **states and territories** <https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-topics/image-based-abuse/police-and-legal-help>, excluding Tasmania, have specific laws concerning image-based abuse, it's also a federal crime to share private sexual material without consent. When the people involved are underage, sharing intimate images may also fall under child exploitation legislation.

Despite this, one thing Dr Henry says she's heard time and time again from the people she's interviewed is that they didn't know what had happened to them was even wrong, let alone a criminal offence.

'Often they didn't know that they could do anything about it, they didn't know where to go for help,' she says. 'The most vital need is to give victim-survivors information, support and advice about what they can do if that's happened to them — and that support needs to be non-judgemental.'

Jess wants more young people to talk about image-based abuse. 'It's disgusting, it's wrong, and people should know it is wrong.' (ABC: Katie McAllister)

Months after her video was shared, Jess says she's managed to come to terms with what happened. When people make comments, she says she tries to shrug it off. 'It's gone, people have seen it, there's not much I can do about it,' she says.

'I worked so hard to get out of that mental state, I don't want to go back there.'

But while she has made peace with her own experience, she has four younger sisters who she 'worries about a lot'.

'I want other girls and boys to talk to people

about it,' she says. 'Don't feel ashamed or embarrassed because it happens all the time. It's disgusting, it's wrong, and people should know it is wrong.'

To find out how eSafety can support you to remove intimate images shared without consent visit their website and to hear from other young people on how to stay safe online follow @scrollwiththesafety on Instagram.

Procedure

1. Inform students that they will be reading 'H9 - Jess - I thought it was deleted', which is about sharing intimate images. When students have finished reading, either place them in small groups or one large group and map the issue by discussing the following questions:
 - What happened to Jess?
 - Who was involved?
 - How did it make Jess feel?
 - Jess said she has shared images in the past without negative impacts. Why was this situation so different?
 - Do you think this is an example of consent?
 - Could it be classed as violence? Why or why not?
 - Is what the sharer did illegal?
 - What impact has this had on Jess?
 - Why does Jess want to tell her story?
 - From what we have learned about gender and violence, how is this an example of gender and violence?
 - Would you say this is a realistic example of image-based abuse between young people?

Journal, jar or podcast entry

Session 4

Pick one of the characters covered in the scenarios in this session – Jack, Harmi, Sam, Cam or Jess – and outline what you would do in this situation and why.



You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction page 12.

Public sharing of intimate images without consent is a growing problem in Australia. And teenagers are paying the price¹

Imagine opening social media only to be greeted with an intimate photo of yourself you didn't know existed. Or one you were sure had been deleted. Maybe you took the photo but shared it with only one other person and now it's popped up in group chats where people you don't even know can see it.

A growing number of teenagers, most of them young women, don't have to imagine. They know how the shock can knock the wind out of you, how the violation leaves you frazzled and on edge, and what it's like to walk around wondering if everyone you pass has already seen it.

Image-based abuse, the act of taking or sharing an intimate photo or video without a person's consent, is becoming increasingly common – especially among young people.

About a quarter of all image-based abuse reports received by the eSafety Commission come from people under 18 years of age, with some as young as 13.

Young women are disproportionately affected, according to a 2017 eSafety Commission survey, with 15 per cent of girls aged 15 to 17 reporting having a nude or sexual image posted online without their consent.

But despite how often it happens, the young victims can face bullying and social isolation, and are often too embarrassed to seek out support.

That's why 16-year-old Jess wants to share her story – so other people know they're not alone.

'I saw it happen at least once a week'

Jess, like many teenagers, is no stranger to posting photos of herself online. Being able to control the way she's presented, through curated selfies taken on days when she feels good about the way she looks, has even helped the teenager from regional Victoria feel empowered.

That all changed earlier this year when someone filmed a video of Jess getting dressed without her consent. When she realised what had happened and confronted the person, she was told the video had been deleted.

But 2 weeks later, she found out the video had been sent to other students on Snapchat – a social messaging app where videos and photos automatically disappear after they're viewed.

'My whole world just fell around me,' she says. 'I'd lost all my dignity, I was embarrassed, words can't even explain the feelings that I was going through.'

Jess spoke to a trusted mentor at school about what had happened. They directed her to the school's wellbeing officer, who talked her through her options.

'I decided not to do anything more, I just didn't want the drama,' she says.

But Jess says the problem goes far beyond her own experience. At her previous school, she says she would see nude or intimate photos of girls posted in group chats 'at least once a week'.

'People would joke about it, and it's something you just don't joke about, especially if the other person doesn't know,' she says. 'I'm talking about something private that happened to me in public, because I don't want someone else – even younger than me – to go through something similar and think it's normal or OK.'

Jess believes teachers 'don't really know what's happening' when it comes to the prevalence of image-based abuse, and when they do: 'They don't really know what to do about it.'

¹ The public sharing of intimate images without consent is a growing problem in Australia. And teenagers are paying the price, Truu, Maani, ABC News; Posted Tue 5 Jul 2022 at 5:00am Tuesday 5 Jul 2022 at 5:00am, updated Tue 5 Jul 2022 at 7:07am Tuesday 5 Jul 2022 at 7:07am

**Learning outcomes**

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of community attitudes to pornography.
- Students will discuss the impact of pornography on young people.
- Students will demonstrate skills in debating.
- Students will continue to develop an understanding of the link between sexualisation, pornography, gender based violence, power and respectful relationships.

**Activities**

- Community attitudes to pornography
- Debating the issues

**Time Required**

- 100 minutes

Activity 1: Community attitudes to pornography

Group: The whole class

Time: 80 minutes

Preparation and materials

Access to *SBS On Demand* website to view Episode 12, Season 2012 of *Insight*, 'Porn in the classroom' (52 minutes), noting that an SBS login is required. The episode is available at <https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/news-series/insight/insight-2012/insight-s2012-ep12/11822659823>.

- Read the transcript of 'Porn in the classroom' in advance of delivering this activity to the class. Think about your own position regarding pornography and the key issues raised in the episode.
- A space for students to participate in a line debate.

Background

There is a great deal of debate about pornography. If we reflect on the basic definition of pornography as 'sexually explicit images designed to sexually arouse', then this is an intensely personal thing that can involve positive aspects of intimacy, desire and arousal. The activities in this unit have not been exploring personal sexual preferences and desires. Rather, the unit is exploring the negative impact of increasingly violent and aggressive pornography that shows an inequitable view of consent, gender and power.

The activities have been designed and selected to examine the cultural context of an increasing acceptance of the aspect of pornography that Crabbe and Flood (2021) maintain is shaping unrealistic sexual tastes among some young people, particularly young men, and having an impact on sexual experiences in a negative way.

This activity is designed to explore some of the debates about pornography, to assist students to make sense of the images they are bombarded with on a daily basis. As with the other sessions, students will be engaged in activities designed to build their skills in media and health literacy in line with the Victorian Curriculum.

Procedure

1. In class, screen Episode 12, Season 2012 of *Insight*, 'Porn in the classroom', an episode on young people and pornography. Or, ask students to view it for homework. You will need to create a free account to view the episode if your school doesn't already have one. Ensure that students have access to be able to view it at home if appropriate. The episode is available at <https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/news-series/insight/insight-2012/insight-s2012-ep12/11822659823>.
2. Discuss the range of positions presented in the program:
 - What positions are expressed in relation to pornography? Are they for or against porn? Why or why not?
 - Did any of the arguments make you think differently about pornography?
 - Was there any difference in how the young men and young women positioned pornography?
 - If adults don't want young people to access pornography, what would need to happen?

Activity 2: Debating the issues

Group: Small groups and the whole class

Time: 20 minutes

Procedure

Finish Session 5 with one of the following debates, depending on the depth and focus of your program.

Line debate – is the use of porn ever good?

1. Ask students to line up in alphabetical order and split the line down the middle to form 2 teams. Pose the question, 'Is the use of porn ever good?' Write it on the board.
2. Ask one team to form arguments to support the statement, and the other team to form arguments against this statement. Give students time to reflect on what they could say and argue, based on the previous presentations. Remind students about the ground rules and inform them if they break them, they will need to cross to the other team and think of a new argument.
3. The debate begins with a volunteer from one team going first. If a member of the other team gives a response deemed valid by the judge (a teacher or assigned student) they can choose someone from the opposing team to cross the floor and join them. This challenges students to rethink their already formed argument, leading them to a higher level of thinking.
4. Remind students about supportive classroom behaviours and how to provide a safe space for people to express their opinion. Inform them that a rule of the debate is that if a student says something that is not supportive, for example, if they yell out or ridicule another student's opinion, including by using negative body language like eye rolling, they will need to cross to the other team and form a new argument in their head.
5. The winning team is the team with the most players left after a certain amount of time, or, if there is to be no winner, the activity can continue until arguments have been exhausted. The aim of this activity is to challenge students' preconceived ideas about porn and formulate the ideas and arguments that have been presented to them in throughout this program.

6. Discuss the following questions with students:

- Did issues of equity, violence and respect emerge?
- What was said about consent?
- Could any of the arguments be used to build more respectful relationships and prevent gender-based violence?
- Do you think pornography is a good sex education tool?

Team debate – sexualised images in popular media

1. Divide the class into teams of 3 students.
2. Give each team either an affirmative or negative position on one of the following debate topics. Ensure there is one affirmative and one negative position for each debate topic that is chosen.

Debate topics

- 'Hot', super-thin, sexualised images of women in the popular media do no harm.
- Movies that focus on relationships and sex encourage young people to be sexually active earlier.
- Mainstream films and TV series encourage consent.
- Sexting (sending nudes via text, instant messaging or social media) is just a bit of fun. It is not harmful.
- Young people's access to inappropriate sexualised and violent material online should be controlled. (What is inappropriate? Students may determine this for themselves, or the teacher may discuss. Pornography and violence are the often debated categories of material that many consider should be censored.)
- The images a person posts help shape their identity.
- Establishing a relationship online is safe if you know what you're doing.

Alternative

1. Select a topic that has been raised in previous activities or is currently in the media.
2. Give students 15 minutes for discussion in their teams to form an argument. Suggest that they come up with 4 good points to support their position. The team will need to allocate each person a role in the debate – one person to introduce the topic and argument in brief, a second person to present clearly the 4 points for the argument, and a third person to respond to the opposition's argument and sum up.
3. For the team debates, the 2 teams need to be positioned at the front of the class, with the rest of the students as the audience. Determine how long you have for each speaker. Select a timekeeper who will notify teams when their time is up.
4. The other groups can decide by a show of hands who they believe has won the debate.

Journal, jar or podcast entry

Session 6 journal questions

Finish the following sentence stems with at least 3 lines for each stem:

- I was surprised that I ...
- I learnt that others ...
- I felt that ...
- Pornography is ...
- Respectful relationships would be improved by ...
- Consent in this context means ...



Learning outcomes

- Students will develop an understanding of the potential positive and negative impact of technology on young people's relationships.
- Students will build understanding and skills in developing consensual respectful relationships.
- Students will continue to build critical digital media analysis skills.
- Students will explore how they think and feel about different types of images and how this influences how they create, use and share images.
- Students will understand what images are appropriate and inappropriate to forward using technology.
- Students will develop an understanding and appreciation of the benefits and risks relating to the information, communication and entertainment technologies available to them.



Activities

- Finding your position
- Online images – the good, the bad and the ugly
- Sexting – real-life scenarios
- Real-life technology scenarios
- Implications – affirmative consent and non-consensual sharing of images



Time Required

- 90 minutes



Handouts

- **H10** Finding your position
- **H11** Online images – the good, the bad and the ugly
- **H12** Sexting scenarios
- **H13** Sexting scenarios – considerations
- **H14** So how do we deal with it?

About this session

Technology plays an important part in the lives of young people. Research shows that digital technologies are 'an integral part of how young people "do" their romantic relationships from flirting through to ending relationships' (McGeeney and Hanson 2019:8). Young people felt it was a way of getting to know someone they liked without the gaze of the peer group. Research suggests that people aged 14 to 34 use technologies like mobile phones, social networking websites, personal blogs and video-hosting websites more than any other cohort. Young people were spending more time using social network sites than doing homework.¹⁰¹ You may like to ask your students which social networking sites or apps they use the most.

The use of technology brings with it both potential benefits and harms to developing respectful relationships.¹⁰² Primary prevention is one of the keys to keeping young people safe, as is building their skills and understanding of the normalised use of behaviours like posting images of themselves and others. Some argue that young people need to become 'critical consumers' of images,¹⁰³ and 'proactive and ethical' bystanders¹⁰⁴ if change is to occur.

This session examines these issues and explores the role of technology in respectful relationships. Using a range of real-life situations, students develop strategies to minimise harm, help others and use technology to build respectful relationships. It begins by providing students with an opportunity to explore the way images are transferred digitally, and the different perspectives students and the community hold on what is considered offensive.

Activity 1: Finding your position

Group: The whole class

Time: 20 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handout:
 - **'H10 Finding your position'**. It contains descriptions of a diverse range of images or clips that may be sent via digital media (phone, email, instant messaging and social networking).
- Make 2 position points, one end being 'Most offensive', the other being 'Least offensive'.
- Provide a large space to run the activity.

Procedure

1. Students should work in pairs. Give each pair one statement from H10 describing a diverse range of images and video-hosting websites that may be sent via digital media.
2. Students are required to place their card on the continuum from 'Least offensive' to 'Most offensive'.
3. The class group should come up with a shared view about the placement of the images. Individuals will have differing opinions. For some it may be offensive to send all of these images or videos digitally. Discuss:
 - What card positions did the group(s) agree upon?
 - What card positions did they disagree about?
 - Was it easy for the group to come to a shared position?
 - Were there any other factors that seemed to affect where people placed the cards?
4. Discuss as a class the factors that can affect how people position the cards. If students have difficulty identifying these, suggest and discuss various influences like age, gender, culture, the experience of using social network sites, privacy, public spaces, consent, consequences, risks, bullying and so on.
5. Once they have discussed the scenarios, the handout 'H13 Sexting scenarios – considerations' provides some advice on the possible consequences and issues arising in the situation.

A photo of somebody blowing out candles on a cake at their birthday

A photo of a woman dressed in cultural attire like a sari or hijab

A photo of a group of friends swimming at the beach

A photo of a young man in his underwear in his bedroom, taken without his consent

A personal and private photo of a girl that she shared with her boyfriend

A video of somebody being bullied

A photo of people in a race at a swimming carnival

School photos

A private video of a person dancing to their favourite song at home, which was stolen from their mobile phone

A photo taken of a couple kissing at a party without their knowledge

A photo of girls getting changed for P.E

A photo of a girl climbing some stairs, which shows her underwear

**A photo of a year 8 boy crying, which is being
texted around the schoolyard**

A photo of some puppies

**A photo of an Aboriginal elder in ceremonial
dress (for example, body paint)**

Activity 2: Online images – the good, the bad and the ugly

Group: The whole class

Time: 20–35 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handout:
 - **H11** Online images – the good, the bad and the ugly.
- Review the scenarios in H11 before using them in the class. Some might be more appropriate than others for your school community or class group.

Procedure

Remind students about their first day of school. Parents or carers may have taken a photo of them dressed up in their school uniform. Ask them if they think parents and carers should post photos of them online. When is it okay or not okay? Ask students if their parents or carers have ever posted a photo of them online that they were unhappy about. Do kids have the right to decide how their pictures are shared? What would be good practise? Ask students what they think about parents or carers checking that it's okay to take their picture and share it online. Suggest students could check out <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/issues-and-advice/privacy-child>.

1. Distribute the handout 'H11 Online images – the good, the bad and the ugly' which presents a range of scenarios related to posted images. Working in small groups, allow 5 minutes for students to tick either the OK or NOT OK column next to each scenario.
2. Ask for some brief feedback from each group following their discussion. They may note the following:
 - There are many different assumptions about what's okay and what's not.
 - People use images to make people feel bad in lots of different ways, not only sexual ways.
 - Sometimes we might think something we do with images is ok so that we feel like we fit in with others.
 - Sometimes what we do can be misguided. We think it's just about having a sense of fun or playful 'sledding', but it can be really hurtful.
3. **Discuss the following questions with students:**
 - How might we hurt others by collecting and posting images online? Why might this be hurtful?

- Does your gender, sexuality, age, religion or race make a difference to the impact and harm?
- How do you know if your friend will be okay with a picture that you share? How do you know if it will hurt someone?
- When is it okay to share someone's picture?
- How can images be used to create insiders and outsiders in social groups?
- Would most of us want to avoid doing that to our friends?



You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the [introduction page 12](#).

	OK	Not OK
Your friend posts a photo of you on your birthday that you think is ugly.	☐	☐
Your friends post a photo of themselves out shopping together without you.	☐	☐
A family member has posted a violent message about immigrants.	☐	☐
A friend posts pics of their abs.	☐	☐
A girl you know sends you a nude.	☐	☐
Someone shares a pic of you kissing your partner.	☐	☐
Your partner wants you to send them a nude.	☐	☐
You post a video of a drunk friend.	☐	☐
Some guys at school are collecting nude pics from Year 7 girls.	☐	☐
Someone posts anti-religious slogans.	☐	☐
You're a vegan. A friend keeps tagging you in pictures of meat.	☐	☐
Your friend has recently become vegetarian and posts animal cruelty images constantly.	☐	☐
You've tagged your friends in a silly group shot.	☐	☐
Your friend loves guns. They keep sharing pictures of weapons.	☐	☐

Activity 3: Sexting – real-life scenarios

Group: Small groups and the whole class

Time: 20 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handouts:
 - **H12** Sexting scenarios
 - **H13** Sexting scenarios – considerations
- 'Help-sources' tool

Background

In this activity students are presented with real-life scenarios that demonstrate some of the challenges associated with 'sexting' situations. In groups, they explore and discuss these situations, looking at the information and skills they need to develop to make reasoned decisions and healthy choices. Students will reflect on what should be done in each case.

You may want to familiarise yourself with the scenarios in the handout 'H12 Sexting scenarios' to ensure they are culturally appropriate.

If relevant, develop additional scenarios and photocopy handouts or post them to a class page so that there is one for each group.

Procedure

1. Divide the class into groups of 4 to 6 students. Appoint a person to report back on the discussion. Inform students they will be discussing some real-life sexting scenarios that demonstrate the pressures, risks and consequences associated with common sexting situations.
2. Allocate scenarios from H12 to the groups. It is good to have more than one group doing each scenario. This allows for a range of opinions. Allow 5 minutes (or longer if required) to discuss the scenario. Ask students to focus on the following:
 - How might the person who had their photo shared feel? What action could they take?
 - How might the sharer of the photo feel? What if they wanted it to stop? What action could they take?
 - How might a friend of the student whose photo has been shared feel? What action could they take?
 - How might a bystander feel? What action could they take to be an upstander?
 - How might a teacher at the school feel? What action could they take?
 -

- What should the person or people do in each case?
- What are the possible consequences of each case of sexting?

3. Debrief as a whole group after each of the scenarios. The handout 'H13 Sexting scenarios – considerations' can either be given to students for discussion or you can use the information during the debrief with students.
4. Watch Project Rokit's video *Nudes: How can I support someone whose photo has been leaked?* which is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXY_8SsjUFo&t=4s.
5. Ask students who is available in their networks and at their school to talk to. Refer to the 'Where to go for help' handout for wellbeing support for students as well as the eSafety kids help page on the eSafety Commissioner website at <https://www.esafety.gov.au/kids/i-want-help-with>.



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Instructions

Read the scenario and decide:

- what the person or people should do
- what the consequences are likely to be if they send the image.

Scenario 1:

One of my so-called friends took some private photos from my phone and sent them around the school. They say it's my fault because I used my birthday as my phone password.

Scenario 4:

My new partner has asked me to send them a nude. I really like them and they've promised they won't show it to anyone else. I think I trust them. Surely it can't be that big of a deal.

Scenario 2:

Someone has set up a fake profile of me and used it to post a nude of me. I'm devastated because it isn't my body. I don't even wear bathers. My family is religious, and I wear a head covering. The photo is a private one of my head where I'm not wearing my head covering, and someone has attached someone else's body to it.

Scenario 5:

I am being bullied at school for not having sexual images of girlfriends on my phone to share with my mates. They're calling me gay because I don't engage in sexting or sharing nudes.

Scenario 3:

My best friend has told me she is planning on sending a nude to this boy at school she likes in the hope he may ask her out. She says everyone else is doing it, so what's the big deal?

Scenario 6:

One of the guys in our class snuck into the girls' change rooms, took a photo of me and 2 of my friends getting changed, and is sending it around to all his mates. I'm devastated because people are now posting horrible comments about my appearance.

Consent for sharing photos and videos¹⁰⁵

Do you have consent or permission to share a photo or video of someone? In short:

- Consent is the informed and freely given agreement to engage in an activity, or permission for a specific thing to happen.
- You should always seek consent before sharing a photo or video.
- Consent is ongoing. Even if someone has said yes to an image being posted, they can change their mind and retract their consent.
- If someone asks you to remove a photo or video, you should do it no questions asked.

What is consent when it comes to sharing photos and videos?

If you're going to share any images or videos online, it's best to make sure the people who are featured in the photos or videos are okay with it too. Ask yourself, 'Do I have consent or permission to share a photo or video of someone?'

Tips for consent to share photos and videos

When it comes to getting consent before uploading or sharing photos or videos, here is what you need to know.

Ask before taking the photo or video

When recording someone, it's important to check your intentions. Are you taking an image to mock someone? Are they comfortable having their image taken? If they aren't, it's probably best to put the phone or camera away.

Ask before sharing photos of people and respect their decision

It's that simple! If they say they're uncomfortable with a photo, then respect their decision.

If someone asks you to remove an image or video of them, do it

Respecting the choices and decisions your mates make about their personal privacy means they are more likely to respect your choices and decisions too.

Follow your instincts and be smart about what you post

If you don't feel good about posting a photo or video of someone because you think it could have long term consequences for them, don't post it.

Remember: Once you post or share something, you can lose control of the content. This can have devastating consequences or impact the mental health of people who may not have wanted the image to be shared in the first place. It could even mean that you, or your friends, miss out on jobs or other opportunities in the future.

Find out more about your digital footprint at <https://www.esafety.gov.au/young-people/digital-footprint>.

Be an upstander

If you see someone recording or taking a photo of someone else without their consent, and you feel comfortable and safe to do so, you can help the person being targeted. This is called being an upstander. You can read more about being an upstander at <https://www.esafety.gov.au/young-people/be-an-upstander>.

Check in on the person who appears in the image or video

If someone's image has been shared without their consent and you know the person who is being targeted, reach out to them. Let them know you have their back and make sure they are okay.

Stop the sharing of embarrassing and inappropriate content of others

If someone sends you a photo or video that you know would be embarrassing for the person in it, don't forward it to other people. Break the chain of disrespect. You can also tell the person who originally sent it to you to stop forwarding it on too. This is especially important if the images that were sent to you are nudes.

Consider that your actions or those of your partner could be image-based abuse¹⁰⁶

Image-based abuse (IBA) happens when an intimate image or video is shared without the consent of the person pictured.

It includes images or videos that have been digitally altered using specialised software.

An intimate image is one that shows:

a person's genital area or anal area (whether bare or covered by underwear)

- a person's breasts (if the person identifies as female, transgender or intersex)
- private activity (for example, a person undressing, using the bathroom, showering, bathing or engaged in sexual activity)
- a person without attire of religious or cultural significance if they would normally wear such attire in public.

If a partner asks you for a nude and you do not want to provide one, but you do it because you want to please them or fear negative consequences like ending the relationship, it is not consensual and could lead to image-based abuse. Remember that it is not consent unless it is enthusiastically gained and a person has said yes.

Activity 4: Real-life technology scenarios

Group: Small groups and the whole class

Time: 20 minutes

Preparation and materials

- Provide students with a copy of the following handout:
 - **H14** So how do we deal with it?' Be familiar with the scenarios in the handout to ensure they are culturally appropriate for the class.
- The ThinkUKnow Australia education resources which includes the *Teacher's toolkit: Jack changes the game*, available at <https://www.thinkuknow.org.au/resources-tab>.¹⁰⁷
- If relevant, develop additional scenarios and photocopy handouts or post to a class page so that there is one for each group.
- Alternatively, the Rewrite your Story activity from Australia's eSafety Commissioner provides a set of excellent short clips that could be used instead. It is available at the eSafety Commissioner's website at <https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/classroom-resources/rewrite-your-story>.

Background

The way technology is used has changed enormously over the past 10 years. This activity is designed to explore this change and the impact it is having on respectful relationships. As with the other activities in these final sessions, it is designed to help students develop an understanding of the benefits and the risks of the information, communication and entertainment technology available to them. The assessment task provided can be used to assess student knowledge, understanding and skills of the entire unit.

Procedure

1. Inform students that technological use has changed enormously over the past decade. Ask students to brainstorm the forms of information, entertainment and communication technology readily available to people in Australia today. Record these on the board. Responses might include mobile phones, social networking sites, computer games, television, radio and so on.
2. Explain to students that these forms of technology have many benefits and have positively changed the way in which many people live their lives. However, they can also cause harm if used inappropriately. Against each of form of technology identified, ask students to identify an advantage and a possible disadvantage.
3. Ask students to work in small groups. Give each group a copy of 'H14 So how do we deal with

it?' or show the alternate clips from the eSafety website. Ask students to discuss the scenarios and the advice they would give about how to deal with the situation.

4. Ask students to report back to the group and share any additional forms of popular technology they are aware of that have the potential to cause harm.
5. Using pages 4–6 from the *Teacher's toolkit* debrief with students covering the points raised.

Activity 5: Implications – affirmation consent and non-consensual sharing of images

Group: Small groups

Time: 25 minutes

Preparation and materials

- A screen or projector
- The eSafety Commissioner's video on image-based abuse is available at: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/media/what-image-based-abuse>
- the Project Rokit video *Nudes: How can I support someone whose photo was leaked?* available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXY_8SsjUFo&t=4s.
- Copies of the handout 'H14 So how do we deal with it?'

Background

This activity explores the ethics and legal considerations surrounding sexting and other issues about sharing images like care for self, care for others, child pornography and age.

Procedure

In small groups discuss the scenarios in 'H14 So how do we deal with it?' Use the following questions as a basis for discussing each scenario:

- Is there harm in this situation? If so, what is the harm?
- Are the people involved acting responsibly and respectfully?
- Are the situations demonstrating consent?
- What support or advice could you offer a student in this situation? Is anyone breaking the law?



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The bullying began after Remy used her phone to send a photo of herself topless to a boy she liked. Another student was using the boy's mobile phone at the time and forwarded it to other students.

You meet a guy at a party and you really like him. He asks for your number and you give it to him. Several days later you start receiving explicit sexual messages from this guy. You text him back and ask him to stop. He passes your number on to his mates and they start harassing you too.

When you check your socials you find that your friends have been sharing information with each other about someone's sexual activity without mentioning names. You're pretty sure they are talking about you, but you can't be certain. You know this is being seen by everyone at school.

Every afternoon when Toby gets home from school she starts gaming and plays R-rated combat games with her mates until her dad drags her away for dinner. As soon as dinner is over she goes back to the game and is often still playing at 2:00 am. Toby's dad hates her spending so much time on it. Lately Toby seems to be angry and aggressive most of the time.

Finley took his friend Ali's phone. As a joke, he sent a sexually explicit picture to Ali's girlfriend Harlow, saying that this is what he would like to do with her. Very distressed, Harlow rang Ali's phone to talk to Ali about it. When Finley answered he laughed and told her to lighten up – it was just a joke.

Ezra is addicted to the internet. He spends huge amounts of time on the internet, surfing sites and looking at pornography in the privacy of his bedroom.

You're on social media chatting to a few friends and you get a message from a new person. You start chatting and find you have lots in common. The next day you go back online and they start chatting with you again. This time, however, they make inappropriate sexual comments. They also ask what school you go to.

Assessment – bringing it all together

In groups of 3, students should develop a guide to help other young people understand and deal with issues of sexualisation, explicit imagery and pornography. The focus must be on some aspect of media and/or technology use and access. The guide can take any form, including a written piece, online presentation, performance, song, poster, photographic, comic, T-shirt logo and so on.

It must include the following:

- key issues facing young people
- relationship to gender and gender-based violence
- how it relates to consent
- implications for relationships and wellbeing
- potential harms
- what needs to be done
- how to help a friend
- where to go for help.

Endnotes

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