



Student Snapshot Report

Student feedback on Relationships and Sexual
Health Education

2022

SHINE_{SA}

We acknowledge and respect the Kaurna people as the traditional custodians of the lands on which SHINE SA is located. During a year which saw many of us work from home we acknowledge that we meet, work and live on the lands of the Kaurna, Peramangk and Ngarrindjeri people.

SHINE SA acknowledges these ancestral lands and their significance for the traditional owners. We respect their spiritual relationship with their country. We pay our respect to the cultural authority of all Aboriginal people, understanding that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still as important to the living people today.

Foreward

In South Australian high schools, comprehensive relationships and sexual health (R&SH) education is primarily delivered through the SHINE SA Focus Schools Program mapped to the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education and the South Australian Department for Education's Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum.

The Focus Schools Program is available to all Department for Education schools in South Australia that have a secondary year component (Years 8 – 10). Some South Australian Department for Education secondary schools enrolled year 7 students this year. The remaining Year 7 students commence high school from Term 1, 2022. Responses from 234 Year 7 students have been included in this report.

Individual school sites sign a formal Focus School Agreement with SHINE SA, which includes a commitment by the school to invite their students to participate in an annual student feedback survey. In 2021, there were 139 government schools involved with the program. The majority of schools get their students to complete a feedback survey online with a few completing them on paper. In 2021, 3,135 students from 35 Focus Schools responded.

To contextualise feedback and responses from students engaged with the SHINE SA comprehensive R&SH curriculum, two new demographic questions were added to the survey this year, namely: What is your gender identity? and Do you identify as LGBTIQ+?

This 2021 Student Snapshot Report summarises data collected from students from Years 7 to 10 participating in the SHINE SA Focus Schools Program during 2021 and highlights possible opportunities for improved R&SH education practice.



Christopher Thorpe (he/him)

**Acting Manager - Schools
Education and Support**



Heidi Drummond (she/hers)

**Schools Coordinator - Schools
Education and Support**



SHINE SA Schools Education and Support Team

Table of Contents

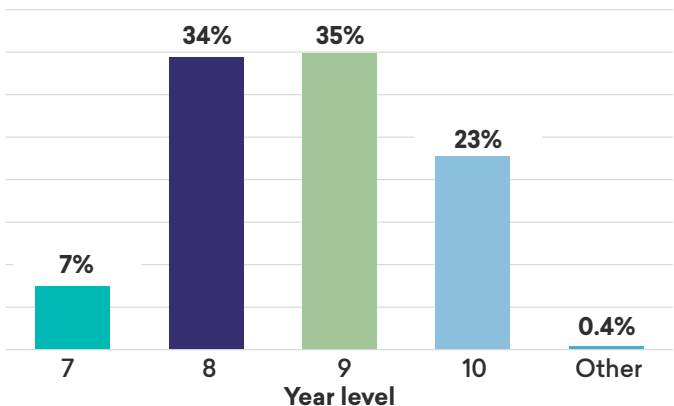
Key findings	6
Students' rating of the course	8
Respectful and inclusive	8
Course usefulness	10
Seeking out information	11
Conversations with carers/family	12
Most useful topics	13
Changes to improve the course	14
Gender identity demographics	15
LGBTIQA+ identity demographics	15
General feedback from students	17
Discussion	18

Key findings

- **3,135 students from 35 Focus Schools submitted a survey.**
- **Most respondents were Year 8 and Year 9 students (7% Year 7; 34% Year 8; 35% Year 9; 23% Year 10).**
- **5% of respondents attended 1–5 R&SH lessons, 19% attended 6–10 lessons, 44% attended 11–15 lessons and 31% attended 16 or more lessons.**
- **83% of respondents rated the safety and support of the class environment as Good or Excellent.**
- **78% of respondents rated the course overall as Good or Excellent.**
- **92% of respondents believed the course will be useful to them now or in the future.**
- **78% of respondents believed the course was often or always respectful and inclusive of LGBTIQ+ identities.**
- **83% of respondents believed the course was often or always respectful and inclusive of different values and beliefs.**
- **27% of respondents had spoken with their family about a R&SH lesson or topic since starting the program.**
- **Parent/carer rated highest (59%) regarding where young people would go for further information, followed by Friend (50%), Internet (39%), Health service (36%), Teacher (34%) and School counsellor (20%).**
- **The 5 most useful topics indicated, in descending order, were: Relationships (47%), Consent (42%), Safer sex (39%), Gender/ Stereotypes (36%) and All of it (35%).**
- **32% indicated that no change was needed to improve the course, 16% wanted more in-depth information, 13% better class behaviour and 13% more lessons.**

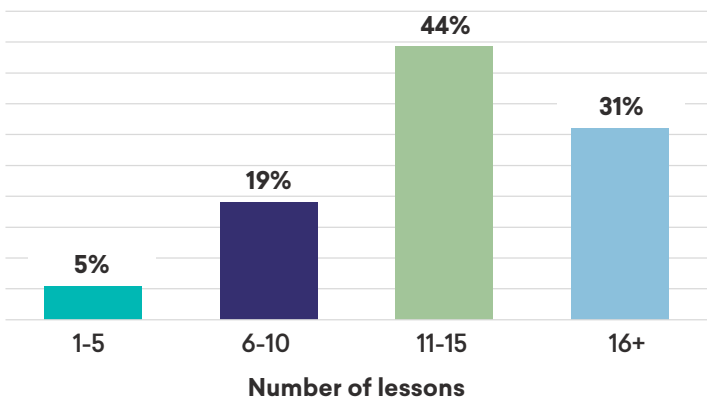
Respondent demographics

Figure 1: Student respondents (n=3,135) by year level (2021)



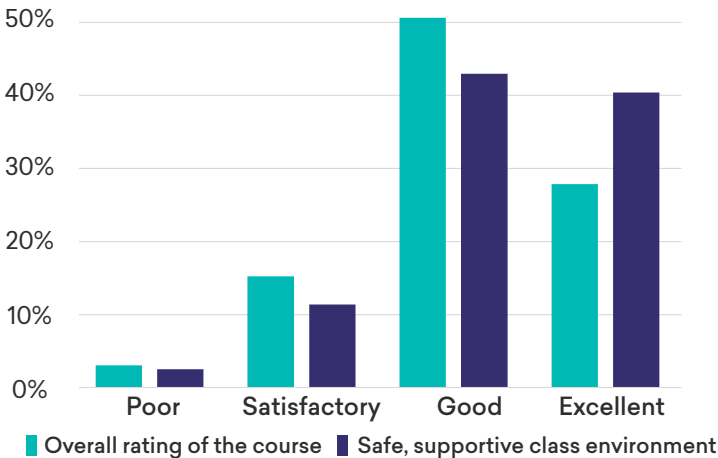
Lessons offered

Figure 2: Number of R&SH lessons offered to respondents (2021)



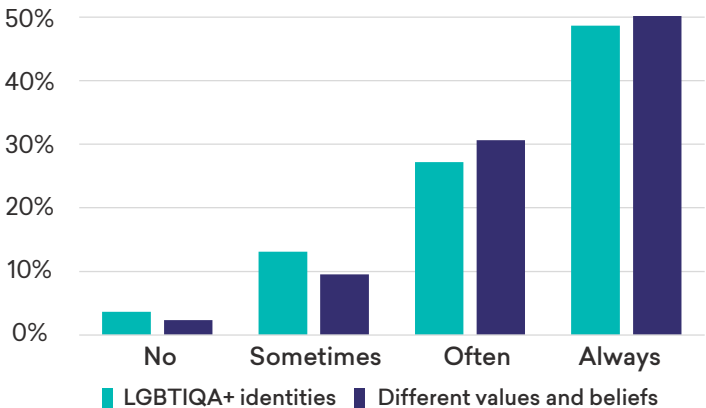
Students' rating of the course

Figure 3: Students rating of the course and the class environment (2021)



Respectful and inclusive

Figure 4: Student views on whether the course was respectful and inclusive of LGBTIQ+ identities and different values and beliefs (2021)



Student feedback

It was very inclusive for all genders and sexualities!

As a lesbian I felt I was included.

We always used “partner” not boyfriends, and never stereotyped.

We learnt without discriminating and our teacher was careful what she said so we didn’t feel singled out or offended.

I said sometimes because we didn’t really talk about LGBTIA+ all that much.

Yes, we all understand what it’s like to have different beliefs and values.

Our teacher was very open-minded and respected our values/beliefs.

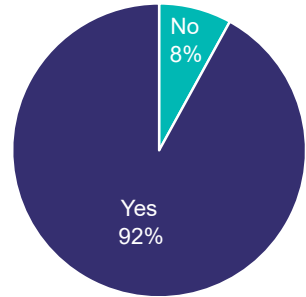
Some people made fun of some topics.

Yes, I think that the course used respectful manners, was a good course and everyone was respectful for who you are.

**“Our teacher was
very open-minded
and respected our
values/beliefs.”**

Course usefulness

Figure 5: Student views on whether the course will be useful to them now or in the future in terms of their relationships and sexual health (2021)



Student feedback

'No' respondent comments

I'm a virgin 4 lyfe.

I already knew everything that was being taught. This was all stuff we should know by now and we need to be taught about more realistic things that are happening with people our age.

Because I learnt about straight relationships and straight sex which wasn't helpful because I'm gay.

Well, I'm in the middle because some of it we probably would not need to now and some of its important.

'Yes' respondent comments

In certain lessons I knew majority of the information, but during others I was clueless and learnt new things. We should put things more in depth for our age groups.

Because sexual health is a big part of our life.

Because knowing these things, in a comfortable environment is good to learn. it can help in the future to be safe and sensible in relationships and sexual health.

I think it's helped me with knowing who's my real friend and how to react to people and find what I'm comfortable with.

Because now I know more people to go to for help and I will know that what happens to my body is normal.

We had never discussed anything like this and now we are comfortable talking to each other about it in serious and fun ways.

So we are aware of what might happen, what we can do if something does happen and to give us information about everything so we are ready for the future.

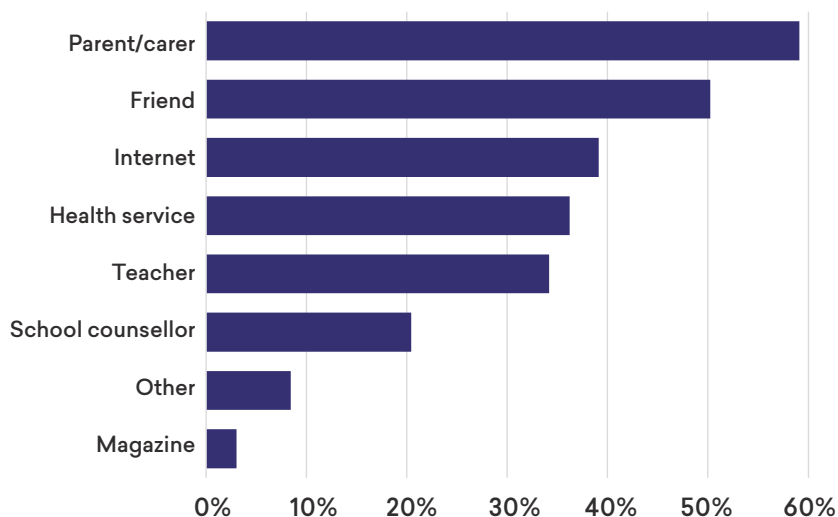
Because it enables individuals to take charge of their reproductive health, and our emotional well-being surrounding by our close relationships.

I think these courses are useful, so you know what a healthy relationship is, and so that you are not mistreated or forced to do something.

“Because now I know more people to go to for help and I will know that what happens to my body is normal.”

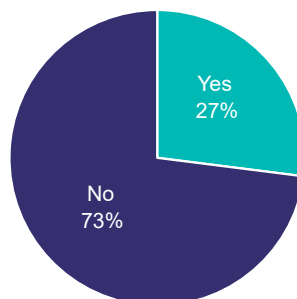
Seeking out information

Figure 5: Student views on whether the course will be useful to them now or in the future in terms of their relationships and sexual health (2021)



Conversations with carers/family

Figure 7: Student views on whether they have talked with their carers/family about any of the topics in their R&SH course (2021)



Student feedback

'No' respondent comments

I don't feel comfortable talking to my parents. Don't have a lot to talk about.

I didn't talk to any of my family but did talk a bit about it with some of my friends.

I don't like talking to my parents.

I might talk with them when I am ready.

No because it would be awkward.

It hasn't come up in any conversation.

I had already done all the birds and the bees and all the other stuff with my parents before the lessons.

It feels weird.

Not really, because I don't really have any questions or reasons to talk about these topics.

I don't feel comfortable talking about it to people.

Because I don't feel comfortable with talking about the topics I talked about in school with my parents. Maybe I would talk about relationships with my parents when I'm older.

I just didn't.

'Yes' respondent comments

At home, I might be able to relate to more adult jokes that my parents make. I can talk more fluently to my parents about growth, my mental health and my relationships.

Mum and I chat about what I've learnt about that day and if I don't understand something, she helps to explain it in a way that I can understand.

I asked my mum about different types of birth control.

We used some terms that I wasn't quite sure of so I asked my family members what those terms meant.

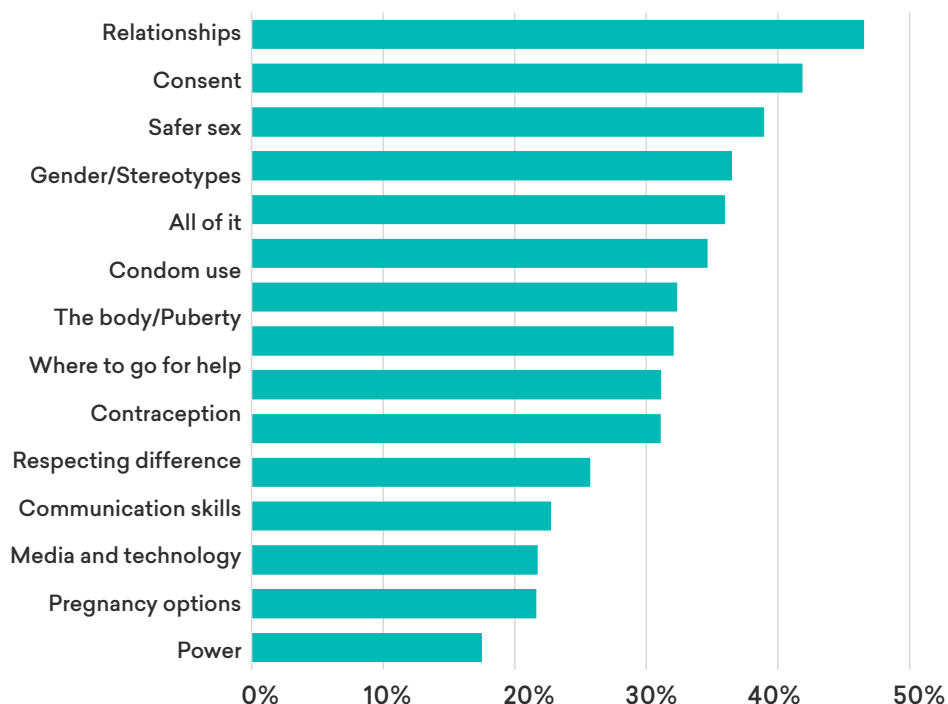
Some of the topics I talked to my parents about, but a lot of them I didn't need to, as I was taught enough in class. I also don't feel comfortable talking to my parents about everything.

I feel more open to talking about it now.

***“I feel more open
to talking about
it now.”***

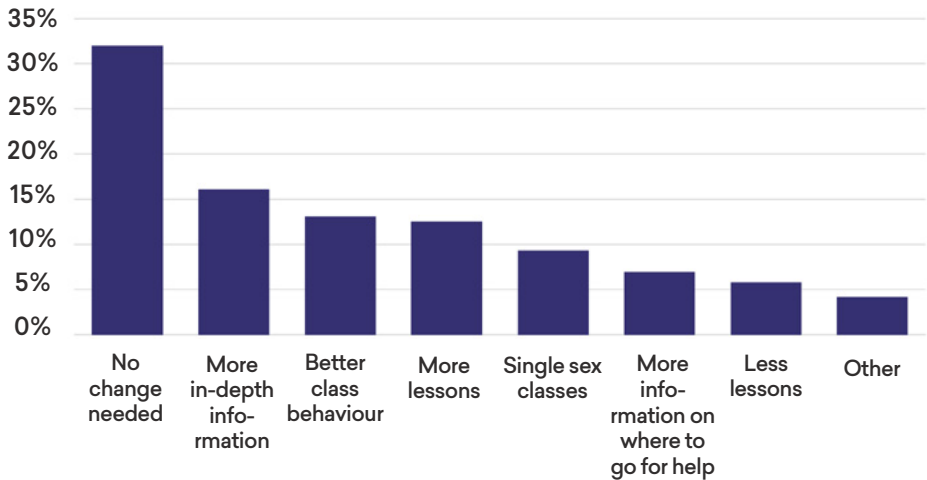
Most useful topics

Figure 8: Student views on what were the most useful topics (2021)



Changes to improve the course

Figure 9: Student suggestions for improvements (2021)



Student feedback

We could have a few more lessons.

When learning a few people were disruptive which made it hard to concentrate/hear.

Have different courses for people who have learnt the most, and the least in primary school.

The teacher being the same gender as us and making it less awkward.

Setting up rules and give out consequences.

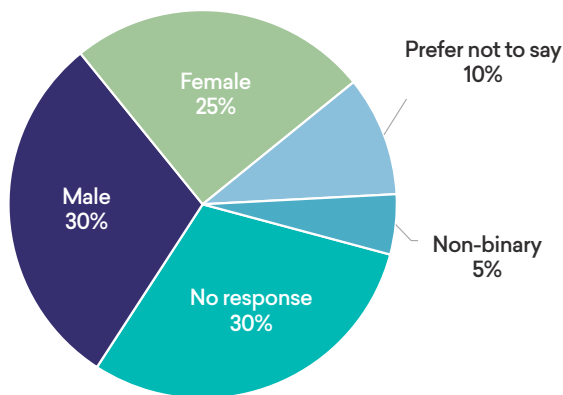
I think that maybe a few single gendered classes because people tend to be more open with the same gender (my opinion) so I think it would become more of a safe place but again the other gender would still need to learn things about the same thing just maybe at different times or places.

More information about relationships would be helpful.

Well I thought the class was good but I felt uncomfortable with some pictures that you showed and the guy's were acting weird.

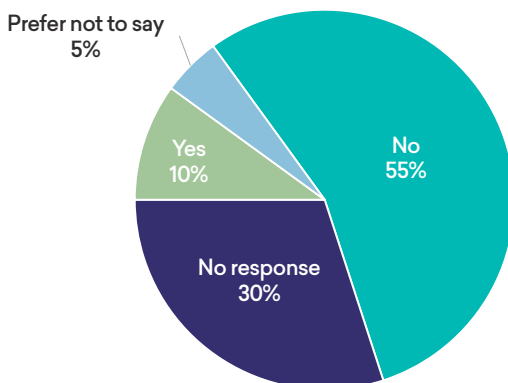
Gender identity demographics

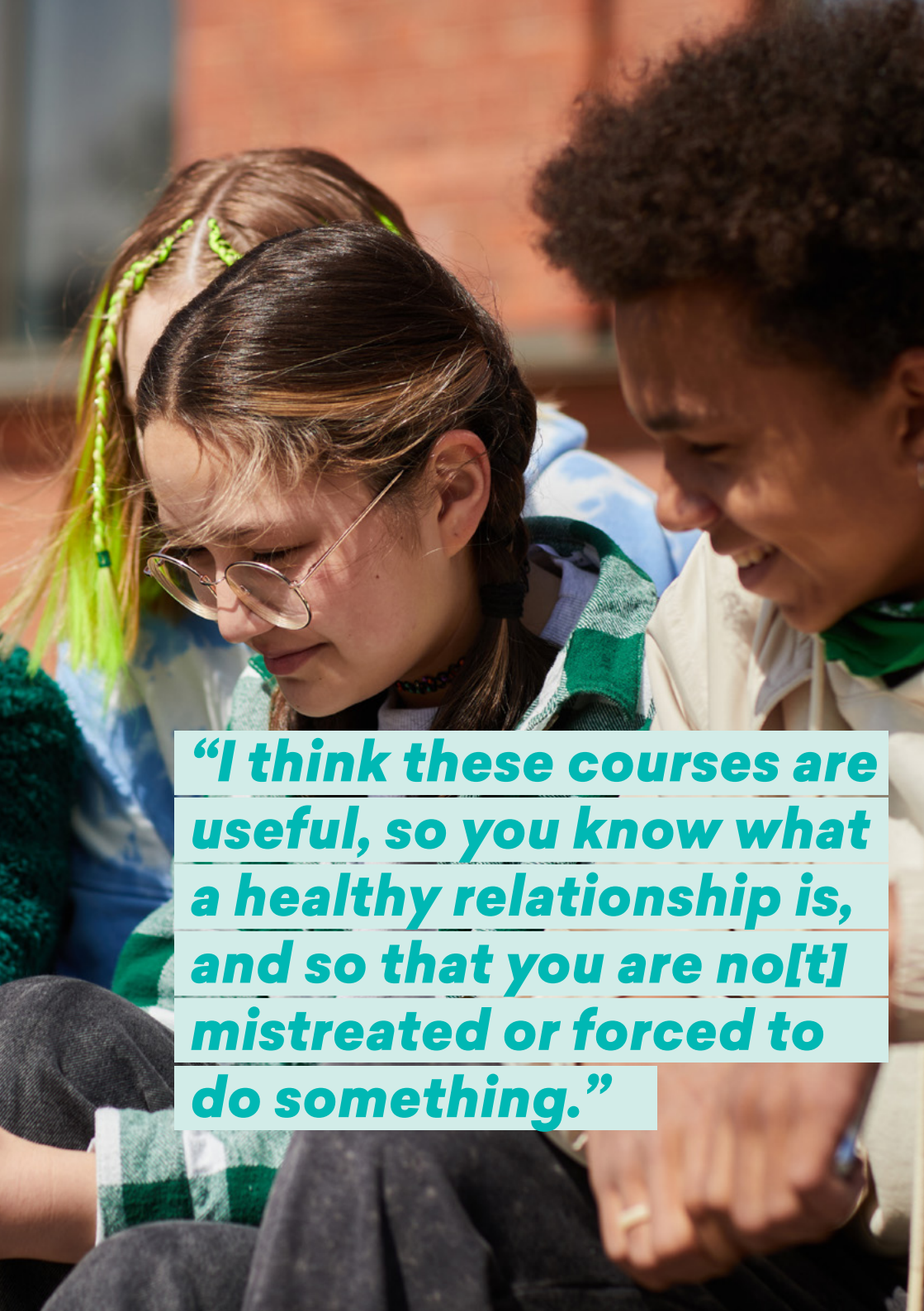
Figure 10: Student gender identities (2021)



LGBTIQA+ identity demographics

Figure 11: Students response to “Do you identify as LGBTIQA+?” (2021)





“I think these courses are useful, so you know what a healthy relationship is, and so that you are no[t] mistreated or forced to do something.”

“This was an overall a good experience I have learnt so much.”

General feedback from students

The teacher that I had was very good at explaining things.

I think that the course was overall good, but it just needs a bit more respect in the classroom. There was some but there could be more.

This was an overall a good experience I have learnt so much.

Happy with the way everything went in the class! 😊

Discussion

During the year, SHINE SA Focus Schools were reminded to encourage their students to participate in the student survey. A total of 3,135 responses were received from students from 35 Focus Schools throughout the year.

This level of response is encouraging and is influenced by several factors including:

- The level of ongoing relationship the SHINE SA Schools Coordinator has formed with a specific Focus School Key Contact
- Staffing changes (particularly a change to the Focus School Key Contact at schools)
- Day to day challenges in schools – e.g. timetabling changes, last minute changes to lessons and the overcrowded curriculum
- Student access to computers/ laptops results in some sites hesitant to submit paper responses
- Incomplete survey responses – especially additional comments.
- Staff teaching SHINE SA's comprehensive R&SH program having an appreciation of the value of information that may be derived from students' responses to the survey

A significant disruption to teaching and learning in South Australian schools in 2021 was due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most schools experienced:

- Ongoing staffing shortages and changes
- Temporary site closures due to COVID-19 outbreaks
- Quick changes between face-to-face and online learning environments
- Timetabling reprioritising other Key Learning Areas

Despite these significant challenges, the number of student survey responses received declined only slightly in 2021 (**Figure 12**).

Prior to 2020, SHINE SA Focus Schools that submitted at least one student survey response were counted. This meant that incomplete and/or incorrect data (incorrect selection of school; 'donkey' responses, etc) was included in the results. From 2020, only Focus Schools that submitted more than 10 student survey responses had been included. This provided a more realistic representation of how many schools sought feedback from their students, thereby improving the quality of data collected and analysed.

Figure 12: SHINE SA Student Survey Respondents (2021)

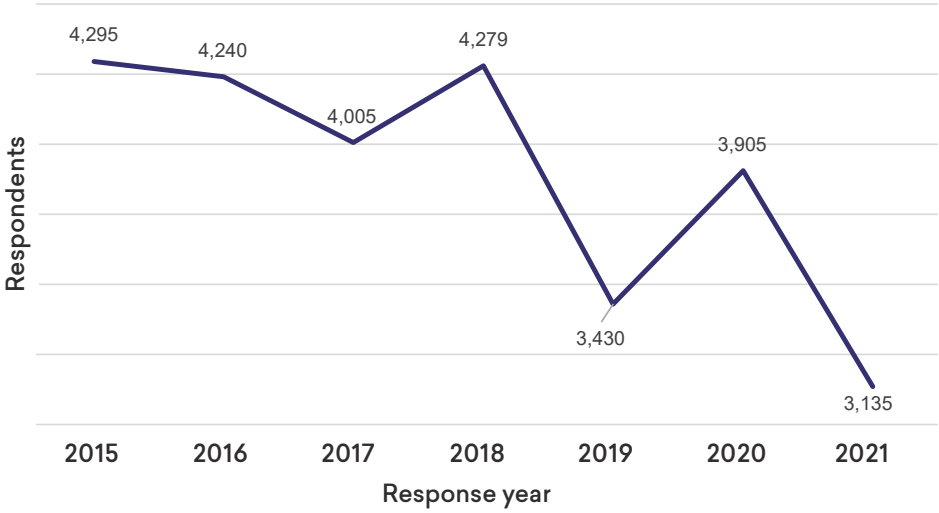
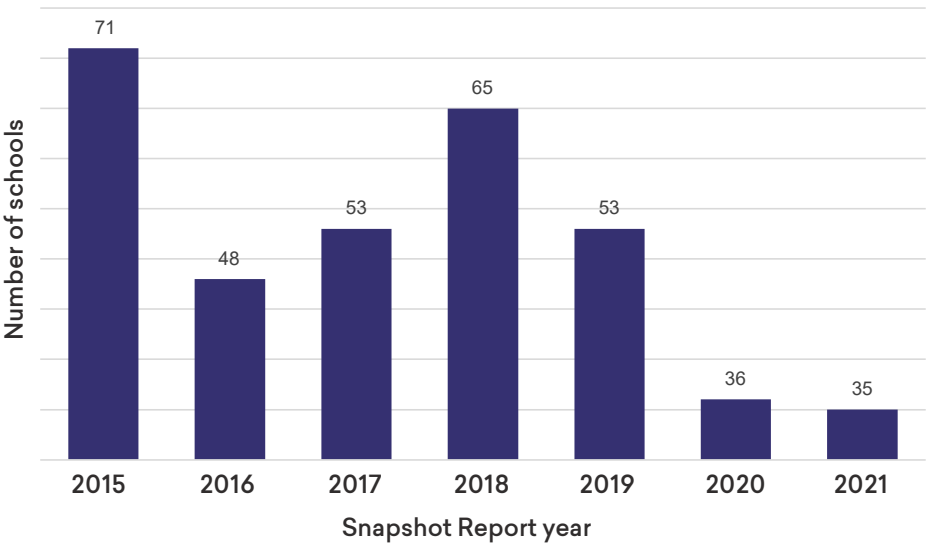


Figure 13: SHINE SA Focus Schools represented in responses (2021)



Discussion cont.

As in prior years, all SHINE SA Focus Schools that provided student feedback responses continue to receive a personalised individual school report summarising the results and sampling of feedback comments made by students. This report is unpacked by the SHINE SA Schools Coordinator during the Annual Curriculum Update session held with staff at the school. School staff often comment on the valuable information they glean from the report including the greater insight they gain from the voice of their students reflected in their responses and comments.

Many educators have taken on board the suggestions made regarding how the curriculum is taught, including areas for improvement with the program at their school.

SHINE SA's Schools Education and Support (SES) Team will continue to work with educators to ensure that as many South Australian students from as many Focus Schools as possible provide feedback about the program. Student voice is critical to the success of the program as it supports our Team to review and improve the curriculum to ensure that it remains relevant for all young South Australians.

Biennial curriculum reviews and adjustments are made to the Years 7 – 10 curriculum by the SES Team. Each year level is comprised of fifteen, fifty-minute lessons. During training and update sessions, educators are encouraged to

differentiate the learning activities to suit their specific cohort of students.

It is noteworthy that 75% of students responded that they had engaged with more than 11 R&SH lessons during the year. This indicates that these students are receiving a comprehensive and fully implemented program that includes most curriculum topics and learning areas. It is beyond the scope of this survey to determine which lessons/topics were omitted.

The confidence, skills and capacity of educators is reflected in the positive response of the majority of students indicating that the classroom environment was safe, supportive (83%), and inclusive of diversity (83%) with 78% rating the course as good or excellent. These results highlight the importance of school-based educators engaging in regular professional development sessions to continue to build confidence and capacity in this key learning area.

As in previous years, the majority of students (73%) had not discussed R&SH topics at home with many commenting that this was not something they felt comfortable with or there was no necessity as they were satisfied with the information they gleaned from their school lessons. Parents/carers continue to rate as the highest (59%) source of further reliable source for R&SH information.

Overwhelmingly, 92% of students endorsed the relevance and usefulness of curriculum to their lives now or in the future. Approximately one third of respondents indicated that they would not make any changes to the course. As in prior years, several students continue to ask for more in-depth information and more lessons. Comments regarding classroom behaviour and the gender make-up of their class provides interesting information for individual schools and teachers to consider.

Student feedback indicates that only 49% of respondents felt that their lessons were always respectful of sexual diversity. This is a similar result to previous years. To further support educators to be inclusive in this space, our Team worked with a Masters of Sexology student during 2021 to produce How to Start a Rainbow Group Schools Guide available to download free from the SHINE SA online shop.

Student responses indicated that their lessons were respectful and inclusive of sexual and gender diversity. Our Team continue to partner with a number of organisations and agencies to support sexual and gender diversity professional development opportunities being provided and accessed by South Australian educators. These include:

- Minus 18 and SHINE SA partnering to provide multiple, free 90-minute online workshops including Creating LGBTQIA+

Inclusive Classrooms and Supporting Trans and Gender Diverse Students

- Our 2021 SHINE SA Annual Update visit to schools including a comprehensive unpacking of the *Writing Themselves In 4* National Report by La Trobe University
- SHINE SA's SES Team providing 90-minute *Gender Diversity in Schools* workshops (both online and face-to-face)
- Face-to-face and online training opportunities being provided by the Engagement and Wellbeing Team within the Department for Education

Furthermore, ongoing individualised support is provided to schools requesting assistance including how to navigate the Department for Education's *Supporting Gender Diverse, Intersex and Sexually Diverse Children and Young People* policy and procedure, providing guidance and assistance to develop support plans for individual transgender students and strategies for supporting LGBTIQ student groups in schools.

Overall, the responses from the 2021 student survey were positive and indicated that the SHINE SA Years 7–10 R&SH curriculum was well facilitated by teachers in Focus Schools and continues to meet the needs of the majority of young people in South Australia.

shinesa.org.au