

WHY COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION MATTERS



SWEDISH GENDER
EQUALITY AGENCY

COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION A GLOBAL CONCERN

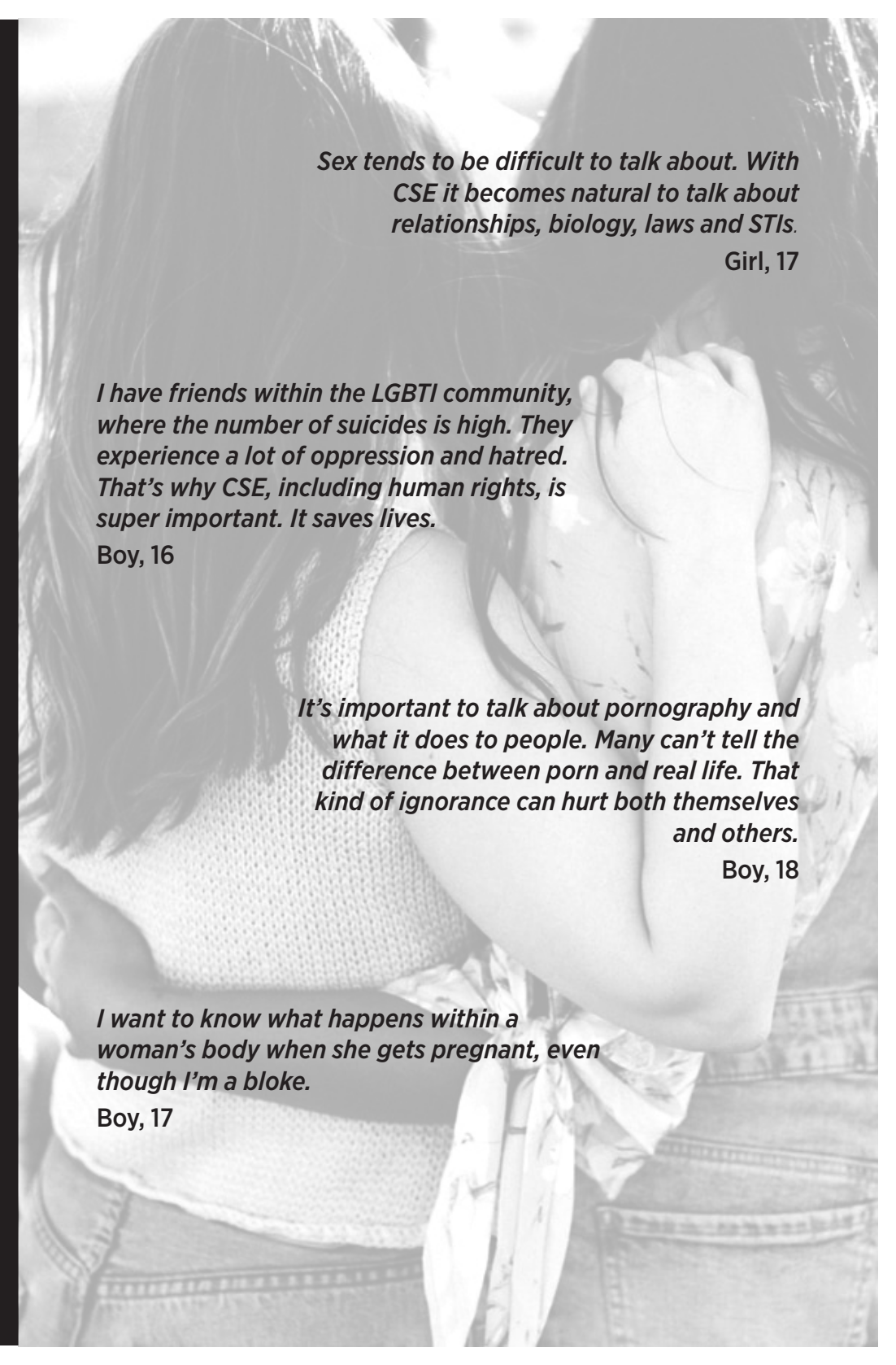
Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) plays a central role in the preparation of young people for a safe, productive and fulfilling life in a world where gender inequality, gender-based violence, HIV and AIDS, sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancies still pose serious risks to their wellbeing.

CSE empowers young people to make informed decisions about relationships, sexuality, bodily integrity and respect for others. CSE is also important as it can help young people reflect on social norms, cultural values and traditional and religious beliefs, in order to better understand and manage their relationships with peers, parents, teachers and their communities.

CSE builds on and promotes an understanding of universal human rights, including the rights of the child and the rights of all persons to gender equality, non-discrimination, health and education.

There is clear and compelling evidence for the benefits of high-quality, age-appropriate, scientifically accurate, culturally relevant, curriculum-based CSE – particularly when addressing gender, power dynamics and social norms.

For more information see the fully updated *UN International technical guidance on sexuality education: An evidence-informed approach* that presents the evidence base and rationale for delivering comprehensive sexuality education to young people in order to achieve the global Sustainable Development Goals.



Sex tends to be difficult to talk about. With CSE it becomes natural to talk about relationships, biology, laws and STIs.

Girl, 17

I have friends within the LGBTI community, where the number of suicides is high. They experience a lot of oppression and hatred. That's why CSE, including human rights, is super important. It saves lives.

Boy, 16

It's important to talk about pornography and what it does to people. Many can't tell the difference between porn and real life. That kind of ignorance can hurt both themselves and others.

Boy, 18

I want to know what happens within a woman's body when she gets pregnant, even though I'm a bloke.

Boy, 17

Compulsory sex education was introduced in Swedish schools in 1955 and has evolved ever since. The Swedish model for CSE is curriculum-based and integrated within a range of subjects, proceeding from the needs of the pupils at various ages. Terms such as sexuality, relationships, gender equality and norms are included in several of the course and subject syllabuses for compulsory and upper secondary school, as well as adult education. From mid 2022, porn-critical discussions, consent and information about honour-related violence will also be included as mandatory in the different curriculums.

The Swedish National Agency for Education governs this work through the curricula and provides support to schools, which in turn decide how teaching is structured and organised. Authorities such as the Public Health Agency of Sweden and the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society have played an important role in producing a knowledge base, and also allocate funds to other actors. Several county councils work actively with prevention in terms of sexual health, and have initiatives targeted at schools.

Many other actors in Swedish society have also long contributed by supporting school staff with knowledge, teaching materials and to develop their working methods. Non-governmental organisations are, and have been, key to increasing staff expertise, and thereby developing the CSE provided in schools.

This collaboration between government authorities and non-governmental organisations is widely recognised as important in order to develop the CSE provided in Swedish schools.

For more information, please visit:

[Youmo.se](https://youmo.se), a website by the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society
[Skolverket.se](https://skolverket.se), the official site of the Swedish National Agency for Education
[Folkhalsomyndigheten.se](https://folkhalsomyndigheten.se), the official site of the Public Health Agency of Sweden.

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