



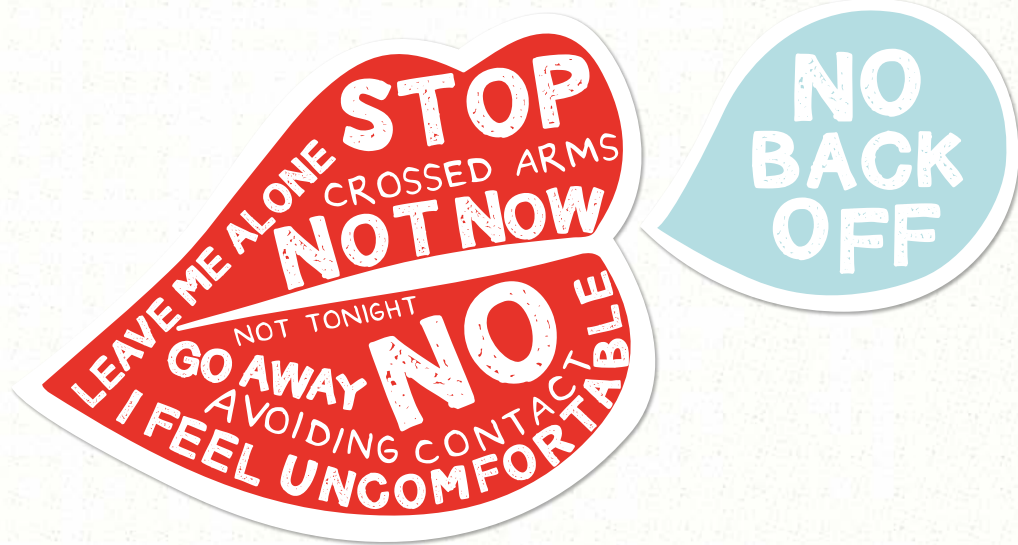
LET'S TALK ABOUT CONSENT!

Consent is about saying “yes” and about respecting and accepting a person’s right to say “no”. Consent is required at any stage of being intimate with someone – asking for a dance, a date, to make out – and at any point in a relationship, whether you’ve just met or you’ve been going steady since the dawn of time.

But let’s talk about consent and sex! You may think you know it well, but read on ahead and reaffirm that you’re on the right track. It is important to be able to communicate what we want, when we want it, and how we want it, with whomever we’re wanting it with. Don’t pressure anyone into having sex and don’t do anything that makes the other person feel uncomfortable. Sex should be about mutual pleasure so communication is key. Check in with the person you’re having sex with and make sure they are enjoying themselves and want to continue.

Equally, if someone is pressuring you or making you feel uncomfortable, it’s your right to say “no”. Consent is something you give, so it’s also something you can take back.

HOW DO YOU DEFINE CONSENT?



AFFIRMATIVE CONSENT

When asked about consent back in the day we might have said something like “no means no”, and while that’s still the case, consent goes far beyond this now. Affirmative consent is when the verbal and physical cues a person is giving you show that they are comfortable, consenting and keen to continue. It’s all about the proactive asking and giving of consent between people. A “no” is still a ‘no’, but the absence of an enthusiastic and ongoing “yes” is a ‘no’ as well.

Every person has the right to choose to have sex the way they want, and to make that choice freely every time without feeling pressured due to their circumstances or out of fear of repercussions. Saying “yes” to a kiss or allowing your partner to touch you, caress you, take your top off etc. does not imply a yes to everything.

The most basic thing to remember is that consent is voluntary, enthusiastic and continuous.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF SOMEONE IS INTO YOU OR NOT?

WHAT DOES IT LOOK AND FEEL LIKE?

WITHOUT CONSENT

If someone does something to you that you don’t want, for example, coercing you into sex when you’ve said – or were unable to say – no, then that’s non-consensual sex, and sex without consent is considered indecent assault or rape under South Australian law.

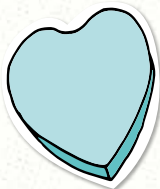
But what does ‘without consent’ really mean? Being bullied, tricked or intimidated with words or violence into having sex or physical contact is coercive control and that’s non-consensual; so is having sex with someone who cannot clearly and freely give consent. This category includes minors (under the age of 17), people who are intoxicated, passed out or asleep, as well as those with a mental impairment that may inhibit them from being fully aware of what they are agreeing to.



CONSENT IN RELATIONSHIPS

Sex can be non-consensual in all types of relationships, even if you and your boo have been going steady for 6 months or 60 years. Sex varies and what worked in the bedroom last week might not feel right, now. If your partner doesn't feel like it, if they want to slow down or stop altogether for any reason, you have to respect this. Remember they know what's right for them, just as you know what's right for you. Just because you've entered into a relationship doesn't mean there is perpetual consent. Failure to stop when someone says no, if they can't consent, or they were coerced into having sex (that old "come on baby" line), is illegal and constitutes rape.

**HOW MIGHT YOUR PARTNER,
LOVER OR FRIEND
EXPRESS THAT WHAT IS
HAPPENING IS NOT OKAY?**



RESPECT

"R.E.S.P.E.C.T find out what it means to me" – catchy and true. Aretha Franklin clearly knew what she was doing because respect lies at the heart of every relationship. Respecting yourself and your lover is important. Remember, you have the right to:

- Change your mind whenever you want to (and communicate it!).
- Ask for a date, but not act badly if the answer is "no".
- Refuse a date without feeling guilty.
- Suggest activities.
- Refuse activities, even if your date is excited about them.
- Have your own feelings.
- Have your limits respected.
- Tell your partner that you want physical closeness and/or sex.
- Refuse sex, or any other intimacy, anytime, for any reason.
- Have an equal relationship.
- Act or feel one way with one person and a different way with another?

In short, be clear about your feelings and intentions and respect those of your partner, lover or friend, knowing that their feelings and yours might change over time – and that's okay.

RESPECT



CONSENT AND COMMUNICATION

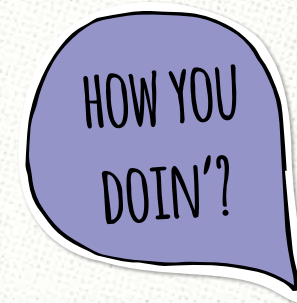
Have you ever seen a newborn horse trying to walk for the first time? It's awkward (and a little cute), but they get the hang of it super quick! Asking for consent and learning to improve the way you seek and give consent can feel the same way. Here's a few tips we can all apply, regardless of where you're at with someone.

BEFORE

Discuss clearly with your lover what you're into as well as your sexual health status. Know, understand and respect that they might not be into everything you are. Be open about where you see things going and ask them to do the same. Also ask what you should look out for if they start to become uncomfortable. We all know how we react when we don't like something but we're all unique in the way we communicate this. Make sure you know your lover's 'yes' language and their 'no' language, and that they know yours as well.

DURING

Good manners are important in and out of the bedroom, so start by asking whether you can touch___; kiss___; do this or that, and once you're in the throes of passion, verbally check in to see if they're into it, and how they are feeling. Reading body language is useful, but so is asking outright.



IF THEY WANT YOU TO STOP

If your partner's not into it – whether they ask for you to stop or become withdrawn, for example – back off and give them some space. Try to see the situation from their point of view. You might be disappointed, but don't pressure them into doing anything further. There's no need to get defensive or cross. Instead, take a breath, stop what you're doing and relax. Talk to your partner and ask them what they're feeling, ask if there's anything you should change in the future and most of all, listen.

ON SAYING NO

You have the power to decide whether what's happening, or what might happen, is okay with you or not. If you feel uncomfortable or you are asked to do something or go somewhere when you don't have all the details, you have the right to say no – whether you scream it from the rooftops, say “no thank you”, “no sorry”, “not tonight”, “not now”, “we are never ever ever getting back together” – it's all a no, and it all needs to be respected. Remember even if you have consented to something already, you are allowed to stop that activity at any time. Consenting once doesn't mean you are consenting continuously. It's your right to say “no” and you don't need to feel guilty for doing so.

WHAT ARE YOUR EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL BOUNDARIES?

REFERENCES

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2. “Sexual Assault in Australia: A Statistical Overview, 2004.” Australian Bureau of Statistics. Published 07/09/2004. abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs%40.nsf/DetailsPage/4523.02004
3. List adapted from Cindy Crabb, ed., *Learning Good Consent: On Healthy Relationships and Survivor Support*, (Chico, California, AK Press, 2016).

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