

SEXUAL THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIOUR

What is consent?

KEY WORDS

communication | respect | boundaries



you have
the power
to say no!

is this
okay?

Consent represents the green light for any sexual activity. It means **both partners are willingly agreeing to participate**, using both their words and actions. It is like a compass that guides healthy, respectful relationships, especially when things get intimate.

- Consent is **given on a case-by-case basis**, which means that agreeing to one thing does not mean agreeing to everything.
- Additionally, consent is **reversible**, which means that if you said yes once in the past that does not mean you have to say yes, every or any time in future.
- Consent needs to be **informed**, which means that both partners are aware of the exact details of their experience. If someone says they will use a condom and then they do not, this does not count as consent.

- Consent is **always freely given**, without pressure, manipulation, or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Consent is **enthusiastic**. When it comes to sex, you should only do things you want to do, not things that you feel you are expected to do.

If you want to know more about sexual coercion, check out this lesson: “Should I ever feel forced to have sex?”

How to ask for consent?

Asking for consent is the responsible and right thing to do. If you are not sure if your partner is on the same page as you, ask questions like: "Is this okay with you?" or "Can we continue?" Open communication is key. Watch for body language, too. If they seem unsure or uncomfortable, it is time to pause and make sure everyone is comfortable.

Respect the other's decision. Consent is a two-way street - if either person changes their mind at any point, that is perfectly acceptable. You can change your mind anytime, and the same goes for your partner.



When there is doubt:

- **Consent is not a one-time agreement**, and if someone gives you consent in the past, they have the choice to say no and revoke it any time, even if this happens just a minute later.
- **"Maybe" does not mean "yes."** It means you will need more communication and checking in. The clothes someone is wearing or how they are behaving do not imply consent, so you should always ask them to confirm it. If someone is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they cannot give valid consent. If you are not sure someone can give you valid and undeniable consent, do not pressure them.
- **If there is still doubt - ask.** It is always better to be sure. If the other person does not want to answer or is not clear, respect their decision and do not pressure them. Consent is about enthusiastic agreement, not just the absence of a "no."

Consent is a non-negotiable in any healthy relationship. It is about respecting each other's boundaries, having open conversations, and ensuring everyone feels comfortable and safe. Without consent, sexual activity (including all its types) is sexual assault or rape. Remember, you have the right to set your own boundaries, and you should always respect the boundaries of others.

Keep it consensual, keep it respectful, and always prioritise each other's well-being.

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