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## Respect and Connect: New name for healthy relationships schools program working to prevent family violence

[Melbourne, Australia] – Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) is proud to announce the launch of Respect and Connect, the new name for its flagship preventative healthy relationships program for schools, formerly known as ‘I like, like you’.

Over the past decade, Respect and Connect has reached over 12,000 Victorian students in years 5-9, uniquely equipping them with essential skills across the areas of mental wellbeing, gender equality and healthy relationships. This type of universal primary prevention approach is an important component of ending gender-based violence, as evidence shows that teaching young people healthy relationship skills, and strengthening their social and emotional skills, is one of the best ways to support safe relationships, improve health and wellbeing, and reduce the prevalence of family violence.

Family violence continues to be a serious and pervasive issue that disproportionately affects women and girls. We know that more needs to be done, and primary prevention is an essential part of stopping further violence before it starts. By delivering preventative education to young people in the classroom and exploring what a healthy relationship means to them, we’re working to combat this violence for the next generation.

Delivered on-site to individual school classes by experienced facilitators, the program’s interactive format fosters the development of self-awareness, empathy, and conflict resolution skills in a safe and supportive environment. Students and teachers alike have noted positive outcomes, including improved communication skills, a deeper understanding of emotions and an awareness of gender equality.

‘These skills are known protective factors, and our program consistently demonstrates improvements in communication, conflict resolution, and understanding healthy relationships, which underpin safe and respectful relationships,’ Eva Kaufman, Coordinator of the Respect and Connect program, said.

Ms Kaufman said that the renaming of the program reflects the program’s core message: fostering respect as the foundation for positive connection, safe relationships and family violence prevention.

‘Healthy relationships start with respect – for ourselves, others and our communities, and our program is a testament to the power of education in shaping a safer, more respectful future,’ Ms Kaufman said.

Braybrook Secondary School year 8 student, Jasmine, who participated in the program, said that ‘if many Victorian kids did Respect and Connect, the society would be a better place’.

To learn more about Respect and Connect, hear about its impact, see the program in action at Braybrook Secondary College in a new short video, or enquire about bringing the program to your school in 2025, visit [rav.org.au/schools/respect-connect](https://rav.org.au/schools/respect-connect).

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