

Introduction to Consent - Virtual Lesson 5

Introducing Consent

Consent is the thing we do before anything sexual happens! A lot of people think of consent as the same thing as getting someone's permission. That's a good start, but there is a lot more to consider when it comes to sex and our bodies.

There are 4 Principles of Consent, all four of these things need to happen in order for consent to exist.

1. You have to present someone with a **choice**. That means you have to talk, ask questions, and listen to their answers. We have to give our partners the ability to say "yes" or "no" to something, before the something starts. If someone feels afraid to say "no" then they aren't really being given a choice. It's also not a real choice if someone doesn't understand what they're saying "yes" to.
2. Consent is **active**. That means that a person says "yes" and also acts like yes. Their body language and verbal language need to be communicating the same thing.
3. Consent is **ongoing**. It's not a box to check. We pay attention to our partners the entire time we're hooking up because people change their minds. Also, we have to get their consent every time we want to hook up.
4. There must be **equal power** in the relationship. It is not okay for anyone to use their power as a way to hurt or pressure someone else. If an adult (teacher, coach, mentor, boss, etc.) is initiating an intimate relationship with someone who is under the age of consent, it is sexual assault.

Consent is not confusing. If we are confused about how our partner is feeling, or if we are unsure about whether or not we have consent – then we don't!

Watch the video below and read the Scarleteen post about consent, then finish with the activity. There are additional resources for you to learn more about consent below.

Watch

- A Compassionate, Empathy-Based Approach to Consent: https://youtu.be/rOh_2meOW58

Read

- Quickies: Sexual Consent Basics: https://www.scarleteen.com/article/disability_quickies/quickies_sexual_consent_basics



Activity Directions: Read the scenarios below and answer the questions.

1. Kimmy and Michael have been dating for 6 months. They have done a lot of sexual things together but haven't yet had intercourse. They both really want to, but they are worried. Both of them have had other partners before, and neither of them have gotten checked for STIs. They also haven't had a conversation about how they would prevent pregnancy. Michael asks Kimmy if they want to make a date of it, and she agrees. They go to their local health center and get tested together. They also pick up a bunch of condoms, and Kimmy talks with her doctor about going on birth control.

What principle of consent did this scenario focus on?

What did you like about how Kimmy and Michael treated each other?

2. Kylie and Erica have been dating for a few months. One day, they're hanging out at Kylie's house after school. Erica asks Kylie if it would be okay to kiss her. She says yes, and they start to make out. As they're kissing, Kylie notices that Erica isn't really kissing her back anymore and her hands are just at her side. She wonders what to do. Kylie stops and says, "hey, are you okay?" Erica responds, "Yeah, I'm fine. It's just freezing in here." Kylie says, "want my hoodie?" Erica says, "yes please!" and kisses her again.

What two principles of consent did you see in this scenario?

3. Jerome and Nate are both into each other and are hooking up for the first time. They ask each other, "does this feel good?" and "are you okay with this?" Nate and Jerome are confident the other person is into it because of how they are responding and acting. Nate stops and says, "I'm really into this but I'm nervous. I'm still closeted and you're out. I don't know if I'm ready to tell people yet." Jerome nods and responds, "That is totally ok. I remember feeling that way, too. Just so you know, I'd never tell people unless you told me it was ok." Nate responds, "thanks. I just don't know if I'm ready for all this." Jerome then says, "that's okay! Let's do something else. Wanna order pizza?"

How did Jerome and Nate do a good job of making sure consent was ongoing?

How does Jerome being out give him more power? How did he resolve this?

How did Nate do a good job of making sure Jerome felt comfortable communicating how he really felt?

4. Trisha really likes Julian. She has told all her friends that she likes him and she's almost positive he's found out about it. Julian likes her as a friend and thinks she's cute, but he doesn't want a relationship. They start talking more seriously and he asks Trisha for a nude. She agrees because she thinks that will get him to like her. The next time they hang out, Julian asks whether she wants to hook up. She says, "I do but I really like you." Julian responds and says, "I want to hook up, but I'm not looking for a girlfriend right now. Can we just be friends then?"

In what ways did Julian have power over Trish? (Hint: there are two!)

How did Julian do a good job of making sure that he didn't take advantage of the power he had in this situation?

5. Charlie and Aaron are dating. Usually they spend their time together at school or with friends and family. Every week, they have one night to hang out one on one. Charlie notices that Aaron is in a bad mood. They know Aaron's home life isn't great and his grades have been dropping. They ask Aaron what would make him feel better, and Aaron shrugs his shoulders. Charlie asks him if he wants to fool around and he says, "I don't know. Maybe." So Charlie says, "no big deal. What would make you feel better?" They decide to watch the new star wars movie instead.

What principle(s) of consent did you see in this scenario?

What did you like about how they treated each other?

Additional resources for learning more about Consent:

- Tea Consent: www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGoWLWS4-kU
- Cycling Through Consent: www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JwIKjRaUaw
- Pizza Metaphor: www.ted.com/talks/al_ernacchio_sex_needs_a_new_metaphor_here_s_one?language=en
- Planned Parenthood Consent Videos: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3xP1jlf1jg-JRkChwVOlwQcVo-UqcWiFV>
- VT Network, Consent Campaign Guidebook: <https://vtnetwork.org/consent-campaign/>