

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONSENT

Through the lens of Rainbow identifying youth



A collaboration between
Waikato Queer Youth and
Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura
- Outing Violence

“Education must tell us that there is no space where rainbow people/relationships don't belong.”

Focus group participant Nov 2020

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ABOUT THE PROJECT TEAM

This project is a collaboration between Waikato Queer Youth (WaQuY) and Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura – Outing Violence (HTRK-OV).

Waikato Queer Youth is a community-led charitable organisation established in 2005 that provides advocacy, education, referrals and social support for queer, gender, sex and sexually diverse people in the Waikato. We also deliver training and education to professionals, services and volunteers who work with young people. Our passion is to advocate for our young people and communities to create positive social and legislative change, including working alongside Waikato-wide services, community organisations, local/central government and collaborations. Our work is made possible because of our dedicated Board of Trustees, employees, interns and volunteers.

Nathan Bramwell is a Transgender Pākehā man who grew up in an equally religious and liberally queer family. He attributes his upbringing to his Grandmother who was a staunch lesbian and educator for his strong moral compass and respect of diversity, visibility and autonomy. He cares deeply about empowering the wellbeing of local communities especially Rainbow populations and children through Early Childhood Education and is often in the background in some sort of advisory group, collaboration or project such as Counting Ourselves NZ and Be There.

Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura – Outing Violence is a voluntary project dedicated to ending partner and sexual violence in Rainbow communities. Sandra Dickson and Bex Fraser provide training and strategic support for mainstream violence prevention organisations and undertake community research to highlight the needs of Rainbow communities.

Sandra is a Pākehā bisexual cis woman with 30 years' experience working in Rainbow communities and family and sexual violence prevention at local, national and international levels. This includes developing the Mates & Dates healthy relationships programme; the Rainbow Ready Framework for Ara Taiohi and the support framework for Rainbow youth volunteers at OuterSpaces. She has also contributed to research collaborations such as New Zealand's first Gender Attitudes Survey and the experiences of rape complainants in New Zealand courts.

Bex is a non-binary trans person, Pākehā and bisexual. They have worked as a facilitator, manager and volunteer in community organisations for 18 years, with a focus on social justice for marginalised groups. This has included working with former refugee and migrant populations, single parents and queer groups. Their recent work includes the development and co-ordination of the Shama national response for sexual harm for ethnic communities, and the development of intercultural practice and facilitation for New Zealand Red Cross.

WaQuY and HTRK-OV would like to thank all the young people who participated in this research and told us what they wanted and needed from healthy relationships and consent education. Our mahi was empowered by WaQuY youth mentors and admin team behind the scenes.

We recognize the importance for Rainbow communities of accurate, safe and joyful resources, programmes and tools to enhance and support our relationships and identities. We also note we are three Pākehā researchers. While Rainbow young people with a variety of cultural belongings participated in this research, we believe that more specific cultural recommendations are best made by Māori, Pacifica and other ethnic researchers and community groups.

INTRODUCTION

In 2020 the Ministry for Women set up a one-off COVID-19 response fund. Community organisations were encouraged to apply for funding to support government priorities of healthy and safe communities, reducing family and sexual violence, and improving child wellbeing.

For many years, community consultation inside the Waikato has highlighted that young people in Rainbow communities wanted support from Waikato Queer Youth (WaQuY) around healthy relationships. WaQuY was successful in applying for funding and approached Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura – Outing Violence (HTRK – OV) to co-develop a project designed to support healthy relationships for young people in Rainbow communities. [1]

Aotearoa New Zealand has inconsistent and patchy coverage of sexuality education, including healthy relationships and consent. [2] Essentially, the needs of students are often not being met. Sexual violence and pornography are the two least often covered topics and sex, sexuality and gender diverse students are among student groups particularly likely to miss out on appropriate sexuality education. In one recent study of experience of sexuality education, 45% of tertiary students reported a lack of inclusion of sexuality diverse identities, and 70% a lack of inclusion of gender diverse identities. [3]



[1] "Rainbow communities" is used in this document as shorthand for those belonging to sex, sexuality and gender diverse communities. We recognize that no one umbrella term in Aotearoa New Zealand is loved by everyone inside our communities, and honour all the many ways our communities describe ourselves.

[2] Education Review Office, (2017), Promoting wellbeing through sexuality education.

[3] Thursdays in Black, (2017), "In Our Own Words" - Student experiences of sexual violence prior to and during tertiary education.

It is now widely acknowledged that Rainbow communities experience significant rates of partner and sexual violence in Aotearoa New Zealand. [4] Government research suggests lesbian, gay and bisexual people are more than twice as likely to experience intimate partner violence and/or sexual violence during their lifetimes. [5] However, community research into violence prevention initiatives has identified significant gaps for Rainbow communities.

One of the foundations of violence prevention is community development or working with communities to develop violence prevention initiatives and projects. Yet in 2013, a national sexual violence sector stocktake reported 48% of community organisations involved in primary prevention of sexual violence (including providing healthy relationships and consent education) had no partnerships with local or national Rainbow groups. [6]



[4] Dickson, S., (2016), Doing our best for LGBTIQ survivors, Good Practice Responding to Sexual Violence – Guidelines for mainstream crisis support services for survivors, Te Ohaakii a Hine – National Network Ending Sexual Violence Together; Dickson, S., (2016), Building Rainbow communities free of partner and sexual violence, Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura – Outing Violence; Thursdays in Black, (2017), “In Our Own Words” - Student experiences of sexual violence prior to and during tertiary education and Veale J., Byrne J., Tan K., Guy S., Yee A., Nopera T. and Bentham R., (2019) Counting Ourselves: The health and wellbeing of trans and non-binary people in Aotearoa New Zealand, Transgender Health Research Lab, University of Waikato: Hamilton NZ.

[5] Ministry of Justice (2021), Experience of Crime by Sexual Orientation, Aotearoa New Zealand

[6] Dickson, S., (2013), Preventing Sexual Violence: A Stocktake of Tauwi and Bicultural Primary Prevention Activities 2013, Tauwi Caucus of Te Ohaakii a Hine – National Network Ending Sexual Violence Together. This research asked about relationships with “LGBT/Queer” Groups.

In 2015 HTRK-OV facilitated 18 community hui around Aotearoa New Zealand to ask Rainbow communities what was needed to address partner and sexual violence. Those attending asked for healthy relationships resources and programmes appropriate for Rainbow people and supports for family, whānau and communities to be safe places for Rainbow young people. This research also introduced the need to understand 'Rainbow relationships' as all relationships in which at least one person is part of the Rainbow community. This avoids excluding asexual, bisexual and trans people who are in different-gender relationships, a problem associated with the term 'same-sex' relationships. [7]

Specifically, the HTRK-OV research called for:

- Culturally appropriate and diverse healthy relationships resources and education which teach consent, non-violent communication and skills and affirm Rainbow relationships
- Role models of healthy relationships featuring culturally diverse Rainbow community members and diverse kinds of relationships, including discussions of consent
- Culturally appropriate and diverse resources and tools online about Rainbow identities which encourage pride, acceptance and support within families, whānau and communities and deal with homophobia, biphobia and transphobia directly to address stereotypes
- Culturally appropriate and diverse resources to create generous, open conversations with families and whānau including group/family counselling that is positive, restorative and constructive about coming out and transitioning
- Culturally appropriate and diverse parent, family and whānau support groups.

[7] Dickson, S., (2016), Building Rainbow communities free of partner and sexual violence, Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura – Outing Violence. The hui were hosted by Otago University Queer Support in Dunedin; Q-Topia in Christchurch; Q-Youth in Nelson; Gisborne community; OUTline, Agender and OUT@ AUT, Shakti and Equasian, Rainbow Youth, and Love Life Fono in Auckland; Village Collective and Te Kaha o Te Rangatahi in South Auckland; Whangareinbow in Whangarei; Multicultural Mash and Link House in Hamilton; MALGRA and YOSS in Palmerston North; New Zealand Prostitutes Collective, Inside OUT and Outer Spaces, Tiwhanawhana and Box Events and Out in the Park in Wellington.

Recent Ministry of Education guidelines have significantly increased the encouragement for schools to provide safe places for young people with diverse sexualities and genders via culturally appropriate and inclusive sexuality education. The guidelines note that sexuality education must respond to shifting social norms around gender and sexuality. [8]

In light of this context, it's not surprising WaQuY has received persistent calls for support in healthy relationships from Rainbow young people. This project attempts to provide more information to address the gap between what is available and what we need.



[8] Ministry of Education, (2020), Relationships and Sexuality Education: A Guide for Teachers, Leaders and Boards of Trustees, Years 1-8 and Ministry of Education, (2020), Relationships and Sexuality Education: A Guide for Teachers, Leaders and Boards of Trustees, Years 9-13.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research reinforces existing evaluation findings of healthy relationships education in Aotearoa New Zealand. In the current context, healthy relationships and consent education is not meeting the needs of Rainbow young people. The focus group conversations and survey results support one another, with several key themes emerging, but it is worth reading this report in-depth, to truly recognize how clearly our Rainbow young people are telling us what they want and need.

The need is stark and the coverage of school-based healthy relationships and consent education is still far from universal, despite growing recognition that best practice education works to prevent perpetration of partner and sexual violence. But in addition to coverage gaps, such education will not work for Rainbow young people if they cannot see themselves because the content or delivery leaves them out, or if the material is being delivered in unsafe school environments that allow bullying and discrimination on the basis of sexuality and gender diversity. Many of the young people who answered our survey talked about having already experienced at least one abusive relationship. This is particularly concerning given that 85% of our respondents were aged under 18, and nearly two-thirds were 13-16 years old.

“Rainbow inclusion” must move beyond same-sex relationship discussions. True and intersectional inclusion of culturally diverse sex, sexuality and gender diverse identities is required. Research in New Zealand and elsewhere has highlighted the overwhelming amount of violence, including partner and sexual violence, experienced by trans people. [9]



[9] James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., and Anafi, M. (2016), *The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey*. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality and Veale J., Byrne J., Tan K., Guy S., Yee A., Nopera T. and Bentham R., (2019) *Counting Ourselves: The health and wellbeing of trans and non-binary people in Aotearoa New Zealand*, Transgender Health Research Lab, University of Waikato: Hamilton NZ.

Bisexual people consistently report the highest rates of partner and sexual violence of all sexualities, including in national population data in New Zealand in which two-thirds of bisexual people report experiencing intimate partner and/or sexual violence during their lifetimes. [10] “Rainbow inclusive” healthy relationships material must include trans and gender diverse identities and concerns, different gender Rainbow relationships and valuing asexual and platonic relationships.

It also must meet the needs of Rainbow young people who are not Pākehā, particularly given the racist violence such young people navigate in their everyday lives. Takatāpui, Pacifica and Rainbow young people from diverse ethnicities need healthy relationships material that recognizes and celebrates all of who they are – and encourages those around them to do the same.

As with other young people, our research highlights that Rainbow young people look to and value their friends for support and information about healthy relationships and consent. There are significant opportunities to better support entire peer groups, particularly in online contexts.

In addition to recognizing school environments which may be unsafe, both our focus groups and the survey results highlighted how unsafe many Rainbow young people are at home. Healthy relationships and consent education cannot ignore this context, because Rainbow young people are asking, in desperation, how they can survive in families that do not support who they are.



[10] Ministry of Justice (2021), Experience of crime by sexual orientation, Aotearoa New Zealand. See also; Walters, M.L., Chen J., & Breiding, M.J. (2013), The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Findings on Victimization by Sexual Orientation, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA. And; Dickson, S., (2017), Bisexual and Pansexual Responses: Building Rainbow communities free of partner and sexual violence, Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura – Outing Violence.

Perhaps the most challenging finding from our research is that Rainbow young people, particularly trans young people, are currently bearing the brunt of managing and protecting themselves from homophobia, biphobia and transphobia at home, at school and in the community. Being able to develop healthy identities and relationships in this context is very difficult indeed. Rainbow young people in our research talked about managing trauma from bullying and discrimination inside their relationships, families and friendship groups.

They need our help, they need our support, and they need families, schools and communities to have better tools to support them to thrive. In terms of healthy relationships and consent education, our research leads us to recommend:

1) Rainbow young people need respect, space and information to support who they are

Rainbow young people want sexuality and gender to be taught in ways which acknowledge all identities and encourage exploration and value people's sense of themselves. This includes accurate information about culturally diverse identities. They see having a healthy sense of themselves as crucial to healthy relationships and consent.

2) Healthy relationships and consent education material and programmes for universal audiences must include diverse Rainbow identities and relationships

Rainbow young people want all young people to learn about sexuality and gender diversity, including to enhance understanding, address the oversexualization of Rainbow identities and ensure young people who are not yet "out" have access to information. Rainbow relationships may include asexual, bisexual and trans young people in relationships with young people outside the Rainbow community.

3) Rainbow young people need visible pathways to support

Rainbow young people want universal healthy relationships and consent material to point to safe Rainbow resources, groups and opportunities for further education. They believe too many young people do not know where to go for support around sexuality and gender diversity and dealing with homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. It is important that Rainbow young people can access support if their families are causing them harm.

4) Delivery of healthy relationships and consent education material must support all Rainbow identities and relationships

Schools which are not welcoming or safe for Rainbow young people cannot offer adequate education, including healthy relationships and consent education. Rainbow young people feel supported by seeing sexuality and gender diverse facilitators and teachers who understand Rainbow identities and communities, and address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. [11]

5) Rainbow young people need online resources about Rainbow relationships and consent

Online resources offer significant advantages for Rainbow young people and were most highly rated by young people in both the survey and focus groups. Online content about healthy relationships and consent that is accurate and Rainbow-centric normalizes Rainbow identities and offers accessible and private information. Rainbow young people like the opportunities to go into more depth about relationship issues including setting boundaries, negotiating consent, dealing with conflict well and the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships.



[11] Unfortunately, the current sexuality guidelines from the Ministry of Education do not refer to biphobia as something they encourage schools to explore or challenge at all, and do not mention asexual people or bisexual people outside of the glossary or LGBTI acronym at all.

6) Rainbow young people want healthy relationships material that supports friendships and other non-romantic relationships

Young people in our focus groups repeatedly talked about consent and healthy relationships principles applying outside of romantic contexts. This is also necessary to ensure asexual people's needs are included. Negotiating non-sexual physical intimacy with consent is important for Rainbow young people, particularly if they are not getting affection at home. They see consent as extending well beyond sexual matters and want to learn how to negotiate consent in complex situations involving trauma and ideas about bodies that may be changing over time for trans people in particular.

7) Peer pressure education must include pressure around sexuality and gender identity

Pressure to be sexual in particular ways, or to be seen to be always sexual, is a reality for Rainbow young people. Healthy relationships and consent education must address peer pressure around alcohol, identity and “proving” your sexuality or gender. It must offer opportunities for young people to learn conflict resolution skills to enhance their ability to negotiate consent.

8) Development and dissemination of appropriate programs and materials must be guided by best practice supported by Rainbow educational facilitators

Both survey and focus group participants reported developing material themselves to guide discussion, and experiencing disconnected or inaccurate teaching. Facilitators without skills in “Rainbow competency” will not be able to deliver healthy relationships content effectively for Rainbow young people.

PROJECT DESIGN

The project team followed a community development approach for this research. We wanted to hear how Rainbow young people were currently experiencing the healthy relationships and consent education they receive, both formally and informally. We wanted to understand what they appreciate about existing methods of learning, what they think is missing, and what they want more information about.

We therefore adopted a mixed-method style of information gathering, using the skills base of the project team which includes significant social work, community development, facilitation, youth work and research experience, particularly with marginalized communities.

We developed and offered two focus groups in Hamilton for young people already engaged with WaQuY; one for all young people, and one specifically for the Beyond Binary group, a gender diverse social support group for young people. Participants were offered a small koha for their time and food was available during the sessions. The focus groups were structured around three areas:

- In what contexts do you want to learn about healthy relationships and consent?
- What content do you want included?
- What extra support do you need when learning about healthy relationships and consent?

Both focus groups were facilitated by project team members Bex Fraser and Nathan Bramwell in November 2020, with additional support from WaQuY Youth Mentors for the second focus group. Across the two focus groups there were 26 participants ranging in age from 13 to 29. More than three quarters of those participating self-identified as trans or non-binary and participants discussed having a variety of sexual identities of asexual, aromantic, bisexual and pansexual, though this is not an exclusive list. Four participants identified as Māori, and all others as Pākehā/New Zealand European.

In addition, we developed a short online survey with questions about young people's experiences of and needs for healthy relationships and consent education. This survey was open in October/November 2020 and we distributed an online survey link to all secondary schools; youth groups working with Rainbow young people; university support groups for Rainbow tertiary students; and other WaQuY networks.

The survey was opened by 426 people, which included teachers checking that the survey was safe to send on, and responses from secondary school students who did not identify as sex, sexuality or gender diverse, but wanted to support healthy relationships education which included Rainbow identities. For the analysis that follows, only those responses from young people aged between 13 and 30 who identified as part of the Rainbow community are included. This means this report draws on 249 survey responses and two focus groups with 26 participants in total.

FOCUS GROUPS

We “advertised” our healthy relationships and consent focus groups by letting young people already engaged with WaQuY know they were coming up. All group members had existing relationships with Nathan Bramwell and WaQuY Youth Mentors. Bex Fraser attended WaQuY groups the week before to answer any questions and socialize the research.

Both focus groups ran at their usual times, and followed the same structure, with a mixture of pairs, small group work and larger group discussion. There was also an anonymous question box available. Comments below reflect language used by participants and issues and themes across both focus groups.

Contexts for learning about healthy relationships and consent

Our focus group participants felt school, specifically class groups, were the best context in which to learn about healthy relationships and consent, to ensure everyone had access to the information. They wanted healthy relationships and consent education to begin at primary school (focusing on family and friends) and be woven through every year of schooling. They also wanted queer examples and queer specific information woven through all content so that students do not have to “come out” to hear Rainbow specific content. [12] They reported experiences of having to lead this content as students in order to ensure schools did not leave them out.

In addition to general content including sexuality and gender diverse people and experiences, our focus group participants wanted separate space to do further and deeper learning with other sexuality and gender diverse people, via Rainbow groups inside schools and extra queer sessions.



[12] We will use language in this section used by focus group participants.

When asked about contexts for young people who had left school, focus group participants talked about tertiary institutions and youth centres as sites for learning about healthy relationships and consent, but they were aware this would not work for all Rainbow young people. The Beyond Binary group raised concerns about the potential lack of safety of some adults and role models in Rainbow communities around relationships and consent. Work contexts were also described as problematic.

Our focus group participants wanted experts to deliver healthy relationships and consent education content to ensure it is accurate and safe. They emphasised the importance of facilitators dealing effectively with bullying and oversexualization of Rainbow identities – for students that are “out” and those not out yet. They want diverse facilitators with different ethnicities, physical abilities, and sexual and gender identities. They also pointed out that students listen better when it is someone other than their teacher, but they want their teachers to be present, to learn and support the education.

“One of our teachers did a great module on gender diversity, but the week after we did a module on body parts. The information was completely cis-normative. It was clear his understanding was not woven through the modules, even though he was trying really hard.”

They commented that out queer teachers make healthy relationships and consent content feel safer for sexuality and gender diverse students, and that anonymous question boxes were good options for asking questions, as long as the answers provided were accurate.

Finally, our focus group participants felt online resources were vital, in particular for queer and trans specific issues in healthy relationships and consent. Most participants find online resources helpful, emphasizing accessibility and anonymity as important. They want in-person education to point to safe online resources, across Instagram, Youtube, Reddit, TikTok and Discord servers. They like being able to consume online content without interactive discussion as a first step. They want moderated and accessible chat rooms and appreciate being able to ask anonymous questions, particularly in Reddit, though they recognize advice provided by Reddit relies on an uptick system which promotes views that are widely held but not always accurate.

Content for learning about healthy relationships and consent education

Our facilitators chose Te Whare Tapa Whā as the best tool to explore different aspects of wellbeing in healthy relationships and consent education. [13] Several participants recognised the model and expressed the importance of connecting with Te Ao Māori when thinking about what they want the "future" to be here in Aotearoa. To structure discussion in each wellbeing area, we used small group work to explore in-depth, and larger group work to explore diverse opinions. We believed the holistic approach of Te Whare Tapa Whā would allow focus group participants to most fully explore what they need.

Mental and emotional wellbeing/Taha hinengaro

Our focus group participants want education about how to manage the emotional harm that is caused by environments or people that believe you are intrinsically bad for being trans or queer. They report not knowing how to deal with these homophobic, biphobic and transphobic harms. They want to learn about queer phobias as part of bullying and how to keep safe from them.



[13] <https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/healthy-living/t/te-whare-tapa-wh%C4%81-and-wellbeing/>

Focus group participants said they need to see and hear about lots of queer people in the world around them (like teachers and other young people), and they also need others to recognize there are lots of people in the Rainbow community. Assumptions that the only two “out” people at school are together, and are the 'only queers in the village', are very damaging.

Focus group participants also want to learn about a wide range of Rainbow identities. They describe some identities such as bisexual and asexual as less respected than others. They see this gatekeeping as a specific form of bullying in Rainbow communities and want to learn why it happens and how to keep safe from it. They also want to learn about the fluidity of gender and sexuality, saying these can feel different at different times, but that's not how gender or sexuality is usually talked about.

Focus group participants want to learn about different types of healthy relationships, not just romantic relationships. This includes wanting to learn about problem-solving and conflict resolution and learning about respecting boundaries.

Focus group participants in the Beyond Binary group also talked about expectations they will “look after” other people. They have to explain trans-ness or being non-binary to everyone, they support friends and family with ‘grief’ over their transition, and constantly manage people apologising for getting pronouns or gender wrong. Healthy relationships education needs to include how to manage this amount of emotional labour and when it is justified or not. This includes boundaries between child and parent – particularly for gender diverse young people, who described a feeling of having to provide parenting for the adults in their life because they know so much more about trans-ness than their parents.

In terms of developing their own emotional intelligence, focus group participants want to learn to trust their emotions, to know they are valid and to express them in a healthy way even when others are not being respectful of their feelings. They want to be taught to recognize red flags for themselves and their relationships, and help with recognizing toxic Rainbow relationships. They talked about young queer and trans people holding onto bad relationships because they feel like this might be their only chance. Related to this, our focus group participants want education on dealing with trauma – for themselves, their friends and their partners. Supporting other people in the Rainbow community, especially with dysphoria, is important for them. They also want to be able to support peers who do not have supportive families.

Specifically in terms of consent, our focus group participants want to learn about respecting triggers, including not trying to change or fix them for other people.

Belonging and connection/Whenua

Developing belonging in a world which does not respect you was acknowledged as difficult by our focus group participants. They want healthy relationships and consent education to include queer topics for everyone, to break down stigma and barriers and address bullying and discrimination against queer and trans people. They want the full range of sexualities and gender identities to be normalized by the healthy relationships and consent education they receive – and they want false binaries in sex, sexuality and gender to be challenged. Failing to challenge binaries and encouraging them happens in Rainbow and mainstream contexts and was described as gatekeeping, or treating some identities as more important than others.

"Education must tell us that there is no space where rainbow people/relationships don't belong."

This education needs to recognize the fluidity of identity as a journey of discovery for many Rainbow young people and to encourage patience and respect for this journey.

Related to content which better reflects the realities of young people's lives, our focus group participants want space in healthy relationships education for discovering identities in an open way, including neurodivergent identities and the importance of friendships and non-romantic relationships. They also want specific education about respecting markers of belonging, such as names and pronouns and how to respond when people don't respect their identities. They would like people to learn about being less defensive if they have said or done something inappropriate, so that change is more possible and they don't have to "look after" people who misgender them.

Finally, our focus group participants want queer and trans spaces for young people to be more accessible for more Rainbow young people. They believe healthy relationships education should include information about how to contact safe Rainbow groups and spaces.

Physical wellbeing/Taha tinana

Our focus group participants want education about healthy bodies and healthy eating. They want education about eating disorders. They are aware that body images promoted by mass media – including for queer and trans people – are unobtainable for many people.

"You don't have to be cute and androgenous to be non-binary. And you don't have to look perfectly masculine to be a man."

The Beyond Binary focus group identified a need for education about commenting on other people's physical appearance. Gendered compliments (eg beautiful vs handsome) can cause pain, particularly for trans people, as can commentary on weight loss/gain for all genders.

Our focus group participants want to learn how to ask other people about the words to use for their body parts. It is easy in theory but quite hard to have the conversations about what people can call different parts of bodies, particularly when people do not know very much about trans bodies.

Focus group participants want healthy relationships and consent education to include non-sexual intimacy. They want to know how to give and receive physical affection with consent, by encouraging people to ask before any kind of touching. Our focus groups participants wanted to be able to decline physical touch without offending anyone.

Consent about non-sexual intimacy and hugging are especially important areas to learn about for Rainbow young people. Our focus group participants said they may not be getting physical affection at home, so want hugs, but they are also over-sexualised, so need everyone to learn that their bodies are not accessible without consent.

"When I came out as a trans male at school, one of the boys in my class said 'Great, I can do this now' and reached out and grabbed my chest."

They also want education about bodily autonomy and respecting boundaries for both non-sexual and sexual intimacy. Focus group participants want education about boundaries to be clear that different people have different boundaries, that what different people want to do must be negotiated with them, and that sometimes boundaries may change over time, particularly in relation to transitioning. They also want education about how to navigate these situations, discuss them with partners or friends, and keep themselves and others safe.

When healthy relationships education talks about actual sex, our focus group participants want it to focus on safe ways to explore different ways of having sex, to normalise queer sex. The Beyond Binary group wanted this part of healthy relationships and consent education to include that there is not one queer experience, and that there are not 'proper' ways of having sex for queer people. The Beyond Binary group in particular were clear that education about physical stuff needs to include that not everyone who is older or well known in Rainbow communities is safe for sexual encounters.

Finally, healthy relationships and consent education should include information about binding safely and gender affirming healthcare including surgery.

Family and social wellbeing/Taha whānau

Overwhelmingly, our focus group participants want education and help to address families that were not welcoming or safe for them, and help to identify how people should be treated with respect inside families. They recognize family norms may set up expectations for their own future relationships, and they want pathways to staying safe.

"We want to know how to get out of our families if we are not being treated well. For example, if someone yells at you all the time in your family you will think this is just normal. We want to learn that it is okay to leave an abusive family and how to do that."

Focus group participants talked about wanting to learn about setting and challenging boundaries inside families, how to step back from family interactions to stay safe. They wanted to hear about healthy families so they can understand what is happening for them in their families, and options for professional support via family therapy to change unhealthy parenting dynamics.

Focus group participants also commented that parents often stop Rainbow young people attending queer and trans spaces. They want tactics to manage this destructive isolation.

They also want chosen and found family to be validated inside healthy relationships and consent education, and to see a variety of family groupings celebrated by this education, including polyamorous family groupings.

Spiritual wellbeing/Taha wairua

Our focus group participants want cultural and faith belongings and identity acknowledged as part of healthy relationships and consent education and wanted to see diverse spiritual belongings and their crossovers with sexuality and gender diverse identities.

Navigating boundaries around spirituality, differences between spiritual beliefs, spiritual beliefs in families and spiritual beliefs that are discriminatory towards Rainbow people were all areas our focus group participants wanted to explore. They also wanted the intersection of being able to have faith and be themselves in terms of gender and sexuality to be affirmed inside healthy relationships and consent education.

Supports to learn about healthy relationships and consent

We asked participants what extra supports they might need for effective healthy relationships and consent education. A number of these points had already been touched on, such as ensuring there are Rainbow specific sessions and inclusive queer and trans content is woven through all healthy relationships and consent education, and that such sessions point to safe queer specific resources and websites. They also re-affirmed the importance of experts who destigmatize Rainbow identities and practices in relationships; de-sexualise Rainbow identities and practices and allow queer and trans young people to see themselves and their relationships

Finally, our focus group participants want to be able to contact safe Rainbow people to talk about issues they are facing. They reported that texting and messaging was better for them than talking on the phone.

SURVEY RESULTS

The online survey for this project included a 'front page' which described the survey, gave details of the project team, and described who would see the results and how they would be made public via this report. Respondents were not asked their names but were able to ask for a copy of the report to be sent to them via email, which was separated from survey analysis. A copy of the survey can be downloaded from the Waikato Queer Youth and Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura - Outing Violence websites.

Survey questions focused on topics of healthy relationships and consent education; sites of formal learning; sites of informal learning; and questions about how helpful the learning people had received had been for them. We also asked what people felt was missing from the sexuality education they had received, and what people most wanted to be able to learn about.

The questions were a mix of closed-end options; rating scale questions; and free text responses. We tried to keep the questions in plain language, as we were hoping young people from age 13 would participate. The rating scales were reduced to just three options ("Great" – "Ok" – "Poor") after survey testing on mobile phones showed more options did not work well on all mobile devices. We also asked demographic questions.

The survey and analysis used the humanitarian aid survey and analysis tool Kobo Toolbox.

This analysis is of the 249 responses we received from participants who confirmed they met our criteria of being aged 13-30 and being part of the Rainbow community. Not every respondent answered every question. The numbers of people answering each question are provided in the following analysis.

Healthy relationships and consent education topics

The first question in the survey, to 'set the tone', asked respondents about the different topics they might have learnt about in healthy relationships and consent education. We selected topics considered as best practice in violence prevention and healthy relationships and consent education, particularly for young people. [14] We also added options more specific to Rainbow relationships and communities. [15]

Respondents could tick as many topics as they wished. This question was answered by 248 people. Thirteen respondents reported not receiving education about any of these topics.



[14] See for example Harvey, A., Garcia-Moreno, C., and Butchart, A., (2007), Primary prevention of intimate-partner violence and sexual violence: Background paper for WHO expert meeting May 2-3, World Health Organisation; Russell, N., (2008), What Works in Sexual Violence Prevention and Education, A Literature Review, Ministry of Justice, New Zealand; Ministry of Justice New Zealand, (2009), Te Toiora Mata Tauheranga - Report of the Taskforce for Action on Sexual Violence; Flood, M., Fergus, L., and Heenan, M., (2009), Respectful Relationships Education, Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation and Cook-Craig, P., (2012), Youth Sexual Violence Prevention, National Online Resource Centre on Violence Against Women.

[15] Dickson, S., (2016), Building Rainbow communities free of partner and sexual violence, Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura – Outing Violence and Our Watch, (2017), Primary prevention of family violence against people from LGBTI communities, Victoria State Government.

Table 1.1 shows the education topics more than half of the respondents reported they had received. Alcohol and drugs – both in terms of negotiating consent and in terms of just general peer pressure, were the topics most likely to be received. Significant numbers of our respondents also reported education that focused on the giving and receiving of consent, signs of healthy relationships, safe and supportive communication skills, and setting and receiving of boundaries.

Table 1.1: Have you received healthy relationships and consent education covering these topics? (n=248)	Responses	Percentage
The impacts of alcohol and drugs on negotiating consent	195	79%
Dealing with peer pressure around trying or using alcohol or drugs	187	75%
How to negotiate the giving and receiving of consent, including checking in so it's ok and fun for both people	169	68%
Signs of healthy relationships, including supporting each other's interests and friendships	166	67%
Safe and supportive communication skills	157	63%
Setting and respecting boundaries of any kind - from time alone, to kinds of touch	125	50%

These topics are all examples of what can be part of best practice but it is important to note that the coverage is inconsistent - many people responding had received education about drugs and alcohol but just over half had education about boundaries. Best practice needs to include all of these elements rather than focusing on some.

Table 1.2 shows the healthy relationships and consent education topics that fewer than half our respondents reported they had received. The data is striking – all of the topics clustered at the lower end, so the topics which fewest numbers of respondents received, are specific to Rainbow communities, Rainbow relationships and Rainbow identities. This means that while the coverage of healthy relationships and consent education topics overall appears to be inconsistent, the coverage of Rainbow-specific violence prevention material is largely absent.

Respondents were least likely to receive education about pornography for/with sexuality and gender diverse people; dealing with peer pressure inside Rainbow communities about your identity, including from partners; dealing with peer pressure inside Rainbow communities about sex, including from partners; and dealing with peer pressure to be “straight” or “cis.”

Respondents were also unlikely (fewer than one in three) to receive education about supporting and respecting your partner’s gender identity and connections to Rainbow communities; online harassment or bullying because of sexuality or gender; supporting and respecting your partner’s sexuality identity and connections to Rainbow communities; harassment or bullying because of sexuality or gender or respecting people’s pronouns, and why this is important.

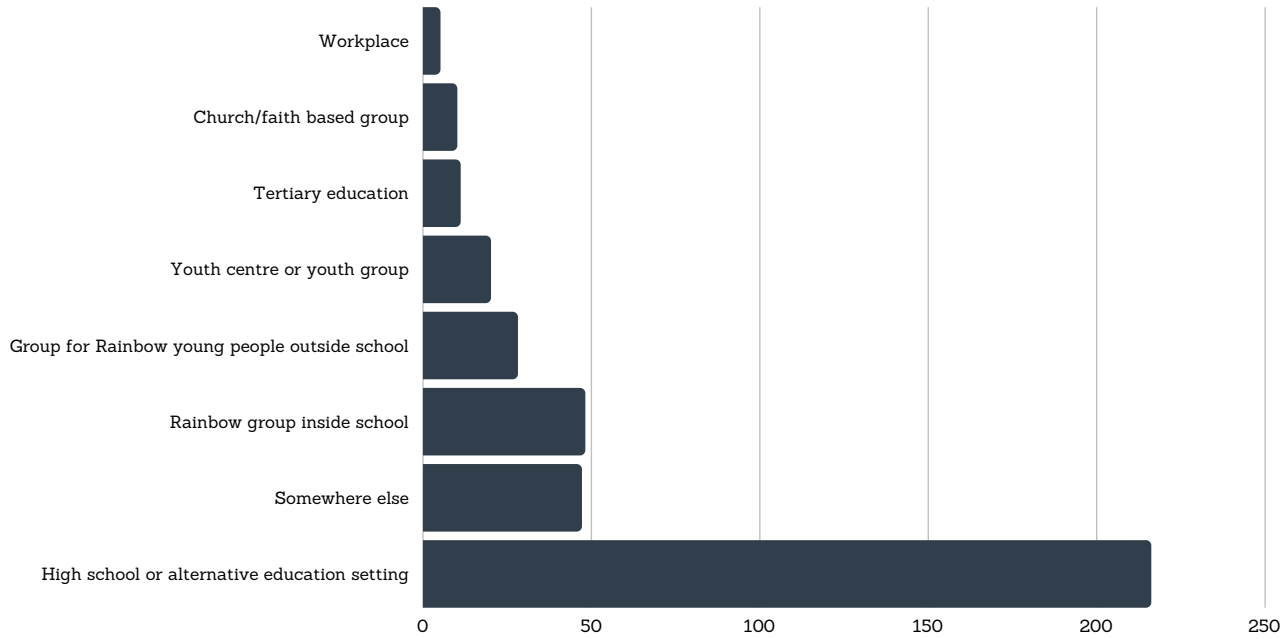
Finally, fewer than half our respondents had received healthy relationships and consent education about the diverse gender identities people may have; skills in resolving disagreements peacefully, or working things out together safely; the many ways we are attracted to other people; dealing with peer pressure to be sexual; supporting and respecting your partner’s background and culture or pornography.

Table 1.2: Have you received healthy relationships and consent education covering these topics? (n=248)		
	Responses	Percentage
Pornography	117	47%
Supporting and respecting your partner's background and culture	111	45%
Dealing with peer pressure to be sexual	109	44%
Accurate information about the many ways we are attracted to other people	104	42%
Skills in resolving disagreements peacefully, or working things out together safely	104	42%
Accurate information about the diverse gender identities people may have	100	40%
Respecting people's pronouns, and why this is important	88	35%
Harassment or bullying because of sexuality or gender	86	35%
Supporting and respecting your partner's sexuality identity and connections to Rainbow communities	80	32%
Online harassment or bullying because of sexuality or gender	75	30%
How to respectfully end relationships when they are not working	71	29%
Supporting and respecting your partner's gender identity and connections to Rainbow communities	70	28%
Dealing with peer pressure to be "straight" or "cis"	44	18%
Dealing with peer pressure inside Rainbow communities about sex, including from partners	31	13%
Dealing with peer pressure inside Rainbow communities about your identity, including from partners	29	12%
Pornography for/with sexuality and gender diverse people	28	11%

Formal education and informal learning

The next question focused on formal education, which we defined as “a course, workshop or training focused on relationships or negotiating consent.” We first asked where respondents had received formal education about healthy relationships and consent. This question was answered by 243 people, and the results are shown in Chart 1.

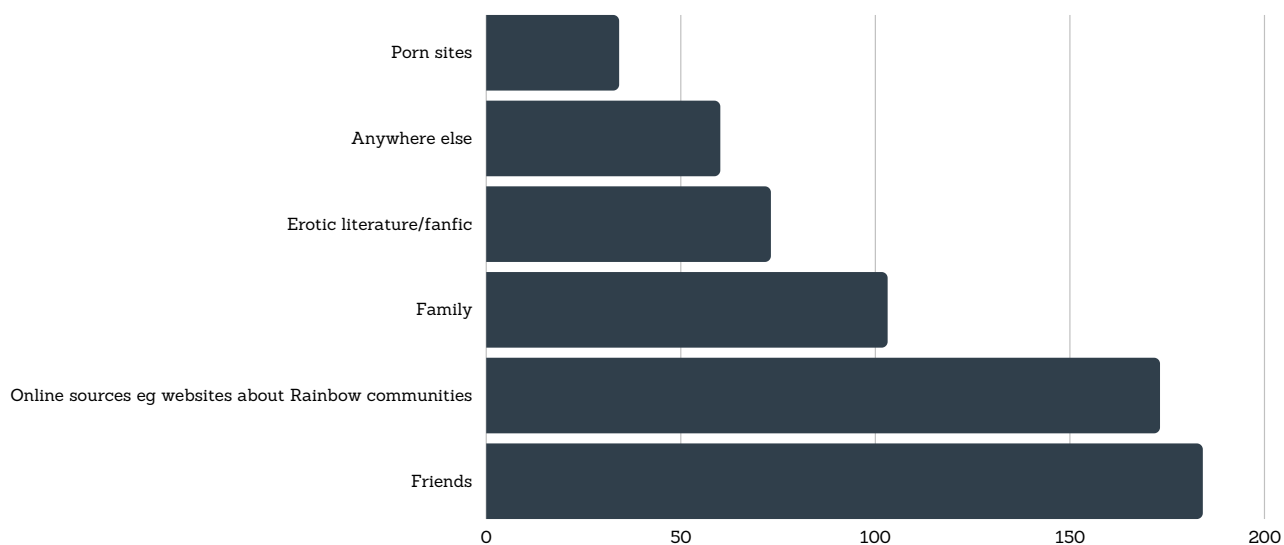
Chart 1: Formal education sites n=243



Our respondents were more than four times more likely to access healthy relationships and consent education at high school than anywhere else. The lower numbers in workplaces and tertiary education probably partially reflect the fact our respondents were more likely to be young (13-16, with 85% under 18) as well as high school being the predominant delivery point of sexuality education. About one in five respondents had attended some kind of formal healthy relationships and consent education at a Rainbow group inside school, and one in ten in a Rainbow group outside school. Respondents were much less likely to access formal education at other sites, including youth centres and church/faith-based groups.

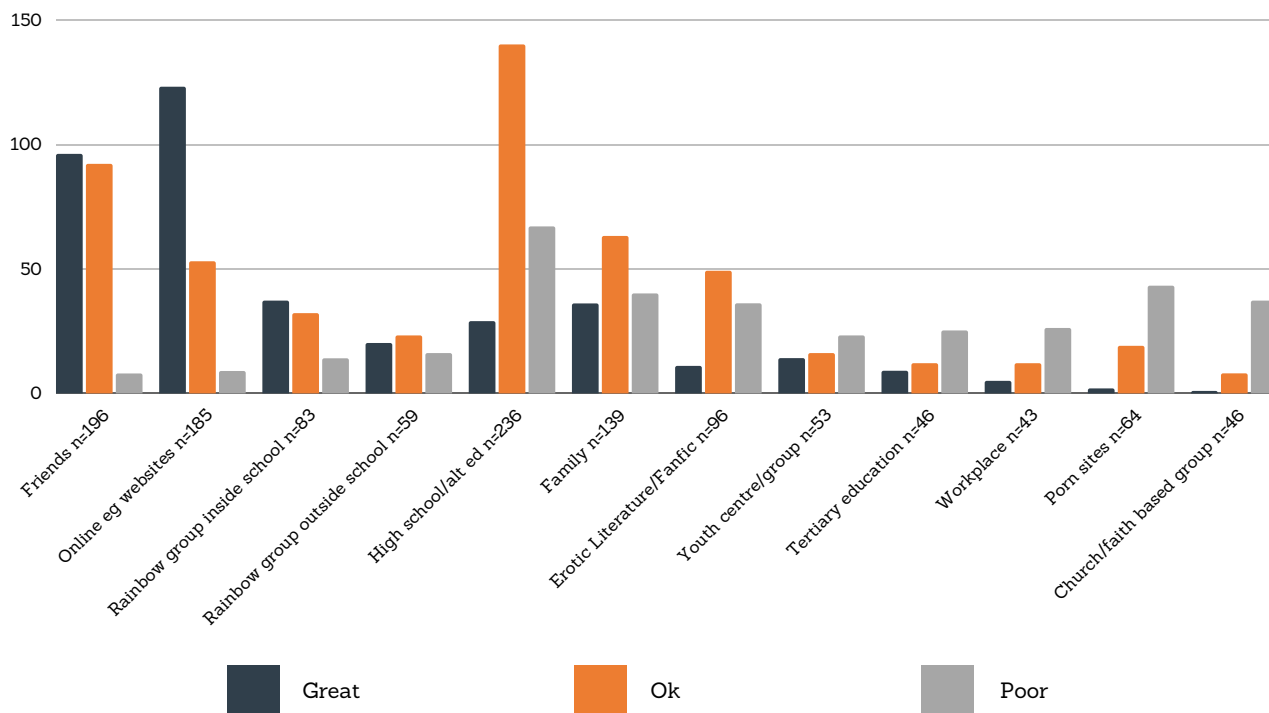
We also asked respondents about other ways they might have learnt about healthy relationships and consent. This question was also answered by 243 people, and the results are shown in Chart 2. Friends and online (eg websites about Rainbow communities) were the most popular, with about three quarters of our respondents learning from those sources. Significant numbers of respondents also learnt from family and erotic literature/fanfic. Just 34 respondents reported trying to learn about healthy relationships and consent from porn sites.

Chart 2: Informal learning n=243



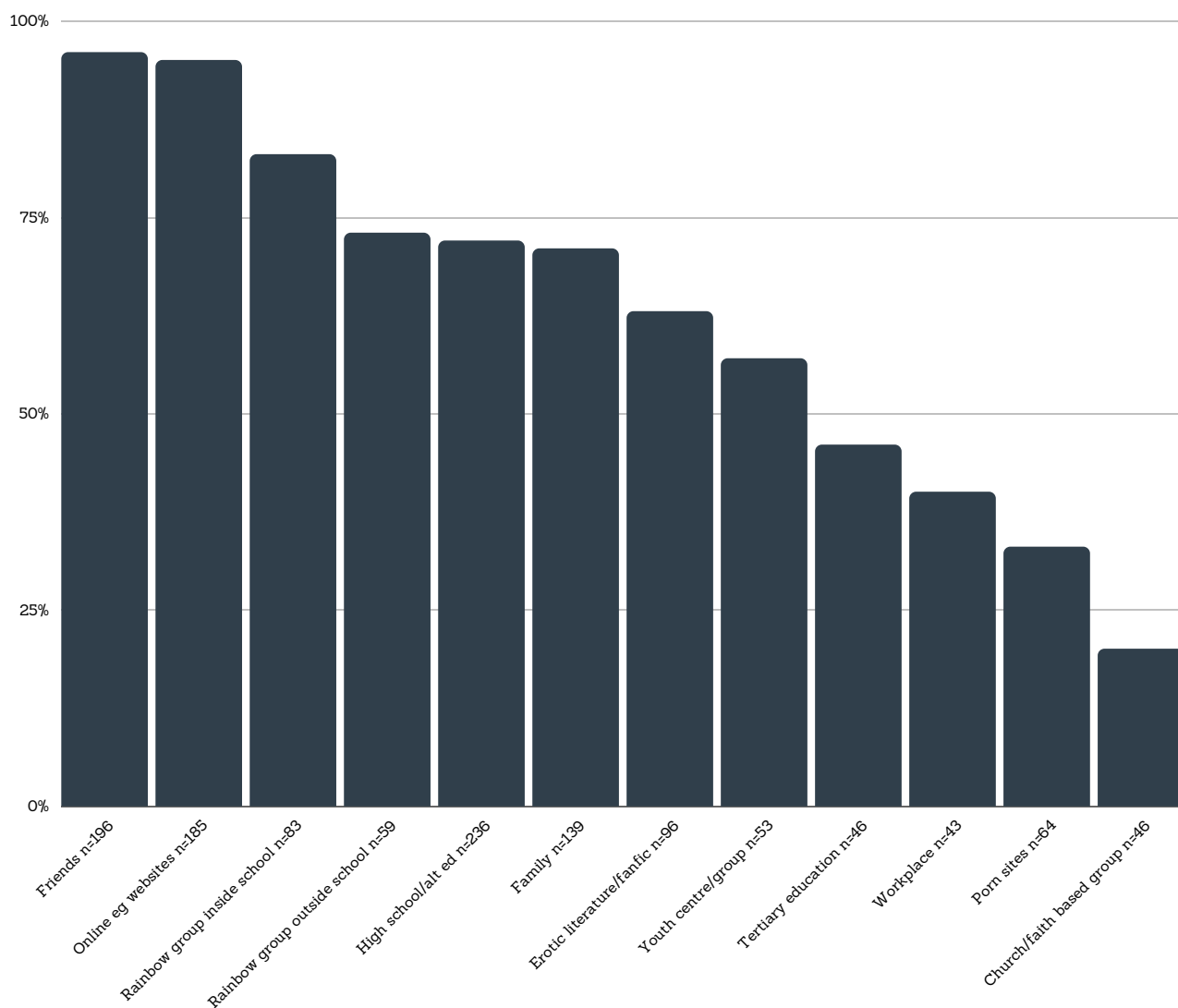
We asked how helpful both the formal learning and the informal learning sources were for our respondents, and these results are presented in Charts 3.1 and 3.2. An interesting feature of these responses is that more respondents offered “ratings” for each source than had identified receiving learning from this source. It’s most likely that this was because more people realized they had experienced learning from these sources when asked about them one by one than had identified when asked as a cluster. We have removed the categories “Anywhere else” and “Somewhere else” for the following analysis.

Chart 3.1: How helpful was this education/learning n=various



Respondents were able to rate helpfulness on a scale of “Great” – “Ok” – “Poor”, and each rating option is shown in Chart 5.1, as well as the number of respondents who rated each learning source. We have also collated, for comparison purposes, the percentage of respondents for each particular source that rated the education/learning as “Great” or “Ok”. This is shown in Chart 5.2. The higher the percentage, the more respondents rated that particular source as “Great” or “Ok”.

Chart 3.2: How helpful was this education/learning n=various



Friends (96%) and online sources (95%) were the highest rated by our respondents in terms of helpfulness, with nearly every respondent who learned from these sources rating them “Great” or “Ok.” There are a cluster of ratings of helpfulness including Rainbow group inside school (83%); Rainbow group outside school (73%); High school/alt ed (72%); Family (71%) and Erotic Literature/Fanfic (63%). Of these, the rating for High school/alt ed is boosted substantially by more than half of respondents rating healthy relationships and consent education as “Ok.” Family and Erotic Literature/Fanfic are both boosted in a similar way; respondents were significantly more likely to rate learning from these sources as “Ok” than “Great.”

All other learning sources are more likely to be rated as “Poor” by respondents than anything else. Fewer than half of our respondents rated Workplaces or Tertiary education as “Great” or “Ok.” However, Porn sites and Church/Faith Based groups were the most poorly rated of all. Four out of five respondents who had accessed healthy relationships and consent education from Church/Faith based groups rated it “Poor”; this was true for two out of three people seeking education from Porn sites.

What was missing

[16] The next sections summarise the free text responses we received from our respondents about the healthy relationships and consent education they had received. The first question in this block, what was missing, received the most responses of any of our free text questions, with 162 respondents offering comments. The answers were concerning, with many respondents reporting they did not have access to any healthy relationships and consent information.

“I wish they would teach everything you listed above.”

Many respondents did not feel like their schools were comfortable delivering general healthy relationships and consent education, and that when it was delivered, it was often not covered in enough depth. But the most devastating gap was around Rainbow content, commented on by 94 respondents.

[16] The exact question was “What was missing in the healthy relationships and consent information you received?”

“In high school the teachers would avoid the topics above, they refuse to talk about the rainbow community. This has affected me because I’m not supported by many of my friends and my family is homophobic, and I would like to know at least some people support me. I would like to be taught about pride in the past and the history of the rainbow community, also how to talk to your parents about difficult subjects like consent or being gay.”

“Literally everything rainbow, we learned absolutely nothing about respecting people’s sexualities, gender identities, pronouns, and also were not taught that there are many sorts of attraction. I think it is very important to learn these things as it would help people feel more accepted and more able to figure out who they were and have a sense of self. Also given how many LGBTQ+ people there are, learning about healthy rainbow relationships is very important.”

“That consent is fluid, that you need consent outside of sex, there was nothing abt queer people and how consent can be different based on things like dysphoria, nothing about how to healthily resolve conflict, nothing about supporting your partner if they have mental illness, nothing about any of the issues in the rainbow community like internalised homophobia and compulsive heteronormativity, I wish I learned what my identity was through a health class and not through the painful internet self discovery.”

“The most we ever got taught about the rainbow community was they exist and what we’re teaching you doesn’t always apply.”

Related to lack of Rainbow content, many respondents talked about bullying based on sexuality or gender, and poor responses from teachers and schools making healthy relationships and consent education content inadequate and unsafe for Rainbow students. The wider context here is schools not always being welcoming or safe for sexuality and gender diverse young people.

“My high school health classes lacked focus on rainbow issues, covering sexual and gender identity as a seemingly cursory thing, it seemed more like a nature documentary than advice to help us navigate our sexuality and identities. I also wish I’d been told more about healthy relationships, especially what to in an unhealthy relationship, and it would’ve saved me a lot of hurt if I’d been told more about the value of communication and support in relationships. It would also have been nice if the teacher confronted the homophobic behavior of a reasonable amount of people in the class.”

Finally, respondents reported many problems with a “one size fits all” approach to healthy relationships and consent education. They felt diverse cultural understandings were missing, and that material being delivered was not always accurate.

“A very pakeha/white view of gender and sexuality. The courses we went through were not very diverse and their descriptions of how different aspects of gender expression and identity works were unhelpful and inaccurate. Consent was barely covered - only in relation to straight couples. No information on safe gay sex, only on safe straight sex. Courses were taught exclusively by straight cis people instead of a diverse group with varying experiences of gender and sexuality.”

What was helpful in formal learning contexts

[17] This question was answered by 132 respondents. There was an overwhelming agreement that learning about consent, healthy and unhealthy relationships where available had been helpful for respondents, but that Rainbow specific content was missing.

“Only things to do with simple consent, sexual things, relationships and although the speaker didn't classify rainbow relationships and things they talked about general relationships and it was quite good talk.”

Respondents talked about enjoying the opportunity to explore negotiating conflict peacefully, navigating the giving, receiving and checking in around consent, peer pressure, body language, boundary setting and practicing skills in different situations.

[17] The exact question was “What was helpful about the healthy relationships and consent education you received?”

“At an all girls high school, we were given info about dealing w/ peer pressure; how to identify unhealthy relationships. Particularly helpful were the techniques we were taught to help navigate conflicts or uncomfortable conversations within a relationship.”

“It was helpful to do class activities that required talking with others about the topic. We’d do things like ask someone to give up consent, or act out a healthy argument. This was good to make the subject less taboo and help everyone be comfortable.”

“It was helpful when we learnt about consent and body language. We learnt how to tell if people were comfortable or not, and what a generally healthy relationship looks like.”

Interestingly, what our respondents report finding helpful aligns closely with best practice in healthy relationships and consent education – strength-based skills practice. [18] It’s also interesting that although this question asked for what was helpful, many respondents pointed out that their education had been very focused on risk management rather than developing skills.



[18] See for example Russel, N. (2008) What works in Sexual Violence Prevention and Education: A Literature Review, Ministry of Justice.

“It was pretty much, This is contraception. Use it. These are drugs. Don’t use them. Its okay to say no. The teachers were clearly uncomfortable and terminology focused, rather than guiding us in how to develop healthy relationships. I don’t think consent ever really popped up and especially not anything LGBTTQIA+ related.”

As was described in our focus groups, some respondents who answered the survey reported taking matters into their own hands – effectively having to create their own content.

“Actually, they didn’t really teach anything at my school - Unless it was Cis and Heterosexual. I protested and ended up doing my own research and did a presentation to my entire class. But other than the pride day talk on being welcoming and my own presentation to my health class- We learned nothing LGBTQ+ related. Even though there are 9 rainbow kids in my class.”

What was helpful in informal learning contexts

[19] This question was answered by 134 respondents, and consistent with earlier responses, there were three key informal sources people referred to - friends, family and online. What respondents most appreciated from every informal source was Rainbow specific information about relationships, sex, Rainbow identities and respecting people’s pronouns (37 respondents).

“The resources from Rainbow communities was helpful as it portrayed accurate relationships about LGBT people by LGBT people.”



[19] The exact question was “What was helpful about the informal healthy relationships and consent education you received?”

“When speaking to my parents, I can trust that what they share is as truthful as possible, and they have often been pretty open to teaching me about any topics regarding healthy relationships, consent and sexuality etc. I know this wouldn't apply for all families but ive been lucky to have a family that are really open to learn about LGBTQ+ etc and they can tailor what i need to know to fit what can apply with me and my sexuality and identity rather than just learning about relationships for cis/hetero like in school. and with friends its similar, they are all really accepting and most are also part of the rainbow community so we can all learn from each others experience. ive learnt so much from some of my friends about gender, pronouns and sexuality that school has never offered or taught.”

The next most helpful thing for informal learning for our respondents was that it addresses real situations and real relationships. People particularly appreciated being able to learn about respecting boundaries, negotiating consent and experiences inside relationships.

“Friends with more experience or more involved in the community can explain things in friendly relatable ways, or even just observing behaviors and terminology. Watching youtube videos of same-sex couple sharing their experiences and how they live (supposedly) happy and healthy lives.”

“With friends and family we were able to talk about real experiences, and how to stay safe in the real world, how to make sure we had both given and been given consent and the importance of it. Online sites gave information about how to prevent yourself from getting harmed within an lgbt relationship (things as simple as protection in wlw sex to actually recognising the signs of any type of abuse)”

Our respondents also raised other advantages of informal learning. They appreciated informal learning from friends, family and online sources being accessible and easy to find, private/anonymous, offering diverse perspectives and being non-judgmental.

“Informal information (talking to friends, online resources/youtube) can be particularly helpful because you can access it somewhat immediately in the moments you feel you need it.”

“More information in general particularly around gender and sexual diversity, as well as seeing many different ideas and points of view rather than the opinions of one teacher.”

“Online sources provided a sense of privacy as I explored relationships while conversations with friends allowed a safe space to be curious with others.”

Finally, and connected to the first point about Rainbow specific information, respondents appreciated their lives being central in online content.

“Discussion completely natural and normalised. It’s ‘This is how we are’ instead of ‘This is how some other people are.’”

What do you want other young people to learn

[20] This question was answered by 139 respondents, some of whom gave very lengthy comments. There were several recurring themes in the responses, of which the most dominant was that learning about diverse sexualities and identities and attractions is vitally important, with sub-themes addressing stereotypes and including asexual and bisexual identities and attractions.

“I really want people to learn more about different types of attraction, that there is romantic, platonic, emotional, aesthetic attraction as well as sexual attraction. I did not learn much about these at school and had to find out about them through friends and LGBTQ+ wiki.”

A related issue was the danger of Rainbow young people “switching off” in healthy relationships and consent education, either because there is no Rainbow content, or because it is far too simple for them. The occasional same-sex example is just not enough for young people with diverse sexes, sexualities and genders – they want to learn about Rainbow relationships which requires learning about homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

[20] The exact question was “Please share what has been most useful for you in learning about healthy relationships and consent. What would you like other young people to learn as well? The more detail the better!”

“In health class there was a lot taught about straight relationships that didn't apply to me, but LGBT+ relationships were never brought up apart from when we learned about sexualities and gender identity.”

Young people were also clear that education about Rainbow identities and attractions was important for all young people – whatever their sexuality or gender.

“I would like those who are NOT in the LBGT+ community to learn about LGBT+ relationships and coming out etc because though I've luckily not experienced homophobia I have experienced some ignorance.”

“I also think that when it comes to sex ed teachers should throw all assumptions out the window, just because one person in the class is gay doesn't mean everyone will know what labels mean what, which is very helpful for people questioning their sexuality privately too.”

The next most frequently raised issue was the importance of consent education, with our respondents wanting this to be broadened beyond “no means no”.

“I would like young people to learn that you can say no at anytime and you can change your mind whenever you want, and if they don't like that say things like "you can't do that" or "but you already said yes" it doesn't matter you can say no or yes whenever you feel like it.”

“If everyone understood consent in terms of the cup of tea analogy all would be safer and better off. Threshold for consent needs to be “only Yes means Yes” as opposed to outdated just “no means no.””

“The enthusiastic yes of consent. If you or your partner are unable to or don’t want to give an enthusiastic yes to consenting, you should stop. Furthermore, it’s important that that enthusiastic yes carries throughout sex.”

People also want education about sex and pleasure and having safe Rainbow sex, and talked about having to look elsewhere for information as they just were not receiving what they needed.

“I have not been taught about this in school so my friends and I had to teach ourselves.”

“I want queer kids to know that having sex with anyone isn't dirty or wrong so long as there is ongoing consent. I think there needs to be more done about how to protect yourself from STD's a queer person.”

Porn was explicitly named as an alternative way to learn about consent by our respondents, particularly to address gaps in available sexuality education. Pornography was liked by some respondents and considered unhelpful by others.

“It's been super important for me to learn that porn is NOT a good place to learn about relationships, sex, and consent. Consuming porn distorted how I thought relationships, consent, and sex should be and it really interfered with my learning actually how to have an intimate relationship and do sex. In contrast, having honest conversations with other people (including my partner) about relationships, consent, and sex have been helpful in teaching me new tools to use in my relationships and facilitate how I talk about sex and consent with my sexual partner.”

“Most useful for me, personally, was learning from my friends, school and erotica/pornsites since they all helped in their own way. I would want other young people to learn about safe sex and good sex health since I believe that it is important and should be a high priority.”

Other online resources were also used by many of our respondents to address gaps in consent education, and consistent with other responses, these were felt to be very helpful.

“Online resources have definitely been the most helpful to me, the majority of the stuff that I find important regarding this topic I have found and researched about myself.”

“Joining online communities with people who have similar experience/perspective/identities. In real life it seems gender and sexual diversity is treated as very rare and focus is on the majority's experience but online communities are much larger and filled with every kind of human being and often much more accepting and educated about different orientations.”

“Online has definitely been the most helpful. I want other young people to know that their wellbeing comes first, consent doesn't just apply to sex, and the general green/red flags for relationships, what healthy relationships should look like, and how consent is very important and which situations a person can't give consent in.”

There were also a significant number of people finding education about healthy relationships important, including being able to identify unhealthy and abusive relationships, particularly unhealthy Rainbow relationships.

“I would like young people to learn about what a unhealthy looks like compared to a healthy one, also that unhealthy relationships can be with the same gender because we only see what it is like with a straight couple and I used to think "that doesn't happen with same gender" which is not the case it can happen with all gender relationships and they need to see that and learn that, also to learn ways to get out of an unhealthy relationship, who they can talk to, how to get away if it becomes dangerous.”

Respondents also wanted to know how to get help if they needed it.

“Learning about toxic relationships was a big help for me because it helped me to realize that the relationship I was in at the time was pretty toxic and how to get myself out of it and then getting counselling afterwards helped me and now I am much happier.”

“I think other young people would benefit from learning where they can find safe place, where they can go to for accurate information, what their legal rights are, where they might be able to find communities they can be accepted and celebrated in.”

Communication and learning how to set and respect boundaries were also skills our respondents wanted from healthy relationships education.

“Communicating, placing and enforcing boundaries in a respectful way (and respecting boundaries - when a person places a boundary, what does this mean?). Communicating and listening to needs, navigating challenges in relationships healthily. Breaking up, that it's not a failing.”

“Help in setting boundaries and knowing what is healthy compromise and what is being pressured into situations and general things. I think it is important to learn to respect yourself and others and follow through that respect into a relationship and comfort levels within that.”

Many of our respondents wanted to learn about how to deal with peer pressure/bullying.

“Peer pressure surrounding sex, asexuality and aromanticism as well as just not wanting to have sex, anything to do with LGBT+ education really, specifically around safe sex and debunking stereotypes as well as people attracted to more than one gender.”

“I think the most important was the peer pressure around dating. Just because people around you are dating doesn't mean you need to rush into a relationship. You're allowed to experience things at your own pace and no one should influence that.”

Finally, respondents recognized peer pressure in many ways, including around their identities and being sexual, and they wanted help to deal with it broadly.

“I would like more guidance on dealing with peer pressure. I do get pressured into many things, sometimes not realizing it until it's a bit too late.”

Demographics

In this section we first asked about age. Our survey results show our respondents are predominantly 13-16 years old, making this research highly relevant to current healthy relationships and consent education taking place in school contexts.

Table 2: What is your age? n=246	Responses	Percentage
13-16 years	153	62%
17-18 years	56	23%
19-20 years	8	3%
21-25 years	12	5%
26-30 years	17	7%

We next asked about gender, and respondents were encouraged to tick all options that felt right. 317 responses were given by 247 respondents (eg transgender and non-binary; transgender and girl/woman).

Table 3: How do you prefer to identify your gender? n=247	Responses	Percentage
Takatāpui	5	2%
Transgender	31	13%
Non-binary	61	25%
Girl/woman	151	61%
Boy/man	38	15%
I prefer another word	31	13%

We received significantly more responses from girls/women and non-binary people than boys/men. Eighty respondents or 32% identified as takatāpui, transgender or non-binary, considerably higher than the only national data we have for young people, reflecting who seeks support and connection through groups for Rainbow young people. [21]

[21] 3.7% of secondary school students identify as transgender or not sure of their gender, from Clark, T.C., Lucassen, M.F.G., Bullen, P., Denny, S.J., Fleming, T.M., Robinson, E.M., Rossen, F.V., (2014), The Health and Well-Being of Transgender High School Students: Results from the New Zealand Adolescent Health Survey (Youth'12), in Journal of Adolescent Health 55.

We next asked whether people were intersex. Most people did not think they were intersex; some didn't know. Only one person who answered our survey did know, which is likely to be influenced by the high numbers of young respondents and lack of awareness of sex diversity.

Table 4: Are you intersex? n=243		Responses
No		210
I don't know		32
Yes		1

Respondents were also asked to describe their sexuality, offering multiple responses if they wished. As with gender, many respondents for this question ticked more than one option (eg takatāpui and bisexual/pansexual; gay and queer). 331 responses were given by 246 respondents.

Table 5: How do you prefer to identify your sexuality? n=246		Responses	Percentage
Takatāpui		6	2%
Asexual		26	11%
Lesbian		38	15%
Gay		27	11%
Bisexual/Pansexual		154	63%
Queer		53	22%
Straight/heterosexual		6	2%
I prefer another word		21	9%

There are two particularly interesting features of the sexuality responses. Firstly, significant numbers of respondents describe themselves as asexual, which highlights the need for healthy relationships material to include asexual and aromantic people and their relationships.

Secondly, there are significantly more respondents describing themselves as bisexual/pansexual than any other sexuality. The only national data we have on young people’s sexualities also identified that secondary school students were four times more likely to describe themselves as “both sex” attracted than “same sex” attracted. [22]

The next demographic question asked people which ethnic groups they belonged to and offered the chance for people to tell us more about that if they wished. Respondents were able to tick multiple belongings. While those answering our survey belonged to diverse ethnic groups, our sample has lower percentages of Asian, Pacifica and Māori respondents, and a higher percentage of Pākehā/New Zealand European respondents than New Zealand census data. [23] This data is summarized to avoid identifying individual respondents.

Table 6: Which ethnic groups do you belong to?			
n=236		Responses	Percentage
Māori		25	11%
Pākehā/New Zealand European		196	83%
Pacifica		14	6%
Asian		19	8%
Another ethnic identity		15	6%



[22] Adolescent Health Research Group, (2014), Young People Attracted to the Same Sex or Both Sexes: Findings from the Youth '12 national youth health and wellbeing survey, The University of Auckland. This survey did not ask about asexual identities.

[23] 2018 Census Infographic, available https://www.stats.govt.nz/infographics/new-zealand-as-a-village-of-100-people-2018-census-data?gclid=Cj0KCQiAh4j-BRCsARIsAGeV12AEuhzQ8nSvZT3G2Qbx2yL08cyfgLEa-HqH97DB4l-d2E-GjuctcxAaAib9EALw_wcB

Respondents were also asked about health problems and conditions lasting for six months or more. Nearly half identified having difficulties with at least one area of their lives for at least six months. This question was answered by 232 respondents who provided 319 answers. Some respondents had multiple areas in which they experienced difficulty. New Zealand's most recent census figures suggests about one in four New Zealanders are disabled. [24]

Table 7: Does a health problem or a condition you have (lasting 6 months or more) cause you difficulty with or stop you from: n=232		
	Responses	Percentage
No difficulty with any of these	124	53%
Learning, concentrating or remembering	70	30%
Communicating, mixing with others or socialising	68	29%
Seeing, even when wearing glasses or contact lenses	28	12%
Walking, lifting or bending	21	9%
Hearing, even when using a hearing aid	5	2%
Using your hands to hold, grasp or use objects	3	1%

The final demographic question asked respondents which region they lived in. The strategy we adopted of sending the survey out through all secondary schools means there was good coverage from around the country.

Wellington and Canterbury were the regions from which we received most responses.



[24] Census Infographic, available <https://www.stats.govt.nz/infographics/the-disability-gap-2018>

Table 8: What region do you live in? n=247		Responses
Wellington		80
Canterbury		48
Waikato		36
Northland		28
Auckland		22
Otago		10
West Coast		10
Bay of Plenty		4
Manawatu - Whanganui		2
Hawkes Bay		2
Taranaki		2
Southland		1
Nelson		1
Tasman		1

