



# The Importance of Consent

Consent for any sexual activity is the centerpiece for preventing sexual coercion and unwanted sexual behavior. Consent can and should be incorporated as an essential and fun part of sexual communication. Likewise, it is a vital component of mutual pleasure and healthy sexuality.



## What is consent?

- Consent is a voluntary, sober, imaginative, enthusiastic, creative, wanted, informed, mutual, honest, and verbal agreement.
- Consent is an active agreement; Consent cannot be coerced.
- Consent is a process, which must be asked for every step of the way; if you want to move to the next level of sexual intimacy, just ask.
- Consent is never implied and cannot be assumed, even in the context of a relationship. Just because you are in a relationship does not mean that you have permission to have sex with your partner.
- A person who is intoxicated cannot legally give consent. If you're too drunk to make decisions and communicate with your partner, you're too drunk to consent.
- The absence of a "no" doesn't mean "yes."
- Both people should be involved in the decision to have sex.
- It is not sexy to have sex without consent!

## Why is consent important?

- Communication, respect, and honesty make sex and relationships better.
- Asking for and obtaining consent shows that you have respect for both yourself and your partner.
- Positive views on sex and sexuality are empowering.
- It questions traditional views about gender and sexuality.
- It eliminates the entitlement that one partner feels over the other. Neither your body nor your sexuality belongs to someone else.
- It is normal and healthy for women to expect to be included in the consent process.

**“NO” NEVER MEANS “YES”** Absence of a “NO” is not consent.

### Get a “YES” -- EVERY TIME

- Saying “YES” while intoxicated is not consent.
- Saying “YES” to kissing is not consent for oral sex.
- Saying “YES” to oral sex is not consent for sex.
- Saying “YES” to sex with one person is not consent for sex with another.

GET CONSENT AT EACH STEP



## Gauging Consent

### Red: Signs You Should Stop

You are too intoxicated to gauge or give consent.  
Your partner is asleep or passed out.  
You hope your partner will say nothing and go with the flow.  
You intend to have sex by any means necessary.



### Yellow: Signs You Should Pause and Talk

You are not sure what the other person wants.  
You feel like you are getting mixed signals.  
You have not talked about what you want to do.  
You assume that you will do the same thing as before.  
Your partner stops or is not responsive.



### Green: Keep Communicating

Partners come to a mutual decision about how far to go.  
Partners clearly express their comfort with the situation.  
You feel comfortable and safe stopping at any time.  
Partners are excited!



## ASKING FOR CONSENT

Show your partner that you respect her/him enough to ask about her/his sexual needs and desires. If you are not accustomed to communicating with your partner about sex and sexual activity, the first few times may feel awkward. But, practice makes perfect. Be creative and spontaneous. Don't give up. The more times you have these conversations with your partner, the more comfortable you will become communicating about sex and sexual activity. Your partner may also find the situation awkward at first, but over time you will both be more secure in yourselves and your relationship.



**When?** Before you act. It is the responsibility of the person initiating a sex act to obtain clear consent. Whenever you are unsure if consent has been given, ask. Check-in throughout. Giving consent ahead of time does not waive a person's right to change their mind or say no later.

**How?** Consent is not just about getting a yes or no answer, but about understanding what a partner is feeling. Ask open-ended questions. Listen to and respect your partner's response, whether you hear yes or no: "I'd really like to . . . how does that sound?" "How does this feel?" "What would you like to do?"

### *Before you have sex, ask yourself...*

Have I expressed what I want? Do I know what my partner wants? Am I certain that consent has been given? Is my potential partner sober enough to decide whether or not to have sex? Am I sober enough to know that I've correctly gauged consent?