

Understanding Consent

IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT SEX



Consent is permission or agreement for something to happen. We practice consent in all aspects of our lives, with various people in our lives. It can look like asking someone if we can hug them, if we can borrow their pencil, or if we can give them a call to chat.

IT'S IMPORTANT IN ALL RELATIONSHIPS



We all deserve to be treated with respect. Consent is foundational to any healthy relationship, whether with friends, family, acquaintances, or a partner. When we know that our choices and decisions matter, it helps us feel safe and comfortable. Asking what someone's into or comfortable with is a great way to get to know someone better, too!

THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR A "NO"

Consent isn't about just getting a "yes" from someone. For consent to be meaningful, "yes" and "no" must be equal options. You shouldn't force, pressure, or coerce a "yes" out of someone. Even if it might be hard or disappointing to hear a "no," we need to be ready to respect any answer.



UNDERSTAND BOUNDARIES

Boundaries are personal guidelines for what we are okay with and not okay with. Asking someone what their boundaries are is what consent is all about. By thinking through and creating awareness of our own boundaries, we can better understand the importance of other people's boundaries. It's understanding that we know what is best for ourselves.



DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK

Even if you want to assume that someone is okay with something, it doesn't hurt to play it safe and just ask. You have the right to change your mind at any time, and just because you say "yes" to something once, doesn't mean you've given someone permission the next time around. Think of it as checking in each and every time.



CREATE A CULTURE OF CONSENT

We can all work to normalize asking for consent in all situations. We can do this by asking others for consent and respecting their response, and when someone asks us for consent, we can give them a response and thank them for asking. If we overhear a situation in which someone is not respecting someone else, we can show that we don't approve.

