



PROMOTING HEALTH IN THE YOUTH SECTOR

Let's Talk About Consent

Recent moments of happiness in your life	Something your grateful for	Places in the world that you would want to visit	An inspirational person you would like to have dinner with and why
A favourite song that has stuck in your mind	A great life lesson you have learned	Things you learned from your parents	A film that has stuck in your mind
One thing you do to relax	The most useful thing you own	A job you would like to try	Something that makes you happy

WHAT DO YOU NEED IN ORDER TO LEARN AND PARTICIPATE TODAY

- Respect
- Communication & Listening to Others
- Confidentiality
- Openness
- Questioning
- Privacy and the right to pass
- Trigger points
- Disclosures



NYHP Consent Resources

- [Youth Workers Guide](#)
- [Young Peoples Guide](#)
- [Research Report](#)
- [Research Summary](#)





Objectives

- To clarify the concept of consent
- To explore the main issues surrounding consent
- To explore how to facilitate young people to address the issue of consent in their lives and in their relationships

National Policies/Strategies



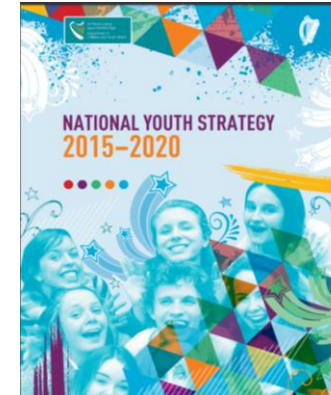
**Healthy
Ireland (HI)**



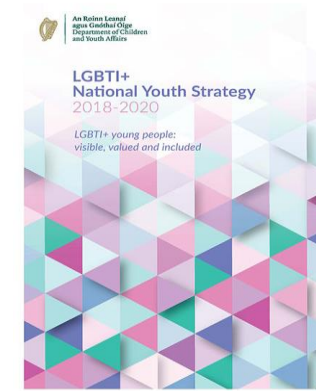
**National Sexual
Health Strategy
2015- 2020:**



**Better Outcomes
Brighter Futures
2014-2020**



**National Youth
Strategy 2015-
2020**



**LGBTI+ National
Youth Strategy
2018-2020**

UBU

Communication Skills

Essential for successful transition to further education, training and employment. Also vital for independence and to form positive relationships



Confidence & Agency

Vital that young people recognise that they can make a difference in their own lives which can lead to positive outcomes such as career success



Planning & Problem Solving

Provides young people with a 'positive protective armour' against negative outcomes and the skills to cope with the stresses of life



7 Personal and Social Outcomes



Relationships

Valuing personal relationships with peers, youth workers, parents and other adults in a young persons life



Creativity & Imagination

Creativity can have a positive impact on young people in relation to their self-esteem and overall achievements



Emotional Intelligence

The ability to manage feelings and a persons own emotions, in addition to recognising and understanding other peoples emotions. This is essential in managing relationships



Resilience & Determination

The cognitive and socio-emotional abilities and health of young people at risk can be improved if society intervenes early enough. Effective early interventions can result in reducing crime, promote schooling amongst many others.

**What are your
goals/intentions
for this training?**



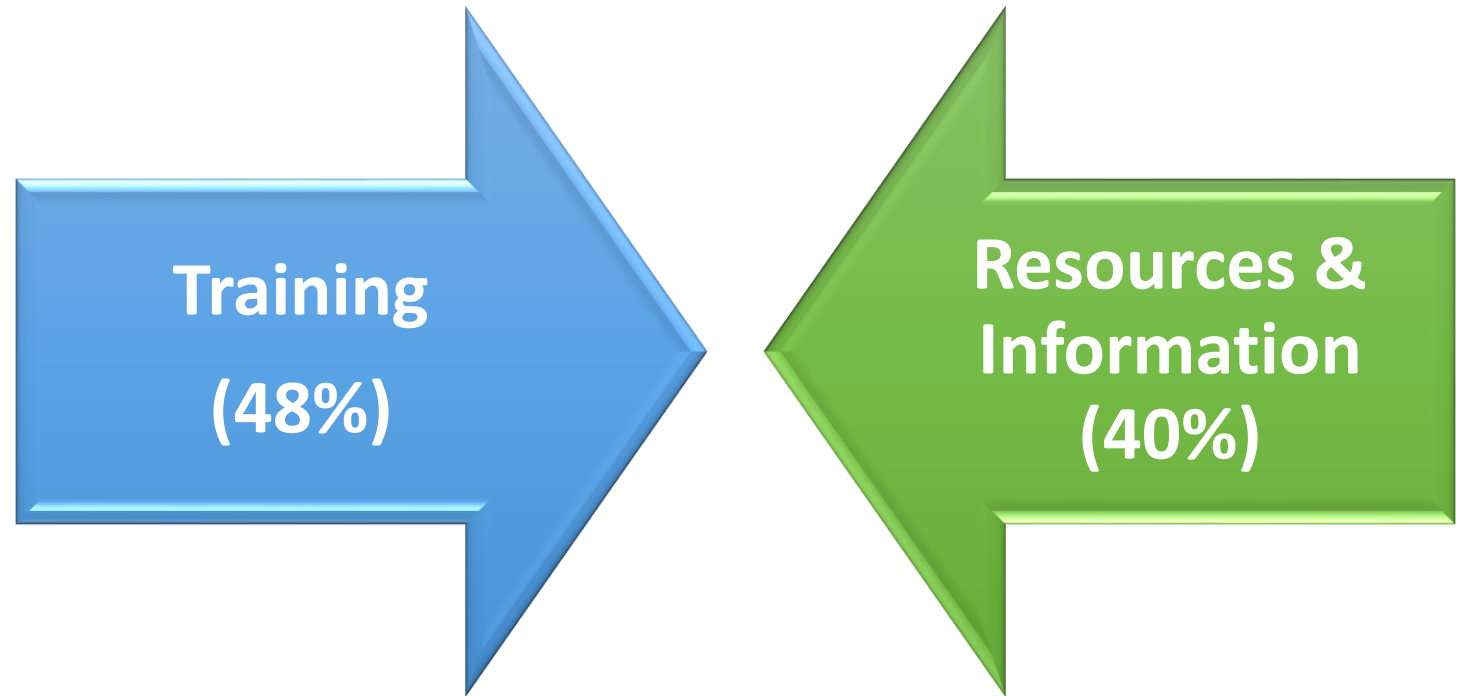
Our Concerns

**PROMOTING HEALTH
IN THE YOUTH SECTOR**

Rationale

- National Youth Health Programme (NYHP)- unique position in the youth sector
- Gap: Research & Resources on 'Consent and young people in Ireland'.
- Evidence-base needed on the topic of consent and young people in Ireland
- NYHP conducted research with a number of youth organisations:
- 5 focus groups (30 respondents)
- Online survey (255 respondents)

Needs of the Youth Work Sector



“Training is key to build confidence of youth workers to address the issue of consent with young people- especially in this fast-changing digital world”

Group Activity

Q. How would you define consent in general?

Q. How would you define sexual consent?

Q. How would you know someone has given sexual consent? What does it look like, feel like and sound like?

Consent, Words and Body Language

Words and body language are used in relationships to communicate however, if you only rely on the use of body language, you may misinterpret or misunderstand what the other person is communicating. Adding in alcohol and/or drugs can make the situation more complicated. Therefore, to ensure that you and the other person

are in a healthy, safe and consenting environment, use language to ask for and give consent.

Here is some of the words you can use and listen for. This is not a complete list, there may be other words you can use.



What CONSENT can sound like?

Yes
I would like
I like that
I am sure
I want to
I am ready
I want to keep doing this
This feels nice
I know I want this
Don't stop
This feels right



What NONCONSENT can sound like

No
I don't want to
I don't like that
I am not sure
I am not ready
I want to stop
Stop
I want to but,
I am really unsure
I don't feel comfortable
I thought I wanted to but,
Can you not do that
That hurts
This feels wrong



Let's Talk About Consent

Young Peoples Guide

**PROMOTING HEALTH
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Consent

Consent may be defined as ‘permission for something to happen or agreement to do something’. Furthermore, it is a concept which is relevant throughout the life course. Much of the discussion and debate on this issue focuses on young people. However, adults also need to be very clear as to the nature and meaning of consent.

Sexual Health

' a state of physical, emotional, mental and social wellbeing in relation to sexuality; that is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.

(WHO 2006a)

Sexual Consent

Sexual consent is defined in Irish law and to summarise, 'a person consents to a sexual act if he or she freely and voluntarily agrees to engage in that act'.

The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences Act) 2017

Consent Explained



Asking for It



**PROMOTING HEALTH
IN THE YOUTH SECTOR**

ACTIVE * CONSENT

John & Becky
Video

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87RU4kIfXN0>

Definition of a sexual act

A “sexual act” is described by law as:

- Sexual intercourse (vaginal or anal)
- Penetration of the anus or mouth by the penis
- Penetration of the vagina by an object, or
- Aggravated sexual assault

The Concept of Consent

How we seek and give consent for acts of intimacy

Involves talking and communicating non-verbally about what we want sexually

Affirmative, active and on-going

More than not saying 'no'

Given freely

Asked for at different points

Undermined by alcohol and drug use (NUIG)

**Criminal Law
(Sexual Offences)
Act 2017**

Respect

Assent

The National Consent Policy (HSE 2019) defines assent as:

'an expression of willingness or affirmative agreement to a health or social care intervention given by a young person who is not legally authorised or has insufficient understanding to be competent to give full consent'

This means that even when children and young people are not legally capable of giving consent, reasonable efforts should be made to ensure that they understand the particular circumstance and the implications of their agreement in this circumstance.

What can young people consent to?

- **14 years** – light work (max 8 hours a week) during the school holidays, as part of an educational programme/approved work experience
- **15 years** – change your name by deed poll with parental consent, 8 hours a week light work during the school term
- **16 years** – see a doctor without parental consent, leave home with parental consent, digital age of consent, drive a tractor, leave school
- **17 years** – consensual sexual activity
- **18 years** – All of the above + Consensual sexting. Marriage. Buy and drink alcohol, buy cigarettes, use a sunbed, apply for a loan.....

For more information – Know your rights. Children's Rights Alliance 2019

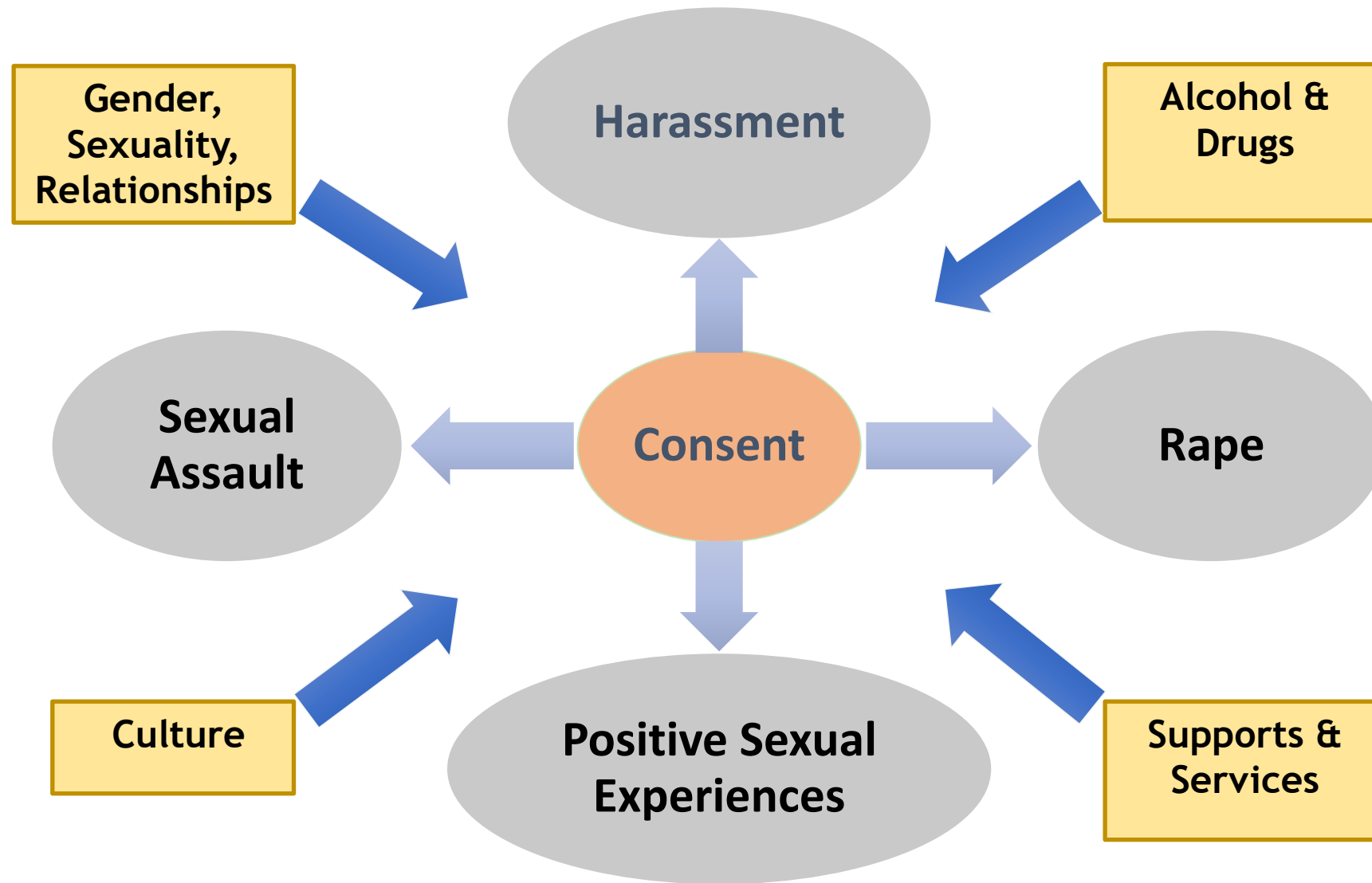
<https://www.childrensrights.ie/sites/default/files/Know-Your-Rights-2019.pdf>

Consent - Compliance – Coercion - Force

(Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, Consent Resource)

- **Consent** - The voluntary agreement in a relationship where there is equal power, to engage in a sexual act
- **Compliance** - Pressure from within, doing what I believe the other wants, what I think will happen if I do/don't....
- **Coercion** - Being compelled to do what others want. Pressure from outside, what will happen if I don't....
- **Force - No Consent.** Psychological, physical force or blackmail used so as to leave the person no choice

Consent / Non-Consent



Definition of Rape

Rape is provided for by section 4 of the Criminal Law (Rape) (Amendment) Act 1990 as follows:.

(1) In this Act “rape under section 4 ”

means a sexual assault that includes—

(a) penetration (however slight) of the anus or mouth by the penis, or

(b) penetration (however slight) of the vagina by any object held or manipulated by another person.

(2) A person guilty of rape under Section 4 shall be liable on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for life.

(3) Rape under Section 4 shall be a felony.”

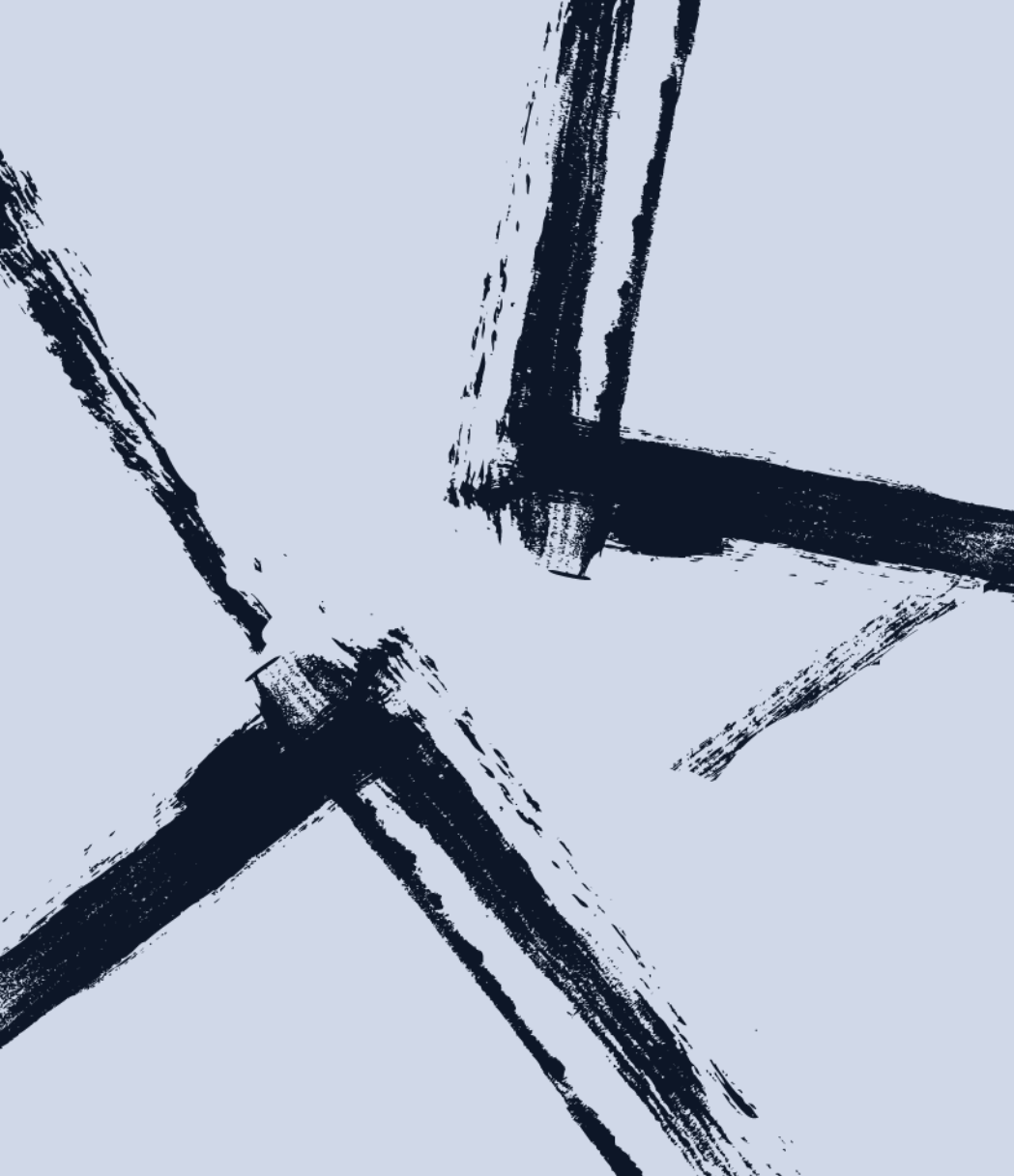
Gender neutral offence for both victim and perpetrator

Aggravated Sexual Assault

- This is sexual assault aggravated by serious violence, or the threat of serious violence, or is such as to cause severe injury, humiliation or degradation of a grave nature to the victim.

Sexual Assault

- This is a sexual attack with a less serious level of violence than aggravated sexual assault.
- There are two parts to this offence: there must be intentional assault, and an aura of indecency.



Activity:

What are the key features of a healthy relationship?

Q1. What is required for a healthy relationship?

Q2. What is required for a healthy sexual encounter?

Q3. What do young people need to support them in this?

Sexual Health Competence

Sexual Health Competence is about young people being supported in achieving:

- a) absence of regret
- b) willing sexual encounters (i.e. not under duress)
- c) autonomy of sexual decision-making (i.e. based on personal preferences rather than being drunk or through peer pressure)
- d) reliable use of contraception.



Regret

- **23% of young people** expressed regret over the timing of first intercourse
- **Young women are more likely** than young men to express regret about the timing of sexual initiation, a quarter doing so compared to one in six of young men – may be related to gendered social norms
- Other factors causing regret:
 - Being with the 'wrong person'
 - Being put under or exerting pressure
 - Lack of prior planning
 - Lack of control

(HSE/ESRI 2020)



Key Features of a Healthy Relationship

Feeling positive and comfortable about yourself

Feeling confident

Feeling loved, wanted, needed and useful

Feeling that your views and opinions are respected, even if you disagree on something

Where you can be yourself

Where communication is open

Healthy boundaries

No Excuses- Department of Justice (Trigger Warning)



Activity

Perspectives-people in the bar

Activity

- Scenarios



Consent & The Law- Quiz

- Go to www.kahoot.it on your phone
- Enter the following game pin:
- Just 10 seconds to answer the questions
- True or false

The Law & Consent

- Proximity of Age Defense
- Persons in a Position of Authority

Proximity of Age Defence - Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017

- Under this provision, a person charged with an **offence** of engaging in a **sexual act** with a person between the **ages** of 15 and 17 years can rely on a **defense** where the **act** is consensual, non-exploitative and the **age** difference is no more than two years

Offences involving a Person in Authority Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017

- A person in authority who engages in a sexual act with a child who has attained the age of 17 years but is under the age of 18 years shall be guilty of an offence

Definition of person in authority

- Parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, in loco parentis, foster parents.....
- Any person who is or has been responsible for the education, supervision, training, care or welfare of the child

Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017

A person cannot give consent if they are:

- Forced, threatened with force or have a well-founded fear that force will be applied
- Asleep or unconscious
- Affected by alcohol or some other drug
- Mistaken as to the nature and purpose of the act
- Mistaken as to the identity of any other person involved in the act
- Unlawfully detained at the time at which the act takes place
- A person with a physical disability which prevents them from communicating consent or if someone else consented on their behalf

The Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act December 2020 (Coco's Law)

Covers a wide range of offences, including online abuse, cyberbullying, and image-based abuse

Two new offences

1. The taking, distribution, publication or threat to distribute intimate images without consent, and with intent to cause harm to the victim – unlimited fine and/or 7 years imprisonment
 2. Taking, distribution or publication of intimate images without consent without a requirement that the person intended to cause harm to the victim - €5,000 fine and/or 12 months imprisonment
- It will be irrelevant that a person might have consented to the taking of an image if it subsequently published or distributed without their consent
 - It will be an aggravating factor If the perpetrator of the offence is or was in an intimate relationship with the victim

Continued...

- “intimate image” means a visual recording of a person made by any means including a photographic, film or video recording (whether or not the image of the person has been altered in any way)
 - (i) of his or her genital organs or anal region or her breasts (whether covered by underwear or bare), or
 - (ii) in which the person is nude, is exposing his or her genital organs or anal region or her breasts, or
 - (iii) in which the person is engaged in sexual activity

Proceedings against a person **under the age of 17** charged with an offence under this Act shall not be taken except by or with the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

6026 students
(18+) across
Ireland
completed the
online survey

ACTIVE*
CONSENT

Student Sexual Experiences Survey

- **44% said they experienced non-consensual behaviour** e.g. sexual touching, attempted or completed oral, vaginal or anal penetration- 52% of females, 49% non-binary, 27% males
- **46% of females said they experienced offensive remarks** about their appearance, body or sexual activities 'once or twice' whilst 11% said they experienced this 'many times'
- Students stated they experienced non-consensual penetration through force, threat of force or while incapacitated i.e. rape – **29% of females, 28% non-binary, 10% males.**

My World Survey 2

The National Study of **Youth Mental Health in Ireland.**

Dooley, B, O'Connor, C, Fitzgerald, A, & O'Reilly, A

Focusing specifically on younger people this survey found that :

- **47% of young adults aged 18-25 years reported** that they had been touched against their will or without their consent and **20%** they had been forced or pressured to have sex.
- **Females (56%)** were much more likely than **males (23%)** to report that they had been touched against their will or without their consent.
- **Females** were also more likely to report that they had been forced or pressured to have sex (25% for females, 10% for males).

(Dooley et al., 2019)

Byrnes & MacNeela (2017)

- *'Has anyone ever had sexual contact with you by using physical force, or threatening to physically harm you' (i.e., any form of sexual activity, in your lifetime) –*

3% of male students and 13% of female students

- *'Has anyone ever attempted but not succeeded in having sexual contact with you by using or threatening to use physical force'*

5% of males and 21% of females

25% of females and 7% males experienced sexual contact or attempted sexual contact of these kinds.

Normal People

[Video: Fans praise consensual sex scene in BBC's Normal People | Daily Mail Online](#)

No Excuses- Department of Justice



In a sexual encounter...

- How would you ask for consent in a sexual encounter?
- How would you know if someone had given consent?
- How would you know someone has withdrawn consent?
- What are the possible reactions to this?
- How might these reactions be managed?

Rejection & Ghosting

- Nobody likes it
- Elicits feelings and judgements
- Question who you are and how others see you
- Can destroy hopes
- If your self esteem is linked to other peoples acceptance or rejection of you then you're giving way too much of your power to someone else



Why is rejection & learning to deal with it useful?

- Stops time wasting & you can move on
- The sooner you ask and hear...
- Separate your self esteem from other peoples opinions of you
- Learning
- It's rarely about you
- Grow self esteem, self awareness
- Develop emotional maturity and self confidence



Rejection- How you can deal with it

- Acceptance
- Depends on context – partner potential or less significant
- It's ok to wallow a little – not for long
- Importance of distractions

Skills for saying no



BODY LANGUAGE: STAND TALL, KEEP YOUR HEAD UP AND KEEP EYE CONTACT. FEEL STRONG AND EQUAL. BELIEVE IN YOURSELF



USE SHORT, CLEAR STATEMENTS: I DON'T LIKE, I DON'T WANT TO, I AM NOT COMFORTABLE WITH THIS



SAY SOMETHING POSITIVE FIRST: BEGIN BY SAYING SOMETHING POSITIVE TO THE OTHER PERSON, FOR EXAMPLE, I WANT TO HAVE A GOOD TIME BUT... I REALLY LIKE YOU, BUT I DON'T WANT TO DO THAT



STATE YOUR VIEWS AND WISHES 'YES, I HEAR WHAT YOU ARE SAYING, BUT I'M STILL NOT GOING TO...



YOU DON'T NEED TO GIVE A REASON: AVOID BEING MANIPULATED INTO GIVING FURTHER EXPLANATIONS. IF THE PERSON REQUESTS A REASON, REPEAT A SHORT, CLEAR STATEMENT SUCH AS 'I'VE ALREADY SAID I DON'T WANT TO AND I'M NOT GOING TO CHANGE MY MIND'.



EXPECT THEM TO ACCEPT WHAT YOU ARE SAYING. IN EXTREME SITUATIONS WHERE YOU ARE NOT BEING HEARD, OR YOU ARE UNDER THREAT, YOU SHOULD LEAVE OR LOOK FOR HELP.

No Excuses- Department of Justice



**PROMOTING HEALTH
IN THE YOUTH SECTOR**

Bag & Baggage

- How do you currently address the issue of consent with young people?
 - What do you have (in your bag) that you could use currently to address the issue?
- What do you need?
 - What would you like to be able to do?

Considerations when addressing the issue of consent with young people

- Opportunities to integrate agreed messages about consent – Can I get a **Hell Yes??!!**
- Health literacy and sexual health literacy
- Trigger warnings
- Challenging perceptions/misperceptions
- Response to disclosure

Supporting Young People

- **Prevention work should assist young people with skills** supporting positive, healthy relationships, and strategies for preventing negative experiences
- **Meet audiences where they are** in reference to their readiness for change
- Address the significant, nuanced **relationship between alcohol (and other drugs) and sexual violence**
- Help young people **develop communication skills and practices specific to consent**

American College Health Association, June 2016
"Addressing Sexual and Relationship Violence"

Important messages about consent

- Age
 - Capacity
 - Given freely
 - Clear understanding
 - Positive, voluntary, active and ongoing
 - Impact of alcohol/drugs
 - Fight/Flight/Freeze
- Safety and comfort
 - Can be taken away before or during sexual activity
 - No assumptions on the basis of being in a relationship, dress, flirting....
 - Silence or not resisting is not consent

Support Agencies

- An Garda Síochána 999/112 or visit www.garda.ie
- The Child and Family Agency www.tusla.ie
- Rape Crisis Network National 24-hour Helpline on 1800 77 88 88 (16 years+) www.drcc.ie
- CARI- www.cari.ie
- ISPCC www.ispcc.ie / Teenline- 1800833634
- Hotline- www.hotline.ie
- Crisis Textline Ireland – text TALK to 50808
- Jigsaw www.jigsaw.ie
- Spunout www.spunout.ie

Useful Websites

www.drcc.ie

www.cari.ie

www.youthhealth.ie

www.consentmattersireland.ie

www.nuigalway.ie/active-consent/

www.scarleteen.com

www.ThinkUknow.co.uk

www.brook.org.uk

Crisis Textline Ireland- text TALK to 50808

Crisis Text Line Ireland

text about it

50808

Text **HELLO** to **50808** to start a conversation,
any time - day or night for free

Chat anonymously with a
trained volunteer