



Women  
With  
Disabilities  
Australia  
(WWDA)

# Our survey on sexual health

## How people find and use information

An Easy Read report



## How to use this report



Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) wrote this report.

When you see the word 'we', it means WWDA.



We wrote this report in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

**Bold**

We wrote some words in **bold**.

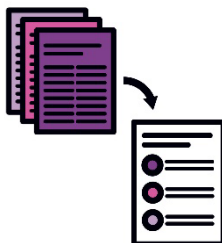
Not bold

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 26.



This Easy Read report is a summary of another report. This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other report on our website.

[www.wwda.org.au](http://www.wwda.org.au)



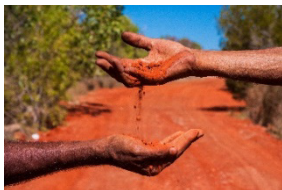
You can ask for help to read this report.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.



We recognise First Nations peoples as the traditional owners of our land – Australia.

They were the first people to live on and use the:



- land

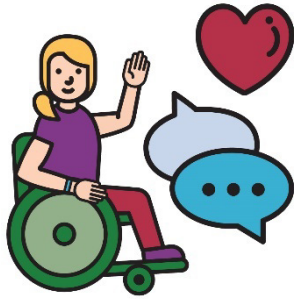


- waters.

## What's in this report?

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## What is this report about?

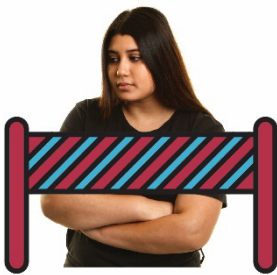


Everyone should be able to make their own decisions about their:

- bodies
- sexual health
- relationships.



But some people experience more **barriers** when they try to make their own decisions.



A barrier is something that stops you from doing something you:

- need to do
- want to do.

This includes:

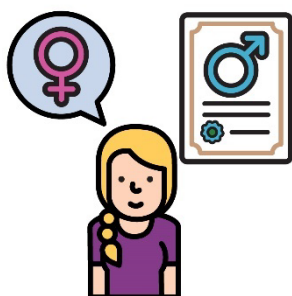


- young women with disability
- girls with disability
- **gender diverse** people with disability.



Your **gender** is what you feel and understand about who you are as a person.

It isn't about whether your body looks male or female.



A gender diverse person is someone:

- who feels like they don't fit the idea of being a man or a woman
- whose gender given to them when they were born doesn't match the gender they are.

## Who took part in the survey?



We asked people to take part in a survey in 2020.



The survey was for people in the Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) youth network.



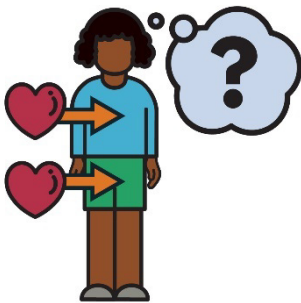
This includes:

- young women with disability
- girls with disability
- gender diverse people with disability.



We call the people who took part in the survey **participants**.

## What was the survey about?

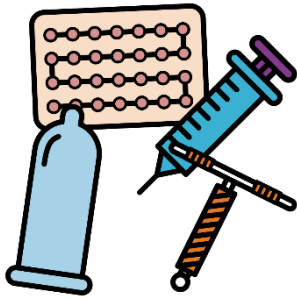


We wanted to find out how participants get information about their sexual health.

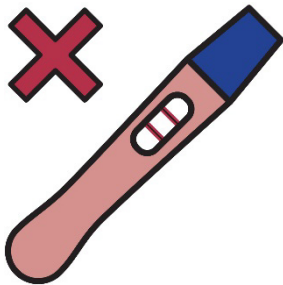


This includes **contraception**.

Contraception is products that can help you:



- have safe sex



- not become pregnant.



This also includes **menstruation**.



Menstruation is a kind of bleeding from the vagina.

It happens once a month.

People also call it a period.

Once you start having a period, you can get pregnant when you have sex.



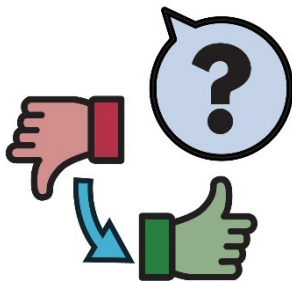


We also wanted to find out what challenges participants face when they make decisions.



And what support they need to:

- know what options they have
- make their own decisions.



We also wanted to find what participants want to happen to:

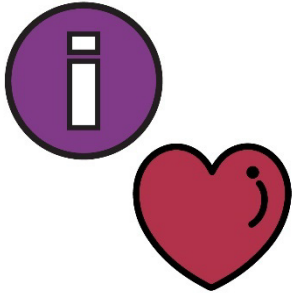
- fix things that stop them from making decisions
- support their **rights**.



Rights are rules about how you should be treated:

- fairly
- equally.

## What did we find out?



We learnt a lot about how participants get information about their sexual health.

## Contraception



We learnt that 1 in 6 participants did not choose their own contraception.



Someone else decided what contraception they use.

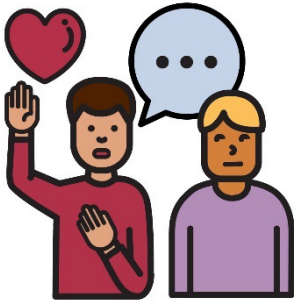
This might have been:



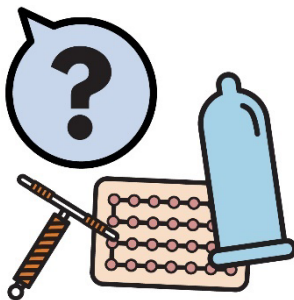
- a doctor



- a parent



- someone they have sex with.



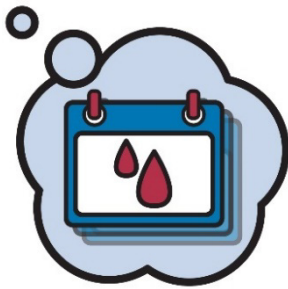
We asked participants to tell us how much they know about contraception.

We asked them to rate it out of 100.



On average the participants rate what they know as 67 out of 100.

## Menstruation



We learnt that 95% of participants:

- had experiences of menstruation
- expect to have experiences of menstruation in the future.



But participants rated what they know about menstruation as 79 out of 100.



40 participants shared that:

- their disability affects their menstruation
- an illness that lasts a long time affects their menstruation.



And 14 other participants think they do too.

But they haven't been told by a doctor.



This might be because it is harder for women and girls with disability to get medical support.



We found out that many participants experience a lot of pain from their menstruation.

## Other things participants told us



We learned that many participants did not get the support they need from doctors.



They want to talk to doctors about:

- contraception
- menstruation.

But often doctors don't:



- listen to them



- believe them

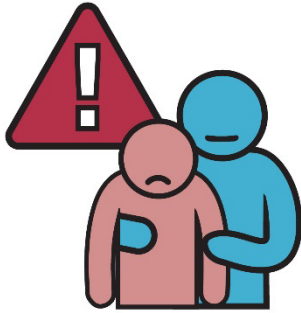


- give them the information they want.



We also learned that many participants don't know when to ask for help.

We learned that many participants have experienced **sexual assault**.



Sexual assault is when someone:

- makes you do sexual things you don't want to do
- does something sexual to you that you don't want them to do.



Participants shared that it's important to teach people about sex and relationships when they are younger.

They think this might help stop sexual assault.

## Challenges



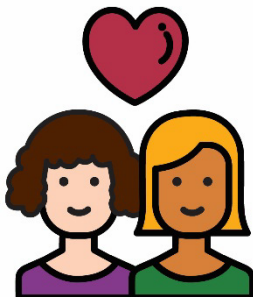
We found out about some challenges that participants face.

## Education about sex and relationships



Education about sex and relationships can be a barrier to young women and girls with disability.

This includes education about **sexuality**.



Your sexuality is who you:

- love
- are attracted to.

There are many different kinds of sexualities.



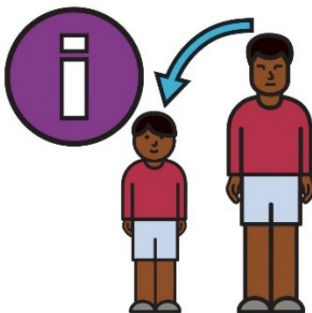


Education about sex and relationships should include people with different:

- disabilities
- types of bodies
- genders and sexualities.



But at the moment it doesn't.



People should get education about sex and relationships earlier than they do now.

And it should help them understand the rights of young women and girls with disability to:



- make their own decisions



- enjoy sex



- have privacy.

## Information for supporters



Many people want to support young women and girls with disability.



This includes:

- family and friends
- carers.



This also includes:

- teachers
- health professionals – like doctors.



But they need more information to understand how to support the rights of young women and girls with disability.

## Accessible support



Young women and girls with disability need **accessible**:

- information
- support.



When information and support are accessible, they are easy to:

- find and use
- understand.



People who provide support should think about what young women and girls with disability need.

And make sure their services are accessible.

## Barriers



1 in 4 participants told us they worry about being able to pay for menstruation products.



They might have to rely on other people for them.



Many participants also shared times they talked to people about their:

- sexual health
- rights.

For example:



- family and friends
- teachers
- health professionals – like doctors.



They shared that these people treated them:

- differently
- badly.

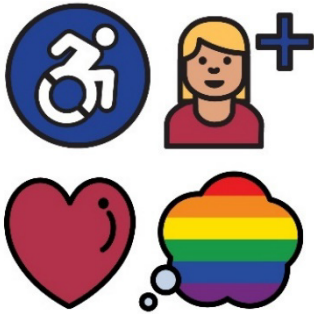


This makes it harder for them to get the help they need.

## What needs to change?



Participants told us they want information that meets their needs.



This means it must include people with different:

- disabilities
- types of bodies
- genders and sexualities.

It should explain important ideas, such as:



- their rights



- how they can use health care



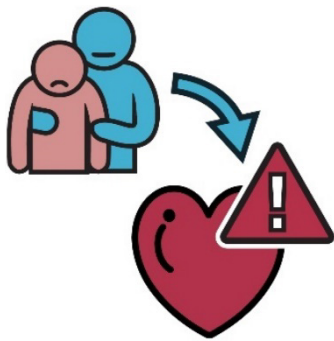
- how other people should protect their personal information.



Participants also want information to understand:

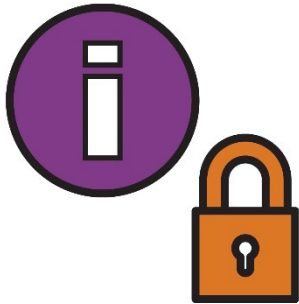
- sexual assault
- sex and relationships.





Information should also explain how sexual assault can affect people's sexual health.

And it should help the community understand this.



It should also be easy to find and use information:

- in a private way
- so other people don't know.

## Word list

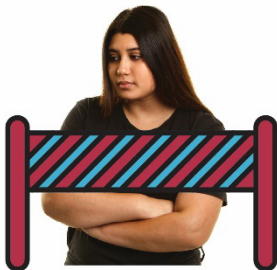
This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



### **Accessible**

When information and support are accessible, they are easy to:

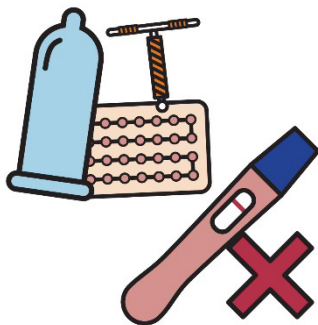
- find and use
- understand.



### **Barrier**

A barrier is something that stops you from doing something you:

- need to do
- want to do.



### **Contraception**

Contraception is products that can help you:

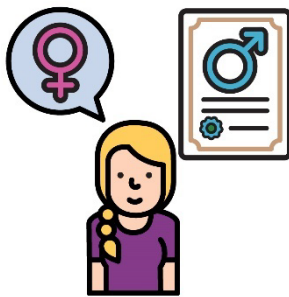
- have safe sex
- not become pregnant.



## Gender

Your gender is what you feel and understand about who you are as a person.

It isn't about whether your body looks male or female.



## Gender diverse

A gender diverse person is someone:

- who feels like they don't fit the idea of being a man or a woman
- whose gender given to them when they were born doesn't match the gender they are.



## Menstruation

Menstruation is a kind of bleeding from the vagina.

It happens once a month.

People also call it a period.

Once you start having a period, you can get pregnant when you have sex.



## Participants

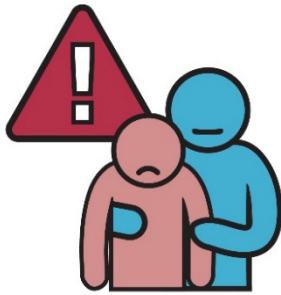
Participants are people who took part in the survey.



## Rights

Rights are rules about how you should be treated:

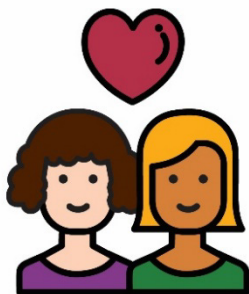
- fairly
- equally.



## Sexual assault

Sexual assault is when someone:

- makes you do sexual things you don't want to do
- does something sexual to you that you don't want them to do.



## Sexuality

Your sexuality is who you:

- love
- are attracted to.

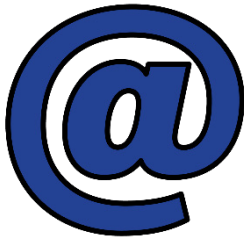
There are many different kinds of sexualities.

## Contact us



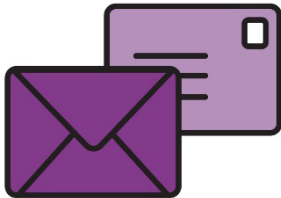
You can call us.

**0438 535 123**



You can send us an email.

**[officeadmin@wwda.org.au](mailto:officeadmin@wwda.org.au)**



You can write to us.

PO Box 407

Lenah Valley

7008 Tasmania Australia



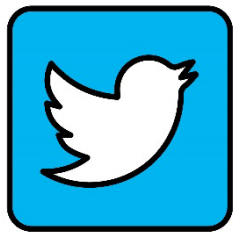
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