

'LET'S TALK ABOUT CONSENT' RESOURCE

The National Youth Health Programme (NYHP)

**PROMOTING HEALTH
IN THE YOUTH SECTOR**



Purpose of this Guide

This guide is designed to be used in conjunction with training on 'Let's Talk About Consent' delivered by the National Youth Health Programme (NYHP). The guide includes some of the key messages regarding consent, alongside links to useful resources. Staff/volunteers should ensure that they are familiar with the resources listed and that they are suitable and age appropriate for any group of young people they are working with. Please note that some content may be sexually explicit and unsuitable for some groups or individuals, including under 18's.

Please remember that these key messages do not provide a comprehensive guide on consent. It is important to take account of all of the information contained in the resources listed and to seek additional information and support if necessary.

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

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

Consent & The Law

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

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 people's acceptance or rejection of you then you're giving way too much of your power to someone else

Why rejection and learning to deal with rejection useful?

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

How you can deal with Rejection

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

Tips 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.

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
- **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**

National Youth Health Programme's Consent Resources & Research:

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

Signposts & Supports

www.garda.ie

www.hotline.ie

www.tusla.ie

www.cybersafeireland.org

www.drcc.ie

www.spunout.e

www.cari.ie

www.webwise.ie

www.ispcc.ie

www.scarletteen.com

www.youthhealth.ie

www.ThinkUKnow.co.uk

www.consentmattersireland.ie

<http://www.nuigalway.ie/student-life/student-support/active-consent/>

Websites & Video Links

Active* Consent Videos from NUIG (for 18 Years and over)

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPcRsMehWMD9_tLwb339y6Q

Asking for It- BBC 3 Sketch

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JO-HI1hGcpM&feature=emb_logo

Consent Explained

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vmsfhw-czA&feature=emb_logo

Department of Justice 'No Excuses' Campaign

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLckR7-wCP7e3C-35MvIxxgs0ZWvGvll7k>

Consent Tea

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGoWLWS4-kU>

Consent for Kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3nhM9UIJjc>

Activities that can be facilitated with young people

- **Coercion- roleplay (10-15 mins)**

Georgina & Sally have been best friends for years and decide to go out to a restaurant for dinner one evening. Georgina doesn't want to do anymore and has to let Sally know without using the word NO. Sally really wants to go out for dinner and needs to try and convince Georgina to go with them.

Roles:

- **Georgina (pressuring)**

You and your best friend Sally have made plans to go for dinner tonight but Sally had changed her mind. You have to verbally try and convince/persuade Sally to agree and come with you. You can:

- Question or undermine their reasons given
- Can use example such as: 'We always go for food', 'I just really need to get out of the house' 'I'm having such a hard time recently' 'I thought we were friends' 'I was there for you last week when you needed to get out' 'fine ill just go with someone else then'

- **Sally (resisting)**

You and your best friend Georgia have made plans to go for dinner but now you have changed your mind and don't want to go. You need to let them down gently and find a way to get out of going for dinner. You can use any words and reasons you want, but you cannot use the word 'NO'

Questions-

To the group:

Q1. Did Georgina want to go for dinner?

Q2. Did volunteer B know that volunteer A didn't want to go for dinner?

Q3. How did volunteer B know they didn't want to go for dinner if volunteer A never said no?

Q4. What tactics did volunteer B use to get volunteer A to go with them?

To those in the roles:

Q1. How did it feel to be Georgina/Sally

(adapted from Give and Get Consent, by the Rape Crisis South London)

- **PEER SEXUAL HARASSMENT by Squashy Couch**

Personal Space Exercise

The group are asked to stand 5 feet apart facing each other in two rows. They are asked to take one step towards each other – pause for a moment and ask them how comfortable they are with the distance between them. They continue stepping towards each other one step at a time, pausing after each step until they are nose to nose. At what stage did they become uncomfortable with the space between them – does how well you know someone have an impact on how comfortable you are with proximity. Do people have different levels of comfort? Are their cultural differences i.e. French people kissing each others' cheeks, gender differences i.e. are girls more comfortable with each other's space than boys, are a boy and girl less or more comfortable with someone of their own gender or opposite gender.

This exercise allows the group to consider the concept of personal space.

Personal Safety and Boundaries – Walking Debate

Areas of the room are designated okay, not okay and not sure. The facilitator reads out a type of touch and the students have to walk to the area depending on whether that type of touch is okay or not. There are no right and wrong answers – this is about what people think. The facilitator can add or take away touches dependant on the age of the group and prevailing behaviours.

- Hugging,
- Kissing,
- Holding Hands,
- Punching someone's arm,
- stroking someone's ass,
- grabbing a boy's crotch,
- playing with someone's hair,
- rubbing someone's leg,
- scratching someone's back.
- Bra strap pinging
- Twisting someone's nipple
- giving love bites

During the debate the facilitator takes the opportunity to tease out:

- whether or not the person had permission to touch,
- was the touch welcome or unwanted,
- was it intended to hurt physically or emotionally,
- does the context change whether it is okay or not,
- does the place where it happens matter (private touches in a public place),
- does the touch invade someone's personal space,
- is there a cultural context,
- is there a gender issue?

Scenarios

A number of scenarios are read out. The facilitator talks through what is happening in each scenario and how the people may be feeling or might react. This should be done in a whole group and not smaller groups as the facilitator has no control over discussions in small groups. The facilitator can take out or add in scenarios to take account of the age and maturity of the participants.

The key phrases for facilitators are: 'unwanted and unwelcome,' 'private behaviour in a public place,' 'what was the intention, was it to hurt or humiliate? (keep in mind that unintentional hurt is still hurt!)

What do you do if it happens to you?

The group are told that the character on the page has been receiving unwanted and unwelcome touches. They are asked to identify who the character could talk to if they found themselves in this situation. During the discussion it is important to ask what might happen if the character gets support, both positive and negative outcomes. The group could be split into smaller groups for this exercise; and the combined answers used to create a list of potential supports and outcomes. It is important when going through this to acknowledge how difficult it can be to tell.

Finishing Up

Kate is walking through the corridor. Sean grabs her breast as he walks past her.

How does Kate feel? Did she give her permission for Sean to touch her? Is it okay for Sean to touch her? Why would Sean do this? How does Sean feel? What could Kate do about it? Would it be different if Kate touched Sean sexually?

Some lads in Abby's class keep groping her ass. She is really upset about it and talks to her older brother, Mark, who thumps one of the lads.

How is Abby feeling? Did she do the right thing telling Mark? How is Mark feeling? Did Mark do the right thing? Does it make it better or worse for Abby that Mark thumped someone? What else could Mark have done?

The lads are touching up some of the girls and say it is just a bit of fun. They are putting pressure on Jake to do it too.

Is it just a bit of fun? Do you think the girls would describe it as a bit of fun? Have the girls given permission for the lads to touch them? How is Jake feeling? Should he get involved? Does he have choices –what are they?

Bianne and David pull Michael's tracksuit down and take a photo. It is sent to all their mates.

How is Michael feeling? Why would Bianne and David do this to him? How do think Bianne and David's friends will react to this? What could Michael do about it? Is this sexual harassment/bullying? Is it legal?

Sarah is going out with Glen. She sends him a full frontal nude shot. They break up the following day.

How is Sarah Feeling? How is Glen feeling? What will happen to the nude shot? Is it legal for Sarah to send it?

Niamh really fancies Steven. He is always touching her breasts and her ass. It is making her feel very uncomfortable.

How is Niamh feeling? Why is Steven touching her? Has he asked for her permission to touch her? Would it be okay if they were going out – would he still need to ask for permission? What could Niamh do?

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