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Student Support for SHINE SA's South Australian Relationships and Sexual Health Program

Recent research demonstrates student support for SHINE SA's comprehensive relationships and sexual health curriculum. The study draws on surveys completed by 29,533 South Australian secondary students aged 12-16 years conducted over a 12-year period between 2006-2017.

University of Adelaide researcher Sophie Kedzior¹, analysed surveys of students who had engaged with lessons from SHINE SA's relationships and sexual health curriculum. The results reveal long-term trends of student support for the curriculum. Results also highlight the importance of safe and supportive learning environments and show an increase over time in students selecting 'consent' as an important topic.

Relationships and sexual health curricula has developed over the years to incorporate topics far beyond the prevention of unintended pregnancy. A growing body of research has shown that an expansion of curricula to include topics such as consent and gendered expectations leads to better sexual health outcomes and prevention of gender-based violence²³.

SHINE SA follows an evidence-based approach, developing a comprehensive relationships and sexual health curriculum that is delivered in many South Australian schools. This curriculum incorporates student, educator and parent feedback to reflect student needs. SHINE SA believes that relationships and sexual health education is a shared responsibility between school, home, and community and therefore our curriculum must reflect their views.

Natasha Miliotis, CEO of SHINE SA said,

"South Australian students have shown that they want, and need, to engage in a comprehensive relationships and sexual health education program to develop life-long skills.

Students trust their schools for information and want to understand a broad range of topics from respectful relationships, consent, STIs to respecting diversity."

We encourage educators, carers, school communities and beyond to consider the importance of implementing a comprehensive, whole-of-school approach to relationships and sexual health education.

SHINE SA offers comprehensive relationships and sexual health support including:

- Training for educators to feel confident in teaching relationships and sexual health education to students
- Comprehensive relationships and sexual health curricula and resources for educators
- Our Focus Schools Program, a comprehensive, whole-of-school program for Secondary schools
- Parent/carer sessions for the school community

To learn more visit: www.shinesa.org.au/educators-and-schools

For further information and media enquiries contact Tracey Hutt, Director Workforce Education and Development on tracey.hutt@shinesa.org.au or 0434 937 036.

¹ Kedzior, S. G., Calabretto, H., Drummond, H., Oswald, T. K., Lassi, Z. S., Moore, V. M., & Rumbold, A. (2021). Student Perspectives on a state-wide relationships and sexual health programme in South Australian schools, 2006–2017. *Sex Education*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2021.1954897>

² Haberland. (2015). The Case for Addressing Gender and Power in Sexuality And HIV Education: A Comprehensive Review of Evaluation Studies. *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 41(1), 31. <https://doi.org/10.1363/4103115>

³ Haberland, N., & Rogow, D. (2015). Sexuality Education: Emerging Trends in Evidence and Practice. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 56(1), S15–S21. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2014.08.013>