

Your voice.

Your view.

CONSENT

con·sent *verb*: **1.** To give assent, as to the proposal of another; agree. **2. Archaic** To be of the same mind or opinion. – *noun*: **1.** Acceptance or approval of what is planned or done by another; acquiescence. Agreement as to opinion or a course of action

Consent means to agree to engage in sexual activity. It must be voluntarily, actively, and clearly stated. Every person, no matter what the circumstance, has the right to withhold consent for sexual activity at any time.

If any type of threat or force is used to obtain a “yes,” the “yes” is not considered consent. Types of force include physical pressure, implied violence, a weapon, blackmail, bribes, and threats. Social pressure and emotional manipulation are two other common types of force.

🕒 **Consent must be clear.** An absence of “no” does not equal a “yes.” Silence could mean several things other than a “yes.” It could mean fear to say “no.” If you are afraid to resist or fight back, you are unable to give consent.

🕒 **Consent must be specific.** A “yes” to a kiss, does not mean you have consent to sex. A “yes” to sexual activity on a previous occasion, does not mean you have consent to a sexual activity today.

🕒 **Consent must be actively given.** If someone is impaired, for instance - unconscious, sleeping, drunk, high, or in any way too out of it to know what is going on, they cannot legally give consent.

🕒 **Consent should never be assumed.** Never wait for the “no” – check with the person to see what is going on and ask if they are ok with it. Listen to their responses and respect their wishes. And if you are confused or unsure about their responses, ask them again. Don’t guess or assume!! Don’t go any further unless she says it is OK.

Even if you have been dating for a long time or are in a relationship, a person has the right to refuse sexual activity. If you do not have a person’s consent, you are risking committing a sexual assault!

🕒 **In Rhode Island,** a person cannot legally consent to sexual activity if they are under the age of 16. If you are 18 or older and have sex with someone younger than 16, it is illegal.

No one has the right to force someone into unwanted sexual activity, no matter what has happened before. “No” means “no” – always.

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