



Sexual
Health
Victoria

Care
Education
Advocacy

Consent

101

Before getting saucy

Let's talk FRIES

Consent must be:

Freely Given

Reversible

Informed

Enthusiastic

Specific



Sexual

Consent

101

Sexual consent is when people of age negotiate, communicate and agree on if and how they will be sexual together. If sexual permission/consent is not obtained, the offending person/s could face legal charges.

It doesn't matter who you are, your ability, or whether you're single, in a relationship or married. All people who want to engage in sexual activity need to gain and give consent, and there are also legal ages, so make sure you check how old your partner is.

**Consent
is sexy,
get a hell
yes!**

But what does sexual consent look like?

Here are a few key points to keep in mind.



You're free to choose.

If a person involved in a sexual activity feels pressured or coerced to say yes or take part, that's not consent. When sexual activity is consensual, everyone involved has equal power in the decision making. Consent doesn't sound like: "I'll go to the party only if you will have sex with me".

The choices are genuine and enthusiastic.

Everyone involved must want to be doing it! This means using all of your senses to listen and take note of how someone is communicating consent to you. Do they seem uncertain, or is their body language withdrawn? If so, it sounds like you might need to stop and take a minute to ask them if they want to keep going or if they want to stop.

You can withdraw consent at any time.

Just because someone has given consent doesn't mean they can't change their mind. Part of being a good sexual partner is being ready for the other person to say no or have second thoughts. Saying yes to sex does not automatically mean 'yes' to all types of sex, so remember to communicate throughout the experience and make sure everyone is having a good time.

Honesty is hot.

Number one life motto: liars don't make great lovers. Always be honest with your sexual partners. If people consent to sex and agree to use a condom or barrier protection (like dams), and a person removes the protection in secret or without the other knowing, this is non consensual sex, also known as stealthing.

Check-in, check-in, check-in.

If someone has given consent to make out, that doesn't mean they've permitted/consented to something else like oral sex. Consent must be ongoing. That means you check in with each other before each new part of sexual activity. Just because you've gotten naked with someone on one occasion doesn't mean they give consent to sex in the future. Check-in every time.

There's some legal stuff too.

Sexual consent isn't just about respect and communication; we also need to understand what the law says about consensual sex.

The law has age limits for having sex; this is called the age of consent. If these laws are broken, a crime has been committed, even if the person consents to the sex. The law applies regardless of sexual orientation or gender. The legal age for consensual sex varies between 16 and 17 years across Australian state and territory jurisdictions. Other restrictions also apply, for example, the age gap between the two parties, or if one is in a position of authority, such as a carer or teacher. This means, if you are under 18 you can't legally consent to sex with someone who is in a position of power over you like your work boss or sports coach.

It is important to review your own State's laws and age of consent.

What does the law say about sexual assault?

If someone has sex with you, or sexually touches you without your consent, or you are underage, this is a sexual assault which is a crime. If you start having sex with someone or engage in sexual touching with them and you change your mind, but they don't stop – that's also sexual assault. If you're asleep, unconscious, or impaired by alcohol or drugs which affect your ability to form a conscious and clear intention, or to communicate your consent, it is not consent. If someone threatens to touch you sexually without your consent, this is also a crime.

But this doesn't mean sex won't ever be weird.

Even when everyone is enthusiastically and freely consenting, sometimes sex is just a bit awkward. It happens; sex can be weird sometimes. Be prepared to laugh and remember it's not always like it is in movies.



Consent is sexy, get a hell Yes!

About us

Sexual Health Victoria is a state-wide independent, for-purpose, all-choice organisation that focuses on reproductive and sexual health care, education and advocacy. We embrace diversity and welcome everyone of all genders, sex, age, cultural background, sexual orientation, religion and ability.



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Our clinics opening hours

Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm
Sat & Sun Closed
Public Holidays Closed

After-hours

For urgent matters present to your local
Emergency Department or call 000.

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