

# REDEFINING SEX EDUCATION

## ADDRESSING THE WANTS AND NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA

Sex education in Australia is not clearly defined and lessons are inconsistent. While most students report receiving sex education at school, many find it irrelevant.

### RESULTS



We conducted an Australian-wide online anonymous survey with 3,551 students aged 14-18 (Years 9-12) attending Government, Catholic and independent schools.

The objective: To explore student experiences and perceptions of sex education and relevance.



44%

found it relevant or highly relevant to their needs

38%

viewed it as 'not very' relevant or were unsure of its relevance

10%

perceived sex ed as irrelevant to their lives

### 1. ASK WHAT THEY WANT TO LEARN

59%

When young people are given a choice of topics

41%

When not asked

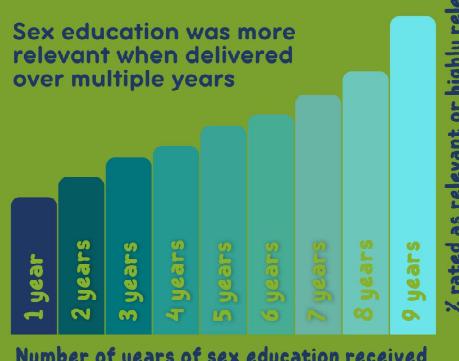
Relevance

Young people were 1.83 times more likely to find sex education relevant when given a choice about what they wanted to learn.

TWO SIMPLE STEPS TO INCREASE THE RELEVANCE OF SEX EDUCATION IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES

### 2. AND REPEAT... EACH YEAR AT SCHOOL

Sex education was more relevant when delivered over multiple years



What young people wanted to learn wasn't always what they were taught

#### YOUNG PEOPLE'S TOP 5 CHOICES

How to have sex - 39%  
About STIs/HIV - 27%  
Respectful relationships - 22%  
Contraception - 21%  
Puberty and reproduction - 20%

#### MOST TAUGHT TOPICS

Puberty and reproduction - 91%  
Sexual consent - 82%  
Condoms - 76%  
Contraception - 68%  
About STIs/HIV - 65%

### CONCLUSION

Attendance at sex education is high, however young people continue to find their classes lacking in relevance. Asking young people what topics they wanted to discuss in sex education classes and including these in the school curriculum may improve students' perceived relevance of sex education.