

Consent

Understanding consent, more precisely consensual sex, is of ultimate importance.

Consent is both confusing and simple. I hope you find this enlightening.

Please exercise caution when reading this as it may be triggering.

Consent education may not prevent rapists from raping. I do believe it is important to learn though because it helps educate you on the very basis of sexual violence. It confirms to you that what happened to you was wrong; it is wrong for anyone to have any sexual contact with you without your consent. If you understand consent there will ideally be less self blame in the _____ event that sexual violence takes place.

Consent is a public health issue and everybody should be educated on it starting in childhood.

Teaching a person about consent doesn't give them permission to have sex, rather gives them permission to have a voice that is heard and respected. This is how we best protect our children from abuse.

You have the right to get consent for all contact and not just sexual. The best way to start is by using it yourself. If you want to touch someone, ask them for permission first. Each individual should have permission to not have to give or accept any unwanted contact from ANYONE that doesn't feel safe, comfortable and right for them.

Consent is something that you have to give and receive from others.

The best way to get consent is to **ask**. Consent is key to good, fun, mutually respectful sex. Communication is vital. Consent should be mandatory/required for sexual activity. Pay attention to body language, but do not rely on it. Listen carefully. Establish limits. Consent means making sure everyone is on the same page.

What defines an act as sexual violence is lack of consent, not the identity and behavior of the victim. It is a violation of a boundary.

You can't buy consent or take consent from somebody. No one owes sex. If someone does not or cannot consent to sex, it's rape. A crime in most places.

Consent does not vary based upon a person's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Certain clothes, flirting, or kissing is not an invitation for anything more.

Consent is an agreement between two participants to engage in sexual activity. It is the responsibility of each person who wishes to engage in the sexual activity to obtain consent by exchanging permission/approval in agreement. Consent does not need to be verbal, but it helps you and your partner respect each other's boundaries, wants, and needs. Consent is **informed**, **freely** and **actively** given, and **mutually** understood. Both parties should be really, truly into what is going on.

Ask why you are having sex in the first place.

Ask if you are being honest with your partner. Birth Control, STDs, other partners...

“Yes means yes” Yes means consent. It requires an **affirmative**, conscious and voluntary agreement between individuals before beginning/engaging in sexual activity. You must have explicit permission before engaging in any touching, kissing or other sexual activity.

No means no. This can be verbal or nonverbal/physical (e.g. crying, kicking, moving/pulling away, or pushing away)

The absence of “no” is not a “yes.” A lack of protest, the absence of resistance, and silence do not indicate consent.

Past consent of sexual activities/interactions does not imply ongoing future consent to sexual activity. Never assume consent. NOBODY is ever obligated to give consent just because they have done so in the past.

Make sure each step in a sexual encounter is met with consent. If you want to initiate things to another level, ask first so everyone is **clear**. Be specific. Do not assume. Consent to one form of sexual activity does not imply consent to other forms of sexual activity. Sexual activity can start out as consensual and turn into a sexual assault. Consent doesn't need to interrupt sex; it can be a part of sex. Check in and build intimacy. Consent is an enthusiastic, clearly communicated and ongoing yes that can enhance sexual interactions. Share your comfort level and clearly express what is wanted.

Consent is unambiguous, not open to more than one interpretation.

You can withdraw consent at any point during an encounter if you feel uncomfortable. Communicate to your partner that you are no longer comfortable with this activity and wish to stop. All sexual activity must stop. Even if it was agreed to earlier.

If you are confused or unsure about the state of consent, sexual activity must stop until both parties consent again. An example would be if the other person is not actively participating.

Both people must be able to consent.

A person must be able to say no to sexual activity without the use of fear, physical force, trickery, intimidation, threats and/or coercion. Pressuring, persuading, convincing, manipulation, bribery, guilting, or harassing someone into saying yes or doing things they may not want to do is NOT consent.

Are both parties of legal age to give consent, as defined by the state?

statutory rape: sexual activity/intercourse/relations in which at least one person is below the legal age of consent

The presence of consent and force is irrelevant.

The legal age of consent for sex exists because of vulnerability due to age. Individuals do not have the maturity and judgment to consent yet.

A misuse/abuse of position of power/position of authority/position of influence could quite possibly be involved.

- Age of consent for sex varies by state.
- Age of consent for marriage varies by state.
- Statutory rape laws vary by state.

Is there an inability to communicate because of a physical or mental condition?

If an individual is unable to understand the fact, nature or extent of the sexual situation because of mental or physical incapacitation, impairment, or helplessness there is no consent. Cognitive impairments (such as intellectual disabilities, traumatic brain injury, and dementia) can temporarily or permanently prevent a person from being able to legally consent to sexual activity.

If an individual is incapacitated or (substantially?) impaired due to the influence of drugs or alcohol, even 'yes' means 'no'. A person who is intoxicated is not legally capable of consenting to sexual acts because it impacts decision making.

An individual who is asleep, unconscious, or involuntarily physically restrained cannot give consent.

Sex education on consent should include that some people don't want to have sex at all and that's okay. It gives space to exist, improves overall understanding, and involves feelings. Asexual or Ace is an identity which means a person who does not experience sexual attraction.

Nonconsensual sex is rape. **Don't rape.**

Sex is about connection and pleasure. Consent is not the goal, but is necessary.

Additional Resources:

We-Consent is an app that exists, but it is very controversial. It is not recommended.

A great resource: <http://www.nsvrc.org/publications/its-time-talk-about-consent>

Videos and comic strip on consent:

2 Minutes Will Change the Way You Think About Consent by CampusClarity

<https://youtu.be/laMtr-rUEmY>

What If We Treated All Consent Like Society Treats Sexual Consent?

<http://everydayfeminism.com/2015/06/how-society-treats-consent/>

Understand Consent With the Help of Stick Figures and a Cup of Tea

(some believe it dilutes the gravity of rape)

<https://magazine.good.is/articles/tea-never-looked-so-good>

- Tea Consent (Clean) by Blue Seat Studios <https://youtu.be/fGoWlWS4-kU>
- <http://metro.co.uk/2015/10/28/this-new-sexual-consent-and-tea-video-from-the-police-is-brilliant-5466392/#4583678641001>

Cycling Through Consent

<https://youtu.be/-JwKjRaUaw>

WANNA HAVE SEX? (CONSENT 101)

<https://youtu.be/TD2EooMhqRI>

Guante - "Consent at 10,000 Feet" by Button Poetry

<https://youtu.be/VzR5Wjnk2hk>

Within the United States the laws vary by state and situation on how they define someone's ability or inability to consent to sex, so as you could imagine it varies greatly worldwide as well. To find out how they vary throughout the United States we have two resources below:

1. Find out how consent is defined in your state with the State Law Database: <https://apps.rainn.org/policy/>
2. See the "Yes Means Yes" campus and legislative policy being tracked within the US: <http://affirmativeconsent.com/affirmative-consent-laws-state-by-state/>

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TEACH AFFIRMATIVE/ENTHUSIASTIC CONSENT #KnowNo
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Resources that help you educate a person on consent as they grow in age:

EMPOWER and LISTEN to your child(ren).

Be age appropriate.

Do not demand. Ask.

- <http://everydayfeminism.com/2013/03/teaching-kids-consent-ages-1-21/>
- <http://www.npr.org/2013/04/11/176930960/how-parents-talk-to-children-about-consent>

- <http://www.bustle.com/articles/110834-6-ways-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-consent>
- <https://www.rainn.org/articles/what-is-consent>
- <http://onehundredconversations.squarespace.com/100conversations/category/consent>
- <http://www.todayparent.com/blogs/tp-loves/this-moms-super-cute-video-explains-consent-in-a-kid-friendly-way/>