



# Student Snapshot Report

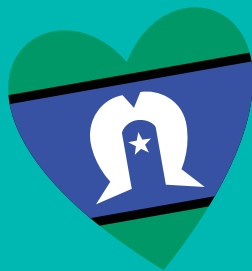
Student feedback on  
Comprehensive Relationships and  
Sexual Health Education

2024

**SHINE**<sub>SA</sub>

We acknowledge and respect the Kurna people as the traditional custodians of the lands on which SHINE SA is located. We acknowledge these ancestral lands and their significance for the traditional owners and respect their spiritual relationship with country.

We pay our respect to the cultural authority of all Aboriginal people, understanding that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still as important today. We listen deeply to Aboriginal knowledges, ways of being, and learning that promote relationship and sexual wellbeing for all young South Australians.



# Foreward

**Comprehensive relationships and sexual health education (CRSE) is primarily delivered in South Australian government high schools through the SHINE SA Focus Schools Program. This program is 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 7 – 10).

**The following report summarises Focus School student survey data collected in 2023.** In 2023 there were 124 individual schools signed on to 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.

Most schools invite their students to complete a feedback survey online with a few completing them manually on paper. During the 2023 school year 4,436 students from 41 Focus Schools responded to the survey.

To further contextualise feedback and responses from students engaged with the SHINE SA CRSE curriculum, an additional demographic question was asked giving students the opportunity to indicate their First Nations identity.

As well as ensuring that SHINE SA CRSE curricula are aligned to national and state curricula, student voice and feedback are critical to ensure that the teaching and learning activities remain contemporary to the needs of young South Australians both now and into their adult lives.

Annual student snapshot reports such as this summarise the responses collected from South Australian secondary students at government schools participating in the SHINE SA Focus Schools Program and they highlight opportunities for improved CRSE education practice.



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SHINE SA Schools Education and Support Team members

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# The Focus Schools Program

SHINE SA's Focus Schools Program is a CRSE program for secondary schools. It is a primary prevention initiative that aims to build relationships skills, health literacy, e-safety and achieve long-term health and social outcomes.

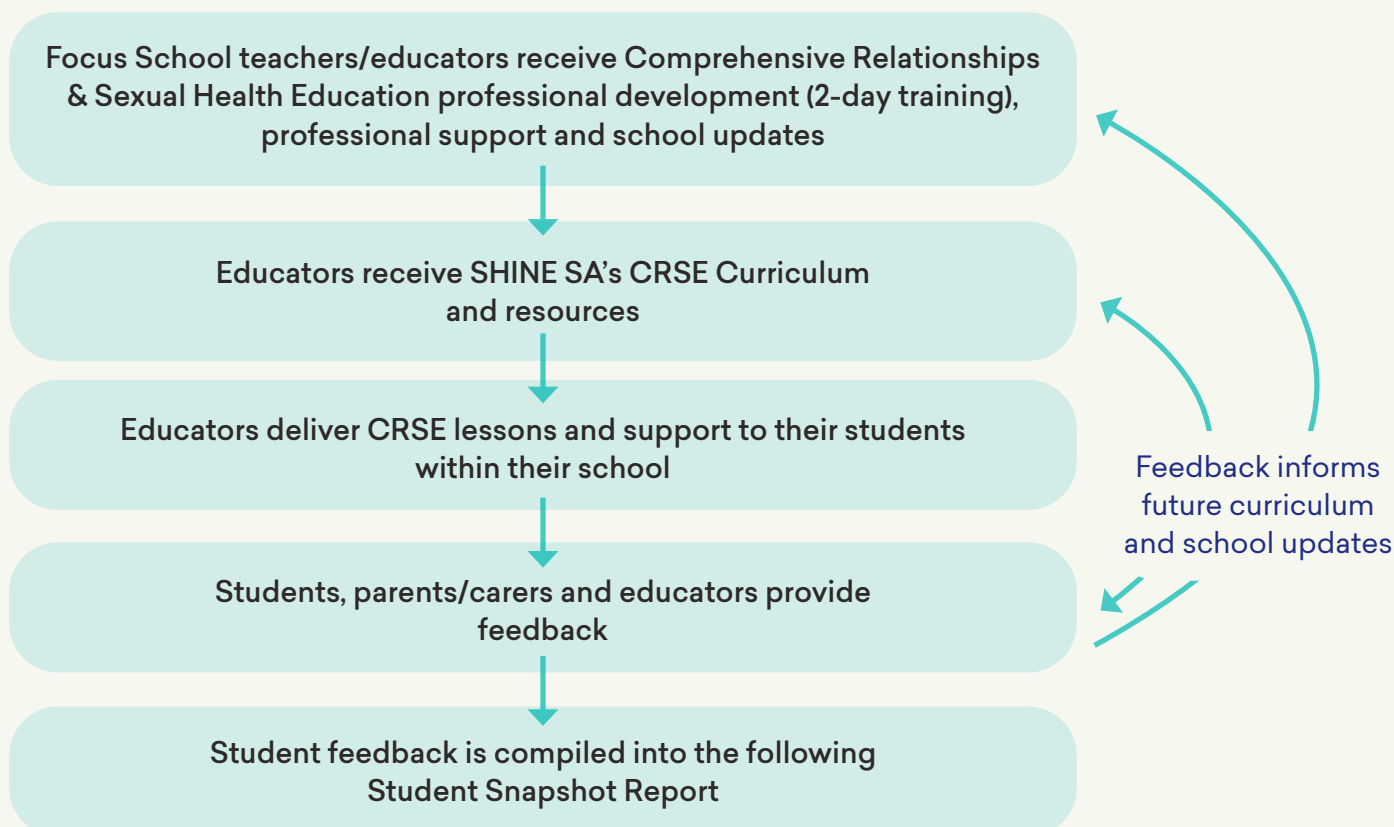
CRSE programs are effective in delivering a range of outcomes for young people including:

- unintended pregnancy prevention
- STI prevention
- dating and intimate partner violence prevention
- development of healthy relationships
- prevention of child sexual abuse
- an appreciation of sexual diversity
- improved social/emotional learning
- increased media and porn literacy.

The Focus Schools Program involves a commitment from Department for Education secondary schools to:

- support educators to attend SHINE SA's professional development/training
- empower their educators to deliver relationships and sexual health lessons across Years 7-10
- deliver the SHINE SA Relationships & Sexual Health Curriculum mapped to the Australian Curriculum
- provide ongoing feedback from students and staff
- communicate with parents/carers
- work towards a whole-school approach to relationships and sexual health education
- follow SHINE SA's Principles of Best Practice.

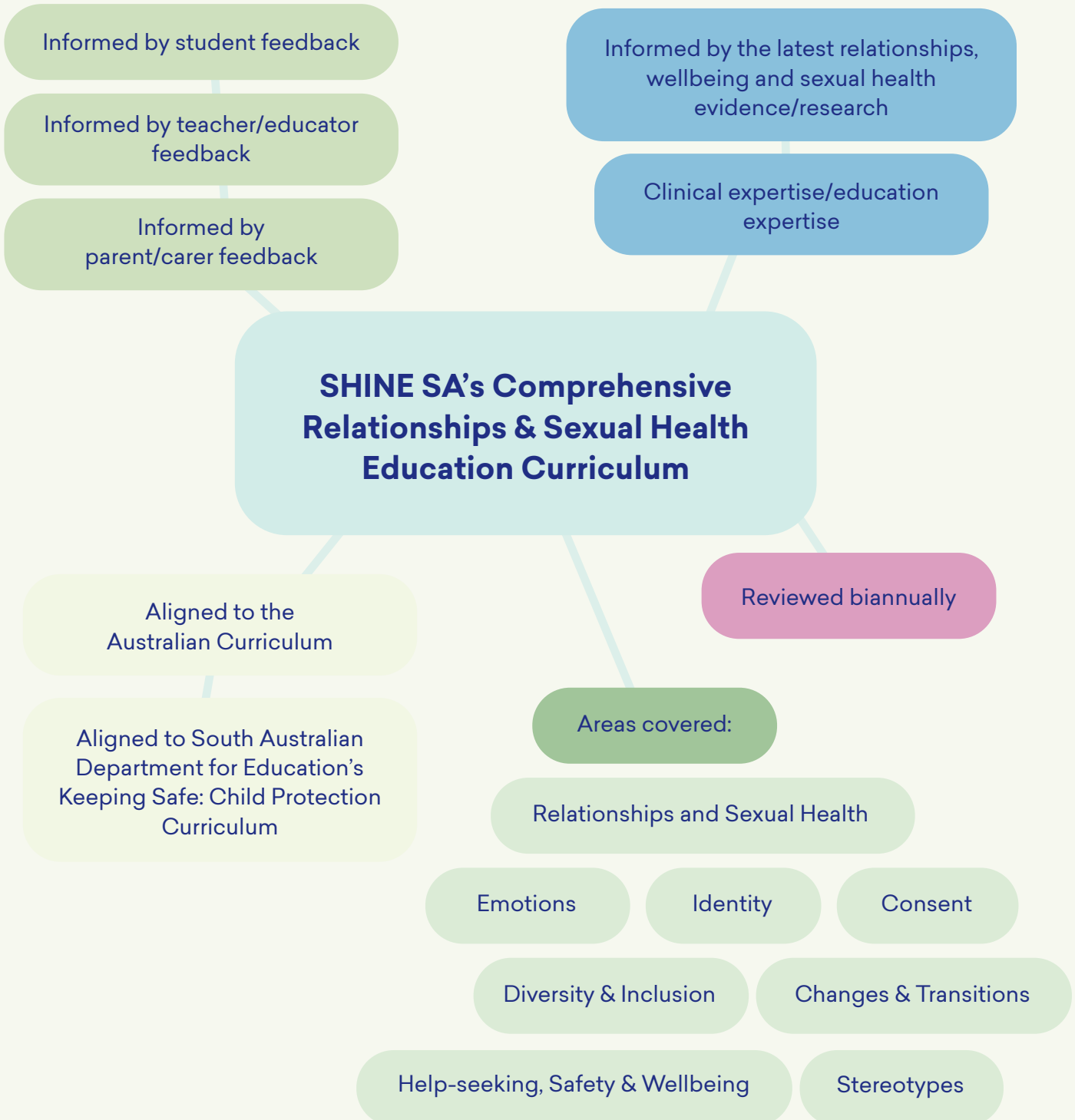
## CRSE Curriculum delivery and feedback



# Curriculum

SHINE SA's CRSE curriculum is available to all South Australian educators and school staff who complete our professional development. This equips staff with the confidence, knowledge and skills to deliver the curriculum.

## SHINE SA's CRSE Curriculum Overview



# Key findings

**4,436  
students**

from 41 Focus Schools  
submitted a survey

Most respondents were Year 8  
students (26% Year 7; 27%  
Year 8; 25% Year 9; 22% Year 10)

Only 5% of respondents  
attended 1–5 CRSE lessons,  
19% attended 6–10 lessons,  
**51% attended 11–15 lessons** and  
25% attended 16 or more lessons

**78%**

of students rated the  
safety and support of the  
class environment as  
Good or Excellent

**75%** of students rated  
the course overall  
as Good or  
Excellent

**92%**

of students believed the  
course will be useful to  
them now or in the future

**75%**

of students believed the  
course was often or always  
respectful and inclusive of  
LGBTIQA+ identities



## Key findings

**78%**

of students believed the course was often or always respectful and inclusive of different values and beliefs

**28%**

of students had spoken with their family about a CRSE lesson or topic since starting the program

Parent/carer was the most common choice (62%) for students as a source for seeking further information, followed by Friend (46%), Internet (38%), Health service (38%), Teacher (31%) and School counsellor (18%)

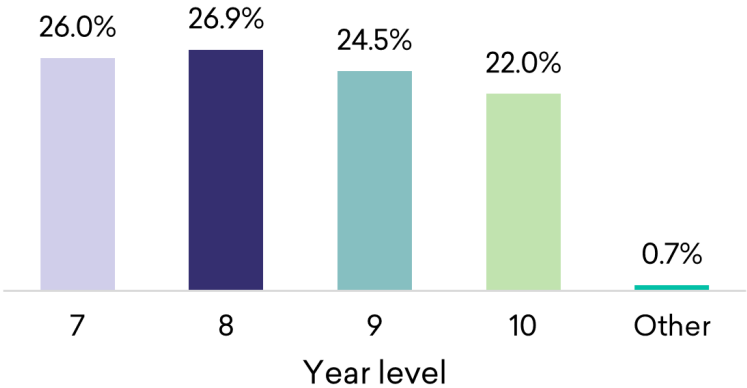
The 5 most useful topics indicated, in descending order, were: **Relationships (47%), Consent (42%), Safer sex (39%), STIs (37%) and Gender/Stereotypes (36%)**

**37%**

indicated that no change was needed to improve the course, 15% wanted more in-depth information, 15% better class behaviour and 10% more lessons

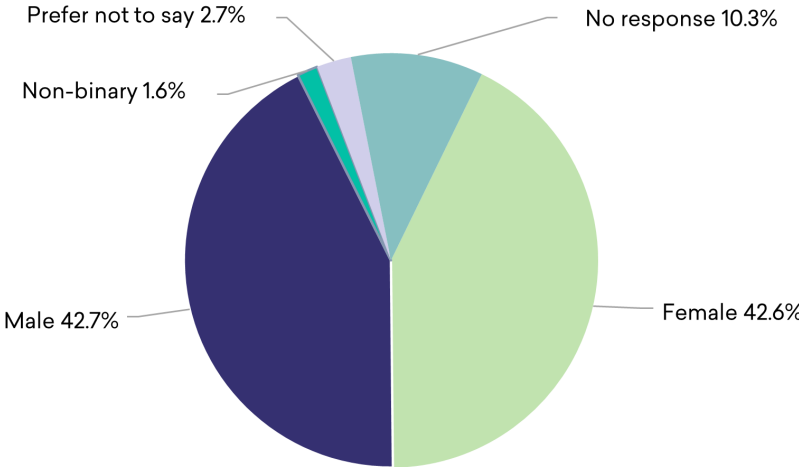
# Respondent demographics - Year level

Figure 1: Student respondents (n=4,436) by year level (2023)



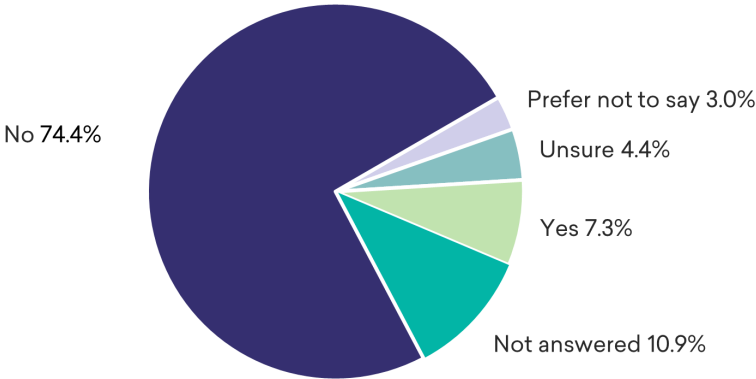
# - Gender Identity

Figure 2: Gender of respondents (2023)



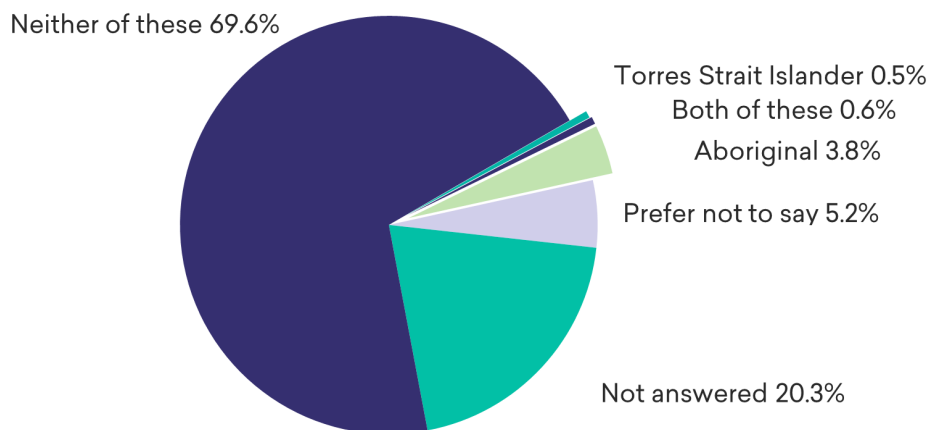
# - LGBTIQ+ identity

Figure 3: Respondents identify as LGBTIQ+ (2023)



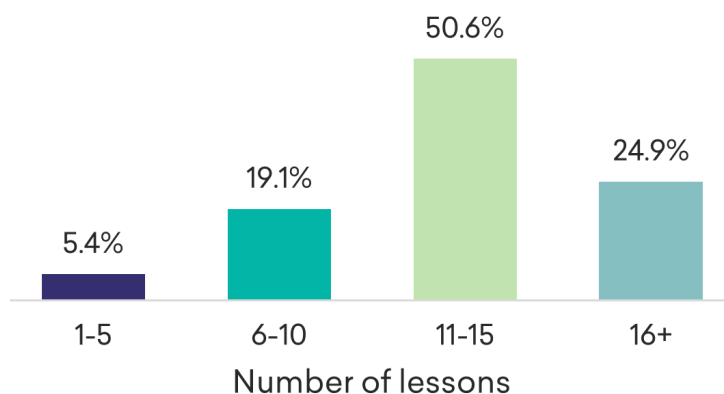
# - First Nations identity

Figure 4: Respondents identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (2023)



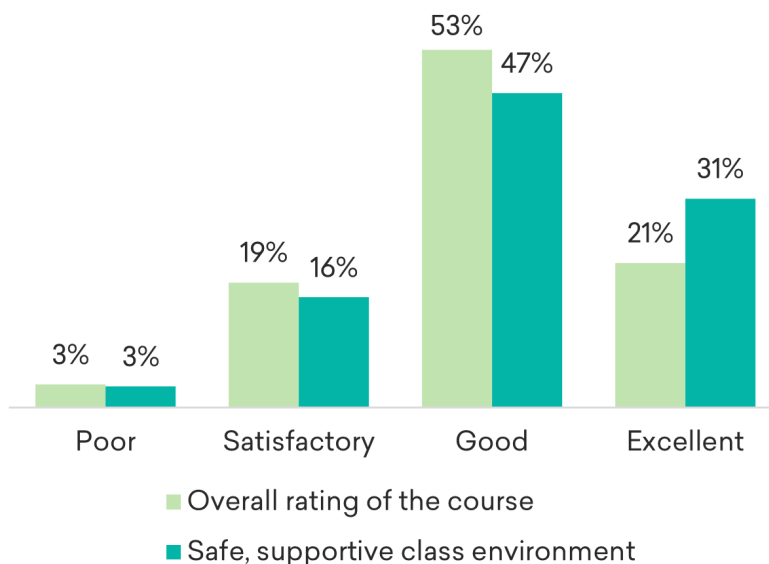
## Lessons offered

Figure 5: Number of CRSE lessons offered to respondents (2023)



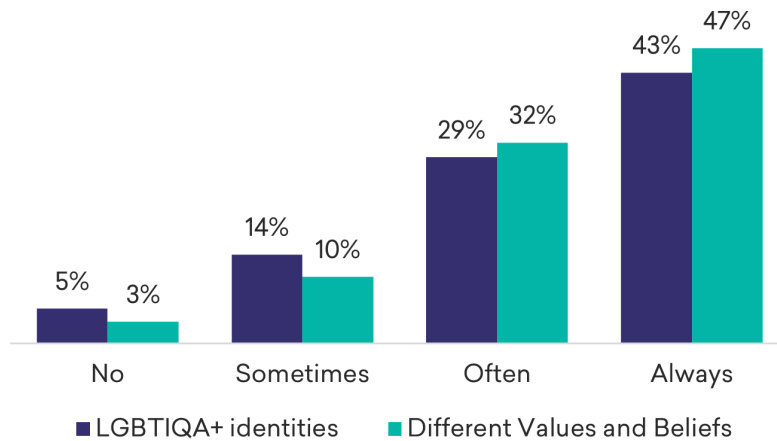
## Students' rating of the course

Figure 6: Students rating of the course and the class environment (2023)



# Respectful and inclusive

**Figure 7:** Student views on whether the course was respectful and inclusive of LGBTIQ+ identities and different values and beliefs (2023)



## Student feedback on whether the course was respectful and inclusive of LGBTIQ+ identities and different values and beliefs



**My teacher was inclusive of everyone and made sure we were always being inclusive and using correct terminology - Year 7 student**



All aspects were covered for both straight people and other sexualities and what differences they may face. - Year 8 student

The kids in the class weren't but the course was. - Year 9 student

With some of the scenarios they stuck to using they/them pronouns so that it could be anyone in the situation, not just a girl or boy. - Year 10 student

The teacher and students were always being respectful and listening. - Year 8 student

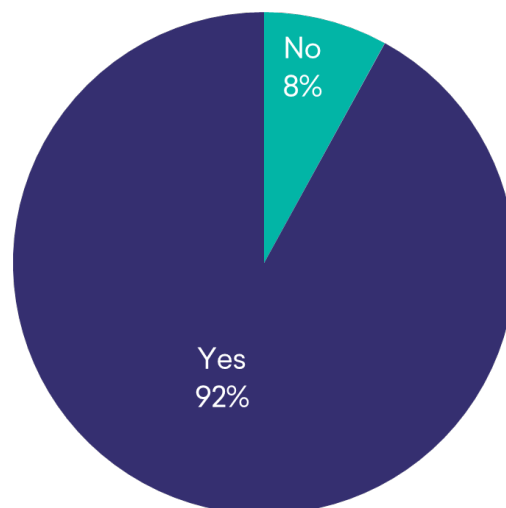
It was very respectful and I am proud to say, as a member, I felt very included :D - Year 10 student

They used the word partner most of the time not just boyfriend or girlfriend and talked about how protection can be used in LGBTQIA+ relationships. - Year 9 student

The course was friendly and displayed this topic well, only problems were with the students. - Year 10 student

# Course usefulness

**Figure 8:** Student views on whether the course will be useful to them now or in the future in terms of their relationships and sexual health (2023)



## Student feedback on course usefulness

### 'No' respondent comments

I knew this stuff. - Year 7 student

Because I do not care about it now. - Year 9 student

I am a Muslim boy, no dating or kiss before marriage. - Year 7 student

I don't feel as if the lessons are accurate or depict real-life scenarios, it feels fabricated and not as necessarily realistic. I didn't feel as if I could connect to the scenarios or imagine them happening. - Year 9 student

### 'Yes' respondent comments

I think being a 15 year old, people are starting to do these things anyway and so knowing how to be the most safe and healthy through this time is really important to know. - Year 9 student

I know lots of things I didn't know before that will surely help me out later in life. - Year 8 student

These are necessary processes in our lives. After such learning, it can help me understand myself better. Understanding this knowledge will be very helpful in the future. - Year 10 student

It's good to start teaching kids young so they can be responsible. - Year 9 student

Because it can benefit people in those situations who don't want to be embarrassed by asking. - Year 8 student

It will be helpful in ensuring we have enough knowledge on what's a healthy relationship and what is safe. - Year 8 student

It has taught me about consent and other valuable lessons about things that may have some kind of laws associated with them. - Year 8 student





## Student feedback on course usefulness

### *'Yes' respondent comments continued*

Now I know what's happening to my body. I also know better how to navigate puberty. - Year 8 student

Because I didn't do sex ed in primary school and didn't know anything. - Year 7 student

It helps me to communicate what I need and wish to do in the future. - Year 9 student

It will help in the future because I will be in a relationship and I would need to know about the relationships and sexual health and safe sex. - Year 9 Student

So when we reach puberty we are not as scared because we understand what is happening and how it happens to everyone. - Year 7 student

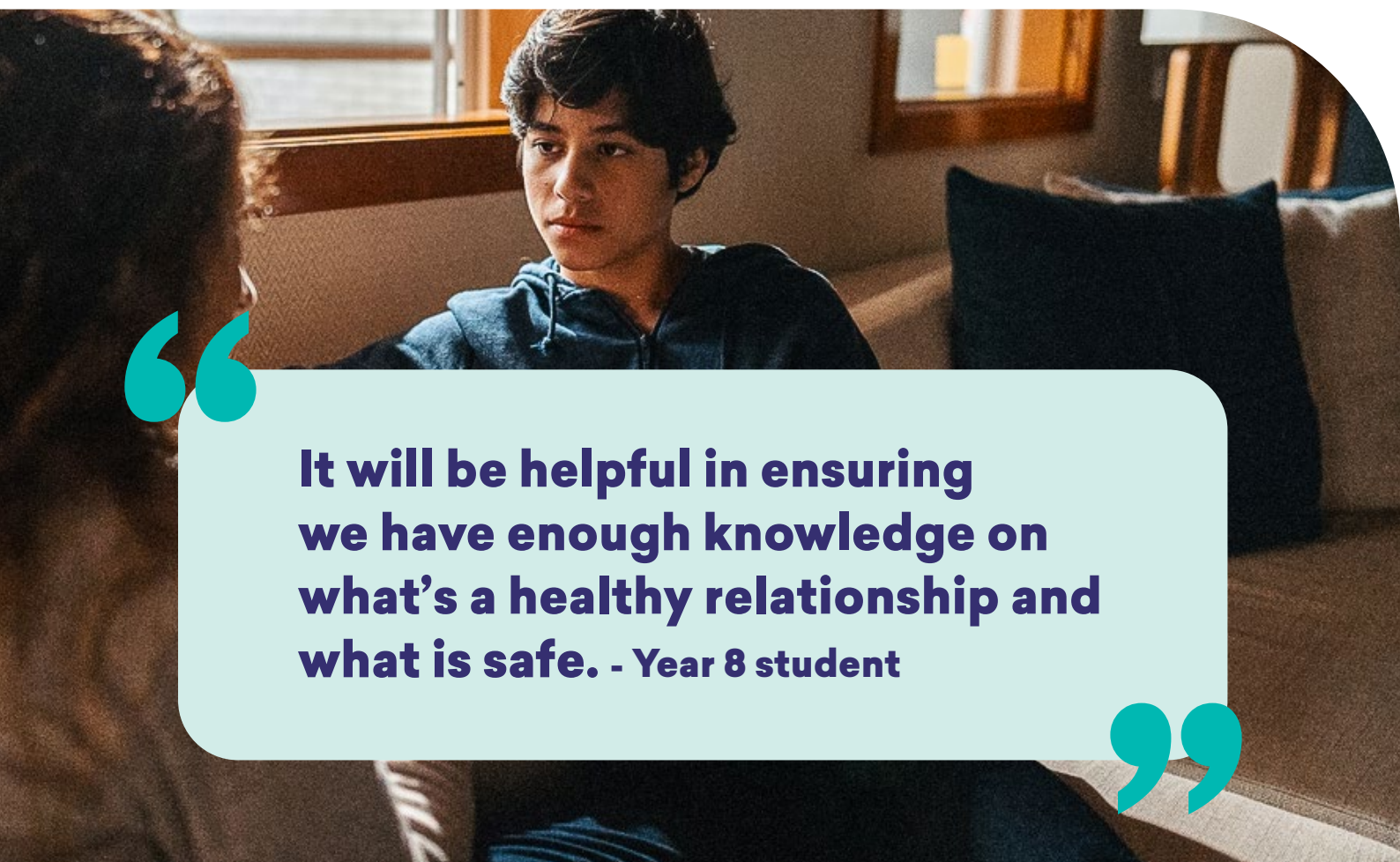
It helped with the idea of power in a relationship and how it has to be equal. - Year 10 student

I think while some of it did not apply to me (especially as a gay and trans person) it gave me information that I can use to help those around me and also make sure I just have a better understanding of contraception and stuff. - Year 10 student

It taught real life situations. - Year 9 Student

It gives us an insight on what we need to know when getting into a relationship, and for what to be aware of when we become sexually active. It was helpful to understand the risks, and the protection around sexual health and what is respectful and what isn't within relationships. - Year 9 student

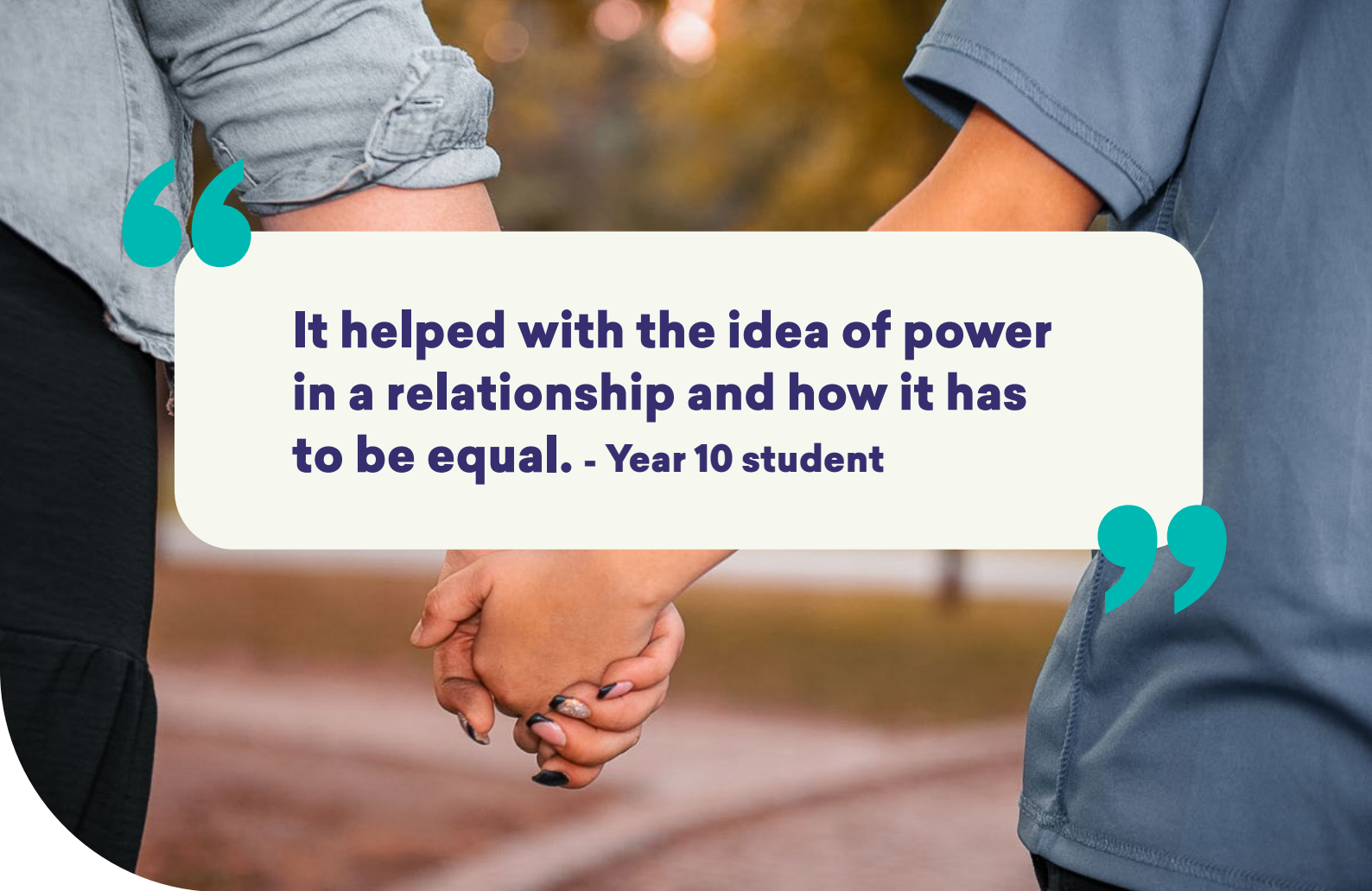
Because learning about contraception and consent is important - Year 9 student



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**It will be helpful in ensuring we have enough knowledge on what's a healthy relationship and what is safe. - Year 8 student**

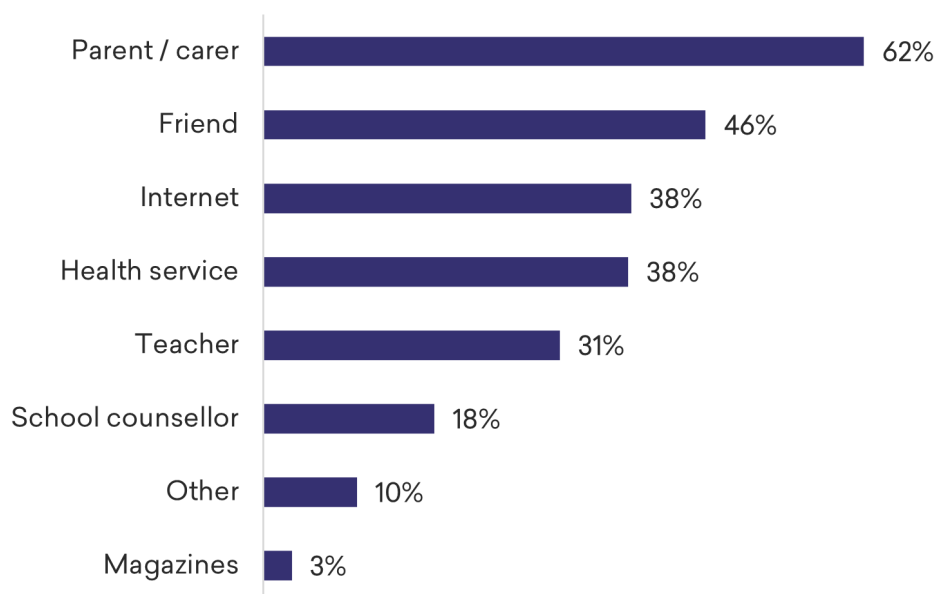
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**It helped with the idea of power in a relationship and how it has to be equal. - Year 10 student**

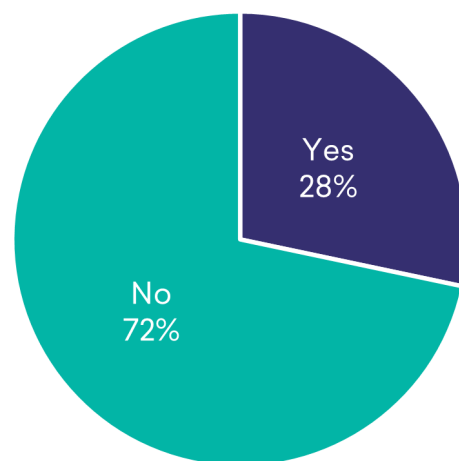
## Seeking out information

**Figure 9:** Student views on who/where they would go to find out more about relationships and sexual health (2023)



# Conversations with carers/family

**Figure 10:** Student views on whether they have talked with their carers/family about any of the topics in their CRSE course (2023)



## Student feedback on conversations with carers/family

### 'No' respondent comments

Because I'm Ethnic and cultural family. - Year 9 student

I kinda already knew most of what I needed to and my parents don't have time to talk to me about it. - Year 8 student

It's still a little bit confusing and embarrassing to talk about. - Year 7 student

Parents = embarrassing. - Year 8 student

I don't think so. My mother has had conversations with me over the years. But the class didn't inspire any more chats with my family. - Year 10 student

Because my mum works too much and my dad just no... - Year 7 student

I don't think they can handle that stuff, neither can I to be honest. - Year 7 student

### 'Yes' respondent comments

We can go to them for help. - Year 7 student

I will share with them what I learn in school every day. - Year 10 student

When you made me give them that survey. - Year 8 student

I talked about sti's and how to use condom. - Year 8 student

I have asked my dad questions that weren't explained during the lessons. - Year 8 student

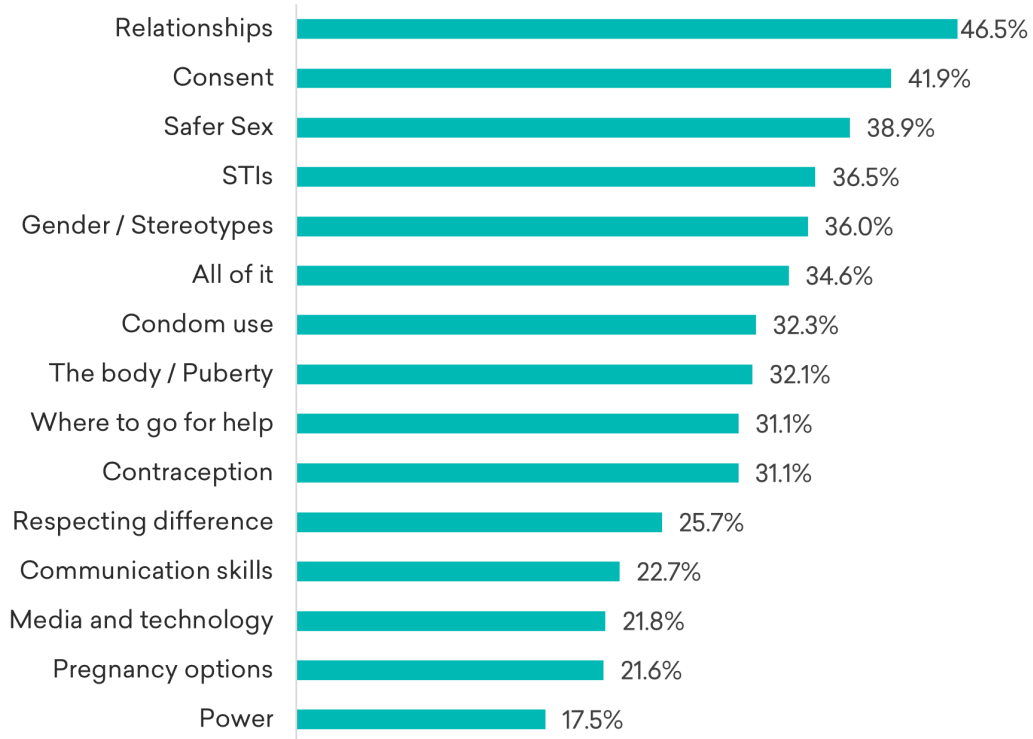
They ask me what I've learned and make sure I remember. - Year 9 student

I asked my mum about how the uterus works. - Year 8 student

**I had talked with my parents long before these lessons, though [I] shared what we have been learning to learn more at home.**  
- Year 7 student

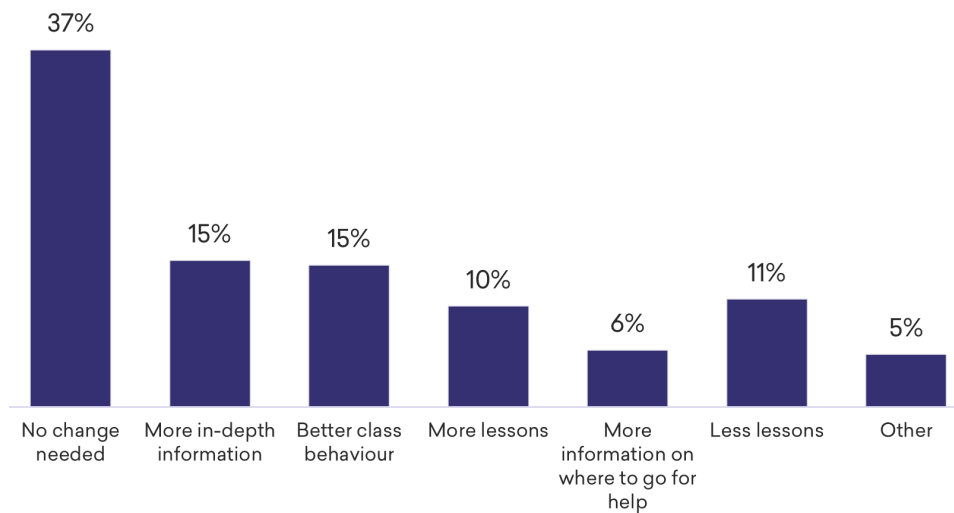
# Most useful topics

Figure 11: Student views on what were the most useful topics (2023)



# Changes to improve the course

Figure 12: Student suggestions for improvements (2023)





## Student feedback on changes to improve the course

More about Periods and LGBTQIA Specific issues. - Year 9 student

Explain in further detail. - Year 8 student

...Basic things are super important to know as a growing teenager, as this info can't be missed out on later in life. Some people haven't done shine or learnt thus stuff in younger years that others may of. That should be considered. - Year 10 student


More active/hands on activities. - Year 8 student

The boys can be really immature and make the girls feel quite uncomfortable most of the time. - Year 7 student

Really explain the science behind things like puberty and "pleasure". - Year 9 student

Setting more rules/boundaries for the class and taking action with bad behaviours. - Year 7 student

Go into more depth about relationships and how to maintain them and have a happy long relationship. - Year 7 student

A photograph of two young women from behind, embracing each other. The woman on the right has long black hair and is wearing a light blue backpack. The woman on the left has long brown hair and is wearing a light-colored jacket. They are standing outdoors with a railing in front of them and a blurred background of buildings and foliage.

**Pretty good program for those who may have not have access to this info at home.**

**- Year 9 student**



# Discussion

**Throughout the 2023 school year, Focus School educators encouraged their students to give their voice to comprehensive relationships and sexual health education (CRSE) by sharing feedback of their experiences. A total of 4,436 responses were received from students at 41 Focus Schools throughout the year (Figures 13 and 14).**

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

- The level of relationship the assigned SHINE SA Schools Coordinator has developed with a Focus School Key Contact
- Staffing changes in SHINE SA Schools Education and Support (SES) Team
- Staffing changes (particularly a change to the Key Contact) at Focus Schools
- Day to day challenges in schools – e.g. timetabling changes, last minute changes to lessons and the overcrowded curriculum

- Agency of students deciding to participate in the survey
- Incomplete and/or informal survey responses – especially additional comments
- Staff teaching SHINE SA’s CRSE program appreciation of the value of information they may gain from students’ responses to the survey.

Despite these challenges, the program and it’s delivery continue to receive positive feedback from both students and educators.

As a long-standing set of survey questions, we often assess whether we need to improve questions or add additional demographic data. For example, in recent years gender and sexuality demographic data has been introduced. The most recent iteration of the survey asked students about their First Nations identity. They were asked “Do you identify ...?” and given the option to select one of the following responses: Aboriginal; Torres Strait Islander; Both of these; Prefer not to say; Neither of these.

# Discussion continued

Figure 13: SHINE SA Student Survey Respondents (2023)

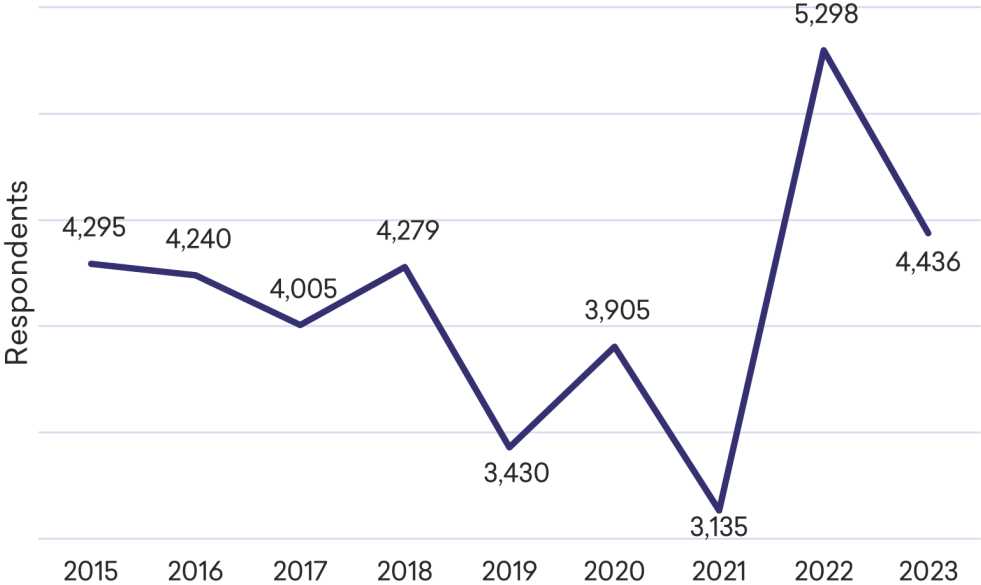
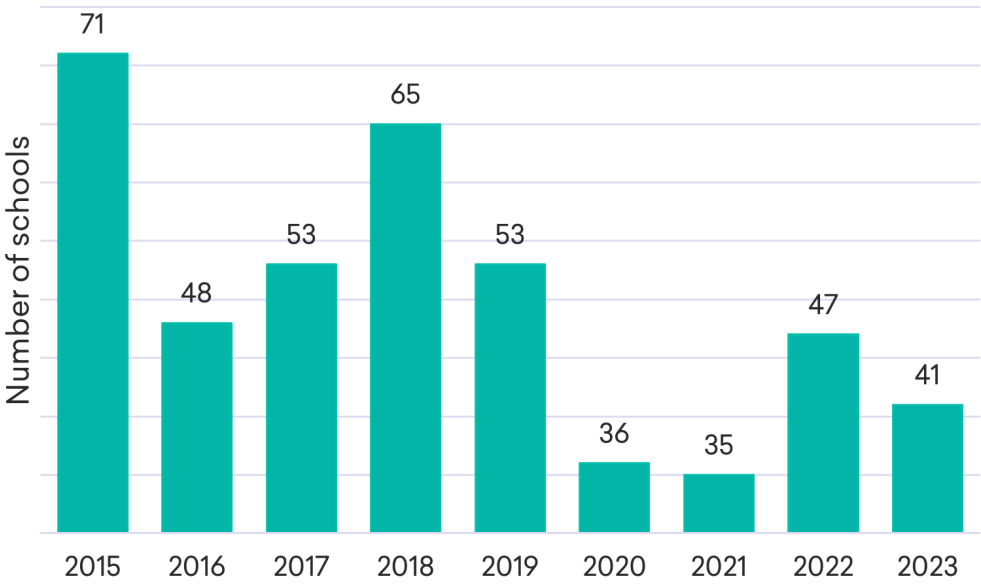


Figure 14: SHINE SA Focus Schools represented in responses (2023)



## Discussion continued

Of the total respondents, 4.9% identified as either Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, or both of these, with 5.2% choosing 'Prefer not to say' (Figure 4).

For every Focus School that submits student survey responses (more than 10) SHINE SA provides an annual school report summarising the site-specific results and a sampling of student comments. During each school's Annual Curriculum update session this report is discussed and unpacked with school staff.

School staff often comment on the valuable information provided in the report including the greater insights they gain from the voice of their students reflected in their feedback. Many educators take on board the suggestions made regarding how the curriculum is taught, including ideas voiced for improvements to the program at their school.

Biennial reviews and adjustments are made to the secondary (Years 7 – 10) CRSE curricula. In addition to feedback provided by students, explicit feedback is also sought from South Australian school-based educators to ensure that their experience and suggestions are included in the reviewed editions of curricula.

It is noteworthy that more than 75% of students responded that they had engaged with more than 11 CRSE lessons in 2023. 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.

SHINE SA takes seriously our responsibility to ensure that educators facilitating CRSE education have the confidence, skills, and capacity to do so in ways that are inclusive and sensitive to the wellbeing of all students at their school. It is encouraging to note the positive response of most students. Most students reported that their classroom environment was safe and supportive (78%); inclusive of diversity (75%); with 75% rating the overall course as good or excellent. This information is also provided in the individual reports provided to each site to enable leadership to understand the learning experiences occurring for their students.

As in previous years, most students (72%) had not discussed CRSE topics at home. Many comment that this is not something they feel comfortable to do or that there is no necessity for them to do so as they are satisfied with what they are learning in their school lessons. Parents/carers continue to rate as the highest (62%) source of further reliable source for relationships and sexual health information.

## Discussion continued

An overwhelming majority (92%) of students endorsed the relevance and usefulness of the CRSE curriculum they received, for their current experience or in the future. More than one third of respondents (37%) indicated that they would not make any changes to course content. Students consistently provide feedback stating that they would like more in-depth information and more CRSE lessons.

Comments regarding classroom behaviour and the gender make-up of their class provides interesting information for individual sites and educators to consider.

Historically, less than half of students indicated in their feedback that their lessons were always respectful of sexual diversity. In response to this feedback, SHINE SA produced the How to Start a Rainbow Group Schools Guide in 2021. This publication has since been distributed to Focus Schools and is available to download at no cost from the SHINE SA online shop. We are pleased to see that in 2023 75% of students indicated that the course is always respectful and inclusive of LGBTIQ+ identities.

SHINE SA have also developed a Menstrual Kit teaching resource in 2023.

This project was possible after receiving:

- Donated funds from Pulteney Grammar School senior students Colour Run fundraising activity.
- A Period Poverty grant from the Commissioner for Children and Young People, South Australia.

The kit includes a range of menstrual products, educator guide, information, A Quick Guide to the Menstrual Cycle and Periods booklets, and activities to facilitate engaging and interactive education on menstruation, endometriosis, and polycystic ovary syndrome. Grant funds also enabled 25 Menstrual Kits to be distributed to South Australian schools at no cost to support menstruation education at their site.

Overall, the responses from the 2023 student surveys were positive and indicated that the SHINE SA Years 7–10 CRSE curriculum was facilitated by teachers in Focus Schools in safe and inclusive ways that continue to meet the needs of most students in South Australia.

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**I think being a 15 year old, people are starting to do these things anyway and so knowing how to be the most safe and healthy through this time is really important to know.**

**- Year 9 student**

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