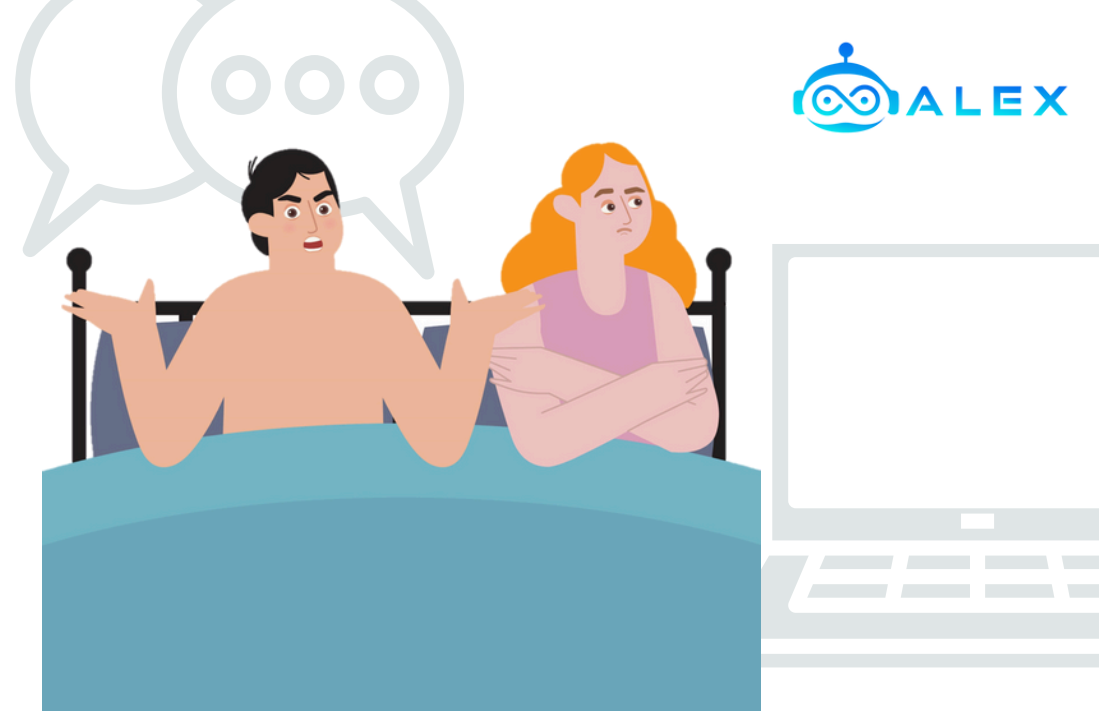


Should I ever feel forced to have sex?

KEY WORDS

sex | consent | coercion | manipulation



No matter how attracted you are to someone or how excited you are about your connection, feeling forced into sex is a major red flag. Sexual pressure (sometimes referred to as **sexual coercion**) can occur not just when someone **insists on having sex even when you've said "no", but also when you've said "yes" but are not genuinely into it.**

If you're ever forced or pressured to have sex, it's important to never blame yourself and tell an adult or someone else you trust as soon as possible. Even talking to a doctor or counsellor can help you make sense of how you feel if you've ever had sex when you didn't want to.

Remember: **only you should be the one to decide how much physical intimacy you want to have**, whether it's with your partner, someone you like, a friend, or someone you've just met.

Pay close attention to these signs that someone might be trying to pressure you or coerce you into having sex:

- **Trying several times and pushing harder and harder.**

This means someone is insisting on sex, over and over again, until they tire you out. This is a form of coercion because they are not accepting your limits, which you can determine for every single activity, no matter if you've said "yes" to them before. The pressure may increase over time, with the person sometimes pushing for another activity after they've already convinced you to go over your limit.

- **Threatening you.**

If you're afraid to say "no", there's usually a direct or indirect threat involved. You may be afraid of the consequences of rejecting the other person, or that person may say something like:

"If you don't, I'll find someone who will."

"It's okay if you don't want to do it, I just won't hang out with you anymore."

"If you don't, I will share private photos of you."

- **Doing things unexpectedly or "too soon."**

Real life isn't like in the movies, which means that it's rare for two strangers to agree so much that they don't have to consult with each other about the boundaries they want to set. Beware of making a hasty decision, especially if you don't know someone well.

- **Changing your environment.**

This tactic involves taking you unexpectedly from a familiar, safe, and easy place to a more isolated place. It can be the first step to physically manipulating you and forcing you to have sex.

- **Pressuring you to take alcohol or drugs.**

Alcohol or drugs can affect decision-making about sex. Too many young people have sex without wanting to when they drink alcohol or use drugs.

- **Manipulating you.**

If your sexual partner makes you feel like what they want is what's best and makes you feel like what you think or feel isn't right, they may be manipulating you into doing something you don't want to do (coercion). This can look like:

- **Making you feel guilty** for setting a sexual boundary by complaining.
- **Embarrassing or punishing you** by telling you that "you're bad in bed", that "you don't know how to have sex", etc. They may insult you like this to manipulate you into doing it again or performing a different sexual act.
- Trying to convince you that you should have sex with them because **you owe them**
- **Love-bombing you.** This form of manipulation includes displays of "love," attention, flattery, extreme compliments, and big promises if you decide to have sex.

In conclusion, the answer is crystal clear: **you should never, ever feel forced to have sex.** You're in control of your own comfort zone – **your body, your rules!** Anyone worth your time will respect that.

**INCLUSION AND
STAYING SAFE**

