

## **SHAPE-ing Peer Conversations about Sexual Health**

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### **Background:**

The Play Safe Programs Sexual Health and Peer Education (SHAPE) program developed a best practice toolkit (BPTK) for organisations providing services to young people, such as universities, to utilise and implement sustainable sexual health peer education programs. The BPTK consists of four documents: peer education factsheet, self-assessment checklist, training guidelines and training manual.

The BPTK was developed following a review of literature to identify the effectiveness of sexual health peer education programs to target safe sex practices, behaviour change, testing, and treatment among young people. Focus groups were conducted to inform the development of the BPTK, followed by an effective pilot in three NSW youth services.

### **Method:**

A targeted scale-up within tertiary education settings has commenced as tertiary education settings have been highlighted as priority settings within the NSW STI Strategy for sexual health interventions.

The SHAPE program has been scaled up across three NSW Local Health Districts in seven tertiary education settings. This has involved the delivery of peer education training sessions to university leaders or students directly and development of tailored content based on the BPTK. Evaluation forms, part of the BPTK, are completed by participants to assess effectiveness.

### **Results**

115 peers have engaged in training to date. Initial findings show that peers were better equipped to challenge sexual health misinformation and sex-negative attitudes post training. Peers gained a practical understanding of sexual health messaging and increased their confidence to initiate and facilitate conversations [it] “Gives me a lot of sexual health knowledge that I've never known before...”.

### **Conclusion:**

The implementation of the SHAPE program is an effective sexual health education intervention within tertiary education settings. The program will continue to be scaled up across NSW with evaluation data presented at the conference.

### **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

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