



# THE LINE

## CAMPAIGN SUMMARY REPORT



# THE LINE: RESEARCH SUMMARY REPORT

## COMFORT ZONE

*The Line* is a long-term campaign helping young people aged 14 to 20 in Australia understand what's ok and what's not when it comes to sex, dating and relationships.

As part of its latest initiative, Comfort Zone, Our Watch commissioned research in March 2025 into young people's understanding of healthy relationships, boundaries and controlling behaviours. The study surveyed 1000 young people aged 14 to 20 from across Australia.



## MANY YOUNG PEOPLE SAY THEY UNDERSTAND HEALTHY BOUNDARIES, BUT FEW FEEL CONFIDENT APPLYING THEM.

Many young people say they understand healthy boundaries and controlling behaviours, but common signs are still misunderstood and few feel fully confident applying their own boundaries.

### KEY FINDINGS

**92%** The majority of young people claim to **understand healthy boundaries (88%) and controlling behaviours (92%).**

**74%** Three quarters of young people claimed they could **confidently tell the difference** between the two.

**29%** However, more than a **quarter of young people confuse controlling behaviours as signs of healthy boundaries**: 27% thought being told you cannot walk away from an argument was a healthy boundary, and 29% thought forcing physical touch out of love was a healthy boundary.

**29%** Only 29% of young people **feel completely confident communicating their boundaries.**

**22%** Just 22% feel completely **confident knowing what to do when they feel uncomfortable, disrespected and/or unsafe in a relationship.**

**24%** Only 24% feel completely **confident taking action in resolving it.**

## YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL UNCERTAIN WHEN IT COMES TO IDENTIFYING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP BEHAVIOURS.

A third of young people confused unhealthy behaviours for healthy ones, and fewer than one in five feel sure about what makes a relationship healthy, highlighting an opportunity to build knowledge and confidence, especially among young men aged 14 to 17.

- A third of young people misidentified unhealthy relationship behaviours as healthy after 31% identified 'I have a right to know where my partner is most of the time' as a healthy relationship behaviour and 27% identified 'it's okay to be jealous because it means I care about my partner' as a healthy relationship behaviour.
- Only 18% of young people claimed they **know what makes a relationship healthy**.
- Half, 49%, of young men aged 14 to 17 are unsure, or **don't know, what makes a relationship healthy**.

## UNDERSTANDING OF CONSENT REMAINS INCONSISTENT.

Understanding of consent remains inconsistent, highlighting the need to strengthen young people's understanding in the context of gender and power dynamics

- One in three young people do not recognise consent violations as 'very serious': 35% identified 'a guy and girl were kissing, he was being really pushy trying to convince her to have sex' as not 'very serious', 35% identified 'a guy keeps asking his girlfriend to try something he'd seen in porn even though she's uncomfortable' as not 'very serious'.
- Over half, 54%, of surveyed young people **believe that if a guy wants to have sex with a girl, it's up to the girl to make it very clear she doesn't want to**.
- 15% of young people agreed that **'if a girl is drunk or affected by drugs, she is at least partly responsible for unwanted sex'**.

## CONCLUSION

The findings reveal a gap between young people's perceived knowledge and real-life confidence in relationships.

Bridging this gap requires youth engagement, research-informed resources, and evidence-based approaches to respectful relationships education in schools.



This research was conducted between 13 March 2025 and 2 April 2025 via an online survey. Quotas and weighting were applied to ensure balanced representation by age, gender and location. The project was carried out in line with the Market Research International Standard, ISO 20252. This research was reviewed by Bellberry Limited Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).