

Consent

Level: Premiere

Objectives:

Students should understand what consent means, regarding both sex engagement and sex refusal.

Expected Behaviours:

- Mutual respect
- Make sure the partner accepts the proposal prior to any sexual acts

Before engaging in sexual activity, students should be sure that their partner consents to the activities taking place. If one partner says no, the other partner should stop and not try to persuade them to do anything that makes them uncomfortable.

Information:

“Consent” is a concept that means both partners have fully and freely agreed (without coercion, force, or manipulation) to engage in physical activity together. If a person proceeds with sexual activity without another person’s consent, this is sexual assault. Sexual assault is commonly known as rape.

Sex Refusal

Traditionally, when people think of consent, they think only of penetrative sex between a male and female (penis-in-vagina sex). However, the topic of consent does not only apply to situations that fit the common or traditional idea of what rape means. It is important for students to understand that consensual sex involves an enthusiastic and clear “yes” from **both** parties, every time they engage in any sexual acts. The absence of a “no” is **not** a “yes”! For example, if a student is pressuring someone to have sex with them and they are not saying anything, just silent and lying there, the student does not have permission to have sex with them. Their silence does not mean they do not mind if the student has sex with them. This is true regardless of the relationship between them (for example, if they are girlfriend or boyfriend), whether or not they have consented to sex before, or how much the student likes them.

Consent does not apply only to vaginal sex. Consent should be given before any physical or sexual touching. It is the individual’s right to choose how, when, and who touches their body. It is also their right to change their mind, even after giving someone permission to touch or have sex with them. No one has the right to touch another person’s body without their permission.

Sometimes one person can assault another without even realising it. Therefore, it is extremely important to obtain consent before sexual activity. Never assume that another individual wants

to participate in sexual activities without that person clearly stating that is in fact what they want.

Sexual assault affects a victim long after the assault has occurred. Many victims experience anxiety, trust issues, nightmares, panic attacks, pain, poor health, relationship troubles, depression, and insomnia. These symptoms can last for weeks, months, or even years after sexual assault.

Sex Engagement

Consent regarding sexual engagement refers to an individual's power to say yes to sex on their terms. It is vital that even if two partners are both consenting to sex, they are each comfortable with everything they do. For example, one partner may consent to sex, but only with a condom. Or one partner may consent to touching, but not penetration. Young people should feel confident in asking for what they want from their partner, and saying no to anything they are not ready for or is not enjoyable for them.

Summary and Key Messages:

A student's body is their own, and they have the right to control how it is shared with others. In the same way, others have a right to decide if and how they share their body with students. If someone says "no," or does not indicate "yes," to sexual activity, all physical acts should immediately stop. By practicing obtaining consent before sexual activity, the students are making mature, responsible decisions that demonstrate good values and respect.

Sources:

<http://www.wcsap.org/effects-sexual-assault>

Consent

Level: Terminal

Objectives:

Students should develop basic skills to allow them to effectively communicate if, how, and when they want to have sex; and to fully respect the sexual boundaries of others.

This curriculum is designed to help Terminal students think critically about their choices, their beliefs, and their respect for others. They should acquire the necessary skills to have and express consent.

Expected Behaviours:

Students should be attentive to and respectful of expressions of consent and non-consent, both verbal and non-verbal. Conversely, students should feel confident in verbalising their own boundaries and wishes concerning sexual activity. When a person is not sure if their partner consents to physical acts, they should stop and ask what he or she feels comfortable doing before continuing with any sexual activity.

Information:

There are many questions included that can be presented to students, and their answers shared to promote class discussion on communication. There are answers provided for the teacher, but students should come up with their own answers first. To begin, students should receive a refresher of information on consent received in Premiere, and then discuss the following points.

How would you let someone know you do not want to have sex?

Answer: People indicate they do not want sex in many ways. For example, one person may directly say “no” if they are uncomfortable, while another may simply laugh nervously. This is one reason it is important to ask or make sure of a partner’s wishes before beginning sexual activity.

How would a person indicate they do want to have sex?

Answer: Like the first question, individuals indicate they want to have sex in different ways. Therefore, one can never assume anything. For example, a girl drinking alcohol wearing short, tight clothing might want to just have fun dancing, or a boy hitting on a girl in public may just want to impress his friends, but isn’t ready to have sex.

How do you express the things you want to do and the things you do not?

Answer: The best way for a student to communicate their wishes for sex is to be open and honest with their partner. For example, saying “I am okay with you touching inside my shirt, but not okay with touching inside my underwear” clearly lets their partner know what the student is comfortable with and how they can show respect for them. They might also say something like, “I want to have sex with you, but only if we use a condom.”

Do people always express what they want verbally?

Answer: No! It can be difficult and intimidating for students to express what they want and don't want to do with their partner. This is why it is important to ask. There are common nonverbal signs which can help people understand if they have consent. However, as discussed previously, every person is different, so these signs should not be relied on *completely* to determine whether the student has consent.

Possible Signs of Nonverbal Consent:

Initiating sexual activity

Pulling someone closer

Actively touching someone

Nodding yes

Comfort with nudity

Smiling

Open body language-relaxed and open arms and legs, relaxed facial expressions/gestural posture

Sounds of enjoyment, such as moaning

Nonverbal Signs of Non-consent:

Fleeing from the other persons eye contact

Not initiating sexual activity

Pushing someone away

Avoiding physical touching

Shaking head no

Looking sad or fearful

Stiff legs or arms, tense facial expressions

No reaction

Just lying there

What should you do if you are unsure what someone wants to do (sexually)?

Answer: If a student is unsure if their partner is okay with something, they should stop and communicate. Asking, "do you want me to keep going?" or "would you be more comfortable if we stopped doing this?" can prevent a violation from occurring or progressing.

Summary and Key Messages:

Open, direct, and honest communication with a partner is the best way to know if and how they want to engage in sexual activity. If the student feels uncomfortable, they have a right to say no. If someone says no to the student or indicates they are not willing to engage in sexual activity, they have an obligation to stop doing the act that makes the other person uncomfortable.