



## ***Let's Talk: Young wom\*n's views on sex education***

### **Focus Group Toolkit**

#### **Background**

The survey *Let's Talk 2019: Young Wom\*n's Views on Sex Education* is part of a project by the Equality Rights Alliance's (ERA) Young Women's Advisory Group (YWAG), to ask young women what they think about sex education in Australia.

In 2015, YWAG surveyed over 1000 young women aged 16-21 nationally about their experiences of sexuality and relationships education at school, including their knowledge of contraception and sexual health topics. We have attached our *Let's Talk 2015: Young Women's Views on Sex Education* report which details our findings. In late 2016 YWAG launched the *A Whole Generation Out of Date* report which captures the findings of three focus groups from the *Let's Talk 2015: Young Women's Views on Sex Education* project.

In 2019, YWAG is updating the 2015 survey. *Let's Talk 2019* will survey young women, and non-binary young people, aged 16-21, on their experiences of sex education, and sexting, in Australia. As part of this, young women, including those who identify as women, cis\* women, trans women, non-binary and trans-femme identifying young people aged 18-21, and those working with young women and non-binary young people, have the opportunity to host events and group discussions on the topic.

\*Cisgender is when a person's gender identity and expression matches the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, if a person identifies as a woman and was assigned female at birth. trans women and non-binary young people

**Important:** Across all Australian states and territories, it's illegal to take or send nude or sexual images of a person under 18 under child pornography laws (even if it's yourself or if the person consents to have the images taken). This means when young people who take and share nude or sexy images, or 'sexts', it can be considered illegal activity. **For this reason, we have limited focus groups to people aged 18 and over, and it's important to inform everyone who participates about these laws before asking questions about sexting. They can choose not to answer if they don't want to.** For more information, see Youth Law Australia: <https://yla.org.au/act/topics/internet-phones-and-technology/photos-and-videos-on-your-phone/>. The survey is open to young women and non-binary young people aged 16-21.

## **Purpose:**

How often do young women and non-binary young people get to have their say on the things that matter to them? How many opportunities do young people get to have their views heard by politicians?

By hosting a focus group with friends you will be providing an opportunity for young women and non-binary young people aged 18-21 to have their say and find out:

- what young women and non-binary young people have learned in sex education at school
- if sex education has helped young women and non-binary young people understand and deal with sex and relationships
- about young women and non-binary young peoples' experiences of sending and receiving nudes, sexy texts, or sexually-explicit messages
- what young women and non-binary young people would like to see taught to young people.

Focus group discussions for groups

Your discussions will be included in a report, which will be sent to politicians, teachers, health professionals, and others to help make sex education in Australia better.

Join the discussion online at <http://www.facebook.com/LetsTalkSurvey>

## **Consent**

It is important that all participants in your focus group understand the purpose of the discussion and what any comments that they make will be used for. You must provide your participant with an information sheet they can take away. Please see Appendix C for this.

You could start with a statement like this:

*This focus group is being conducted as part of Equality Rights Alliance's Young Women's Advisory Group (YWAG) project, which aims to bring young women's voices to the national conversation about sex, sexuality, sexting, and respectful relationships education.*

*We will be taking notes and photos at today's focus group, which will be sent to YWAG to be included in their report. All comments that you make will be anonymous – we will only note your age when making notes. If you don't feel comfortable with your comments being recorded or your photo being taken, please let us know.*

*When we are talking about sending nudes, sexy texts or sexual images, videos and texts, remember that it is an offence to share a sexually-explicit image or video of someone without their consent. If the person in an image or video is under 16 years of age, there are child pornography laws which make it illegal for anyone who to take*

*or share the photograph or video, even if they are the person in it. There are mandatory reporting obligations, or a legal requirement to report to police if a person suspects child pornography or abuse. Please keep this in mind when sharing your stories and experiences.*

*This is a safe space. I ask that you respect everyone participating in this session today. We will not tolerate comments that are sexist, racist or homophobic, or otherwise offensive. We are here to listen to each other and share experiences.*

*Today we will be discussing a wide range of issues. Feel free to leave at any time if you need a break from the discussion. If you would like to talk further about any of the issues raised today, we recommend you contact the Kids Helpline, 1800Respect or the eSafety Commission. The details are available on your information sheet, or you can ask any of the organisers for their details, or for the details of local services that may be able to support you.*

## **How to organise your event**

What you will need for your event:

- A venue: Consider venues that you can access for free including classrooms, university queer and women's rooms, and community halls. Also consider whether the venue is accessible for women with disabilities and those using public transport
- A facilitator: Decide who will act as a facilitator at your event, to direct the discussion on the day. YWAG hopes that focus groups will be run by young women and non-binary young people, however if there is someone else that you would like to invite that is fine.
- A scribe: Decide who will take notes during the discussion. This should be someone different to the facilitator.
- A photographer: You may wish to take photos at your event to send to YWAG. This isn't compulsory.
- Refreshments: Providing food and drinks (such as morning or afternoon tea) can be an incentive for people to attend the event, and assist attendees to feel comfortable at the event.
- Copies of documents;
  - Let's Talk Focus Groups FAQ
  - Sign in sheet

Toolkit resources which will assist you to advertise your event:

- Digital customisable 'Let's Talk' focus group
- Digital facebook cover photo

You may like to create a facebook event to advertise your focus group. Other suggestions for promoting your event include: posters on community or school noticeboards, asking community groups to include your event in their newsletters and social media, and speaking to leaders and groups who may be able to recruit young women and non-binary young people to attend your event.

### **What should you talk about?**

We want to know what young women and non-binary young people think about the sex education that they got at school, and what else they would like to see included in sex education.

Here are some questions to start conversation (see Appendix B - Report template for a simple guide to use at your focus group):

- Did you receive sex education at school?
- When did you first receive sex education?
- What type of school did you go to?
- What things did the sex education include?
- What was your experience of sex education at school? How did it make you feel?
- After participating in sex education at school, do you feel adequately informed to manage your sexual health?
- After participating in sex education at school, do you feel adequately informed to manage dating and/or your sexual relationships?
- Is there anything missing from sex education in schools?
- Other than school where else do you get information about sex and relationships?
- Do you discuss sex, sexual health and relationships with your family?
- Do you discuss sex, sexual health and relationships with your friends?
- What do you think about sending and receiving sexual or nude photos, videos or texts?

### **How to report back on your conversation**

Please bring the following documents to your focus group, then return Appendix A and B to:

Equality Rights Alliance Young Women's Advisory Group

Email: [era.admin@ywca.org.au](mailto:era.admin@ywca.org.au)

Post: GPO Box 2082 Canberra ACT 2601

See:

Appendix A – Sign in sheet

Appendix B – Report template

Appendix C – Participant Information Sheet (Please note this document is double-sided, and does not need to be returned to YWAG)

### **Thank you!**

Thank you for

If you have any questions, you can contact us at: [era.admin@ywca.org.au](mailto:era.admin@ywca.org.au)

We encourage you to share the survey online with your friends and networks, and like the Let's Talk Facebook page for updates on the project.



## **Appendix B: Report Template**

Use the Report Template to share what came out of the discussion and return to YWAG. This can also be used as a guide to direct the conversation, and be used to take notes at the event.

Date:

City, State/Territory:

# of participants:

### **Sex education at school**

Did the young women and non-binary young people in your group receive sex education at school? If so, when did they first receive sex education? What types of schools did they go to?

What things did the sex education include:

Where else do young women and non-binary young people get information about sex and relationships:

### **Experiences of sex education**

What were their experiences of sex education at school? How did it make them feel?

### **Outcomes of receiving sex education**

After participating in sex education at school, did the young women and non-binary young people in your group feel adequately informed to manage their sexual health? To manage their sexual relationships? What discussions came up:

### **Improving sex education**

Is there anything missing from sex education in schools? What do young women want to see taught to young people?

**Nudes, sexy texts or sexual images, videos and messages**

What are young women and non-binary young peoples' experiences of sending and receiving nudes, sexy texts, or sexual images, videos and messages. What do they think of it?



## **Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet**

This focus group is being conducted as part of Equality Rights Alliance's Young Women's Advisory Group (YWAG) project, which aims to bring young women's voices to the national conversation about sex, sexuality, sexting, and respectful relationships education.

YWAG is serious about your safety and anonymity. The facilitator will be taking notes and photos at today's focus group, which will be sent to YWAG to be included in their report. All comments that you make will be anonymous and your name, address or contact details won't be recorded. This means that it won't be possible for YWAG to identify you from the information you provide, and the facilitator will only note your age when making notes. If you don't want your comments to be recorded or your photo taken, please let the facilitator know.

When talking about sending nudes, sexy texts or sexual images, videos and texts, remember that it is an offence to share a sexually-explicit image or video of someone without their consent. If the person in an image or video is under 16 years of age, there are child pornography laws which make it illegal for anyone who to take or share the photograph or video, even if they are the person in it. There are mandatory reporting obligations, or a legal requirement to report to police if a person suspects child pornography or abuse. Please keep this in mind when sharing your stories and experiences.

We ask that you respect everyone participating in this session today. Comments that are sexist, racist or homophobic, or otherwise offensive will not be tolerated. The purpose of the focus group is to listen to each other and share experiences.

The focus group will discuss a wide range of issues. Feel free to leave at any time if you need a break from the discussion. If you would like to talk further about any of the issues raised today, we recommend you contact one of the Australia-wide services listed on the back of this sheet. You can also ask any of the organisers to find out about the details of local services that may be able to support you.

To find out about results from the Focus Groups, follow YWAG ERA on Facebook, or check <http://www.equalityrightsalliance.org.au/projects/young-womens-advisory-group-ywag/>

For more information, you can contact the ERA Project Coordinator at [era.projects@ywca.org.au](mailto:era.projects@ywca.org.au) or on 0435 919 077.

## Support Services

If you're feeling upset or distressed about anything in the survey, and if there is that you want to talk to someone about, it's important that you access support. We suggest contacting:

**Kids helpline:** A free, private and confidential telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25.

1800 55 1800 or copy and paste <https://kidshelpline.com.au/young-adults>

**1800Respect:** A national counselling helpline, information and support 24/7 for people experiencing sexual assault or domestic and family violence.

1800 737 732 or copy and paste <https://1800respect.org.au>

**eSafety Commission Image-Based Abuse Portal:** A national portal to help with removing intimate or nude images from online platforms, and for taking action against someone who shared your images without consent.

Copy and paste <https://www.esafety.gov.au/image-based-abuse/action/remove-images-video/report-to-us>

If you'd like some more information and sex and relationships, the organisations and webpages below might be of use:

**Bits and bods:** General sex ed  
<https://www.bitsandbods.com>

**True Contraceptive Choice:** Evidence-based information of different contraceptive choices  
<https://truechoicecontraceptivechoice.com.au/>

or contact your local family planning or sexual health service!

**Know4Sure:** Information of pregnancy testing and options  
<https://www.know4sure.org.au/>

**Minus 18:** Support for people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary, intersex, queer, asexual and pansexual  
<https://www.minus18.org.au/>

**OMGYes:** Information on pleasure for people with vulvas and clitorises  
<https://www.omgyes.com/en/>

**Youth Law Australia:** Legal information for Australian young people under 25, including about sex  
<https://yla.org.au/>