The Shark Cage® Program for Young Women*

A Human Rights approach to gender violence and healthy relationships

Program Summary

What is The Shark Cage Program for Young Women?

The program utilises the Shark Cage Framework. The framework was developed by Melbourne psychologist, Ursula Benstead, to provide an accessible explanation for re-victimisation in girls and women that does not blame the victim. It is based on 25 years of clinical experience with girls and women who have experienced abuse and violence. The framework is built on a metaphor based on human rights.

The Shark Cage Program for Young Women is informed by the highly successful and evidence-based Shark Cage Group Program for Women, currently being delivered across Australia by a range of community services that support women who have had multiple experiences of family violence and/or sexual assault. The adult program has been delivered since 2011, with approximately 15 facilitator training sessions held nationally each year to meet the demand for workers to be trained up to deliver the Shark Cage group program to women. The young women's program is co-authored by a psychologist and a teacher. The program synthesises their wealth of theoretical and practical expertise in their respective fields.

Understanding the Shark Cage metaphor

The metaphor is the first step in the five-step framework. The metaphor is of the ocean, full of friendly harmless fish and dolphins, but also sharks. A strong Shark Cage helps girls and women identify people who use abusive behaviors and, if possible, to avoid or minimize future contact with that person. Each bar of the Shark Cage represents an important human right. These bars are installed when girls are growing up, as a result of their experiences and messages they have received from care givers, family, peers, communities and broader society about their worth and rights. Some bars may be strong, some may be weaker and some may be missing altogether.

The metaphor is reinforced with fun and creative activities, including a large-scale mural that all participants contribute to creating.

If another sea creature bumps up against a bar, it sets off an alarm of body sensations and emotions that are connected to a sense of rights. This is the Shark Cage alarm. The fish will know to swim away, if possible, because the alarm has warned them that this other sea creature is possibly a shark. This person using the shark like behavior is potentially dangerous because they have disrespected a basic right, such as the right to personal space or the right to say no to things that make them uncomfortable.

*the program is accessible to teens who identify as female, trans, queer or non-binary & relate to the program objectives

The framework helps girls reflect on Shark Cage bars that they already have, bars that need installing or strengthening, how to do this renovation work, how to know when the alarm in their Shark Cage is going off and how to defend their Shark Cage of rights when it is safe to do so.

Why was a young women's version of the program developed?

The Shark Cage Program for Young Women was written to meet a demand for a youth and school-friendly version of the adult program that focused on prevention and could be delivered by agency and school staff in a sustainable and ongoing way.

What are the learning objectives of the program?

1. Increase knowledge of healthy and unhealthy relationships.
2. Increase capacity to set boundaries.
3. Increase skills in respectful assertive communication.
4. Increase understanding of consent
5. Decrease victim blaming attitudes
6. Increase the ability to care for and be kind to themselves.
7. Increase awareness of 'gut feeling' about people and situations
8. Increase sense of self-worth.
9. Increase belief in their entitlement to rights.
10. Increase ability to recognise a potentially abusive or exploitative person.
11. Increase awareness and respect for the rights of others

How does this program fit with other Respectful Relationships programs?

This program is designed to complement a range of other Respectful Relationships programs aimed at all genders. Whilst it is imperative that male identifying teens learn about their rights and the rights of others, this program is designed for those who identify more with the experience of being female. This may include teens who identify as trans, non-binary or queer as well as cis-gendered female teens. It aims to create a safe space to address issues that may be difficult for some to fully explore with boys or men present. The objectives of the program meet different State and Territory directives to include material relating to Healthy Relationships into the syllabus of schools.

How is the program delivered?

The program has been delivered in two ways:

- One full-day workshop (six hours).
- Seven x 90-minute sessions, designed to be delivered during a double lesson period

The one-day program has been successfully delivered in three schools: 2 regional NSW government high schools and a boarding school for aboriginal girls in regional Victoria. The success of the one-day program led to a demand for a more comprehensive 7-week program which allowed more time for consolidation of the new learnings. Research in the field also indicates that the more sessions and deeper exploration of issues has an increased potential to bring about changes in behavior (Flood, Fergus & Heenan, 2009). For this reason, development of the program has focused on the 7-session version.

How has the program been piloted and evaluated in schools?

A. One day program (54 students across the 3 schools). Evaluations provided the following data:

1. I understood most of what was talked about today:	100% agreed
2. I know more about my rights now:	96% agreed
3. I will recognise a shark better after today:	98% agree
4. The workshop talks about things that are important for girls to know:	96% agreed

B. The seven-session program has been piloted in one Victorian and one NSW high school.

A total of 40 students between the ages of 12 & 16 participated across four group programs run in 2018. More detailed demographics are available on request. The qualitative and quantitative data indicated that overall the young women found the Shark Cage Program informative, engaging and fun. Like the adult women, they responded to the imaginative, visual and activity-based way that material about human rights and gender violence was delivered. Across the 4 groups and 28 sessions delivered, between 85 and 95% of young women agreed that they would be able to use what they had learnt in the session in their life (full data and sample session evaluation form available on request). See pg.5 of this document for an over-view of the 7 session program.

What are students and teachers saying about the program?

Some comments from young women who participated in the workshops:

"Sharks & Dolphins makes you understand. I liked how we got to do lots of fun things but still learnt lots and it will help us with our future."

"I liked that it is alright to say no and we learnt our rights for relationships: physically, mentally, financially and spiritually."

"I will be able to use everything that I have learnt in this program in my life"

"I know now that I can tell someone if I am being harassed and ask for help"

"I liked that it makes every girl understand that she is beautiful."

"I liked that it was really fun and creative. What we got to do with the shark, fish, dolphins and bars. It was a fun way to learn about respect for your rights."

"I liked that the information we talked about will be used in real life and it is okay to say no."

"I now understand more about my rights and understand how to recognise sharks."

"I will take a lot out of today that I will take away and use."

Some comments from staff who facilitated the schools' workshops:

"I think this is an excellent and valuable program"

"The Shark Cage bars were a success. The girls wrote very thought-provoking rights "

"I've loved the enthusiasm and questions from the girls and the things they say they have learnt"

"I liked the way the students engaged with the information…Especially the consent and human rights information. Students enjoyed writing their own scenarios"

"It is set out brilliantly and so easy to follow"

"We have had parents calling up the school requesting that their child complete the program"

"Students have loved the program and would have liked it to continue"

Contact details for the schools who ran the seven-session pilot program are available on request.

Accreditation & Program Delivery

To become accredited to deliver the program in their school or agency, teachers and professionals are required to complete an accreditation process, which includes:

- Attend the training: Foundational Shark Cage: A practical framework for prevention & addressing re-victimisation in girls and women (Part 1 Training)
- Attend the training: Facilitating the Shark Cage Program for Young Women (Part 2 Training)
- The school or service intending to run the program entering into a Services Agreement with Ursula Benstead Consulting that details how the program material can be used and run. Please refer to the pro-forma Services Agreement provided.
- Complete a supervision consultation with Ursula Benstead (with set tasks/reflections) whilst they are running their first Shark Cage Program for Young Women as provisional facilitators.

After the successful completion of the accreditation tasks and the running of one group, facilitators are granted full accreditation status as a facilitator for The Shark Cage Program for Young Women.

Accreditation includes:

- Total of 16 hours training
- A bound manual with detailed session plans and teacher resources such as work sheets and one-page condensed running sheets for each session
- A USB with a PowerPoint guide for each session and PDF's of all worksheets & forms and The Shark Cage animation

The accreditation process and Services Agreement has been developed to ensure the integrity & fidelity of the program is maintained and to ensure lead facilitators have a critical base knowledge about drivers of gender violence, consent and skills in managing potential disclosures. Please refer to pages 6-8 for more detail regarding accreditation, pricing & training options.

Ursula Benstead is a psychologist in private practice in Melbourne. She has 30 years' experience in the field of complex trauma, particularly in the areas of family/domestic violence and sexual assault. She is the author of The Shark Cage Group Program Manual: A human rights approach to empowerment & healing for women who have experienced sexual assault or family violence, How to Spot a Shark: 5 Steps to Healing from Abusive Relationships and co-author of The Shark Cage Program for Young Women: A human rights approach to gender violence and healthy relationships. Ursula has provided Shark Cage training in Australia and internationally to over 10,000 professionals.

Angelle Hughes is an educator situated in central Queensland, Australia. She considers gender equality to be fundamental to a healthy society and actively promotes equality and respectful relationships in schools and community environments. Angelle is passionate about science education and reducing the gender disparity in STEM fields, helping young women to challenge the internalised societal views that limit women when choosing careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. As a martial arts instructor, Angelle teaches respect and self-defence to both men and women. She has over a decade of experience supporting adolescents and their parents as a teacher and as a leader in community programs.

More information

For more information about the program, accreditation and cost info@thesharkcage.com. For general information about Ursula and The Shark Cage visit www.thesharkcage.com.

The Shark Cage® Program for young women: Brief overview

Session 1: Exploring gender & the Shark Cage Metaphor
What does it mean to be a girl or a boy? How can the Shark Cage Metaphor help us to understand how our sense of human rights can be supported and not supported as we grow up?

Session 2: Human rights & renovating the Shark Cage
In this session we explore the categories of Human Rights that make up the bars of our Shark Cage. A strong Shark Cage can help us to know the difference between people who may hurt us and people who support us. In this session we will begin to renovate and strengthen our Shark Cages.

Session 3: Self-care & fixing the Shark Cage alarm
Looking after ourselves is vital for a healthy, happy and balanced life. In this session we will look at self-care. We will also investigate our internal Shark Cage alarm which lets us know when someone is nudging up against a bar in our Shark Cage. This is like strengthening our 'gut feeling' that tells us something doesn't feel right.

Session 4: Yoga session & defending the Shark Cage
As an extension of the importance of self-care, healthy coping strategies and connection to our body, we will do a short yoga session. We then learn strategies to defend our Shark Cage when it is safe to do so.

Session 5: Practicing Assertiveness & healthy coping strategies
In this session, we will practise assertive communication, an important skill for letting people know what we need or want and recognising when our communication style is disrespectful of the rights of others. We will also further explore and build on healthy coping strategies.

Session 6: Recognising shark and dolphin behaviours
This session we will explore how shark-like behaviours disrespect our rights and dolphin-like behaviours support our rights. We will discuss how to identify the different behaviours. Participants will also have opportunities to reflect on the rights of others and how they can respect those rights in the way they choose to interact with others.

Session 7: Building self-worth and celebrating our strengths.
In the final session we will explore our strengths and positive things about ourselves. We will also reflect on all the things that we have learned in the program and celebrate our achievements. We will work together to build an Ocean art mural that represents all our work during the program and brings the Shark Cage metaphor to life.

The Shark Cage® is a registered trademark of Ursula Benstead.

Accreditation Process, Services Agreement & Fees

Step A: Training of facilitators.

Professionals wishing to become accredited facilitators need to complete the two separate trainings. Both trainings are offered as live, interactive online training with Ursula with strictly limited numbers in each training. **Inhouse training can be also be provided. Costs vary according to location. Please contact us for a tailored quotation.**

Step B: Annual Service Agreement.

The school or service running the program is required to enter into a services agreement with Ursula Benstead Consulting that details how the program material can be used. Please refer to the Standard Services Agreement provided. The Services Agreement has a set up fee of $275 and a once off $295 charge for a joint digital consultation whilst facilitators run their first group. This fee includes time taken to review set tasks and reflections. This consultation is part of the accreditation process.

Set up Service Agreement fee of $275.00 (inc GST) plus a one-off cost of $295 (inc GST) for a joint facilitator supervision session and review of set reflections whist running first group.

TOTAL INITIAL COST: $570.00 (inc GST)

TOTAL ONGOING COST AFTER ACCREDITION: $192.50 for a mural kit for each group run after the initial group (approx. $2.30 per participant per session for a group of 12)

Procedure:

1. **Attend the training session: Foundational Shark Cage: A practical framework for prevention & addressing re-victimisation in girls and women (Part 1 Training). This is a pre- requisite for Part 2 training.**

   One day face to face public training or two 4 hour live webinars $520 inc GST

   Inclusive of:

- Eight hours of training
- Training day resources
- Professional Development Certificate
- Catering (Face to Face only)

2. **Attend the training session: Facilitating the Shark Cage Program for Young Women: A Human Rights Approach to Gender Violence, Healthy Relationships & Gender Equality (Part 2 Training)**

   Two 4 hour live webinars- $799 per participant (inc. GST)

   Inclusive of:

- A bound edition of the Program Manual (worth $110.00). Note this manual is part of the accreditation process and is not sold separately.
- Electronic resources including 7 Power Point session guides & other electronic resources (worth $295.00)

- Professional Development Certificate

Step C: Supervision

A 60 minute supervision consultation with Ursula Benstead (with set tasks/reflections) whilst facilitators are running a Shark Cage Program for Young Women as a provisional facilitator. The consultation, which includes time spent reviewing set task material prior to the consultation costs $295 (inc GST). This cost is part of the initial Services Agreement set up with facilitator employers prior to registration for training. The session is a one-off requirement for the facilitator(s) engaged in the accreditation process. If only one facilitator is trained and engaged in the accreditation process, they can choose to invite the assistant facilitator to attend the consultation. If additional consultation sessions are required additional charges apply.

TOTAL COST OF TRAINING PER PARTICIPANT FOR PUBLIC TRAINING:

A; If Part 1 pre-requisite training already complete.	$799.00 (inc GST).
B; Including pre-requisite Part 1 training.	$1319.00 (inc GST).

To become an accredited facilitator & run groups, the participant's organisation must enter into a Services Agreement with Ursula Benstead Consulting. The services agreement has a $275.00 set up fee plus the initial one off $295 for the consultation session whilst running their first group required for accreditation.

Please contact us for information regarding the next online or face to face trainings. We can also provide in-house training for your organisation.

To discuss the Services Agreement and register for the training beginning the accreditation process, please contact us at info@thesharkcage.com

All costs are accurate as of April 2023. Costs are reviewed annually and may be subject to change.