



How to talk about consent

Conversation Menu

Entrée

"The term "consent" is often associated with sex, but it's much broader than that. It relates to permission and how to show respect for ourselves and for other people. Consent should therefore be addressed in an age-appropriate way across all years of schooling.

The most important point about consent is that everyone should be comfortable with what they're engaging in. If you are uncomfortable at any point, you have the right to stop."

Jacqueline Hendriks, [Consent isn't as simple as 'no means no'](#) ABC News

Comprehensive, inclusive sexuality education is a compulsory part of the school's health education curriculum. The goal of sexuality education in Victorian schools is to build on knowledge, skills, and behaviours, thus enabling young people to make responsible and safe choices.

But sexuality education is a shared responsibility that works best when schools, families and communities work together to make sure young people are equipped for a safe, healthy and fulfilling adult life.

We know that access to the internet and social media means that our young people are exposed to a broad range of unhealthy and inaccurate messages, and only through a combined effort can we combat these messages and replace them with healthier ones.

Good sexuality education focuses on love, safer sex, abstinence, respect for others and oneself, diversity, personal rights and responsibilities, relationships and friendships, effective communication, decision-making and risk behaviours.

Main

The following clip discusses the concept of consent by using drinking tea with a friend as an analogy. It can be a good one to watch as a family to introduce a conversation about ideas around respect and consent. View clip by clicking here: [Tea and Consent](#)

ReachOut suggests the following topics when discussing consent with your teenager:

- Ask them what consent means for them
- Talk about their changing lives and the overwhelming feelings that are a natural part of this process
- Help them understand their own and other's boundaries by encouraging them to think about the impact of different actions on people's wellbeing
- Get them to reflect on their own experiences
- Make sure they know it's okay to say no
- Check in about parties, drinks and drugs
- Keep the dialogue open by continuing to ask about consent, healthy boundaries and respect

The full article can be accessed here: [How To Teach Your Teenager About Consent](#)

Dessert

We surveyed some of our year 7 and 8 students to learn more about their understanding of consent. Here are some of the scenarios that were generated.

Scenario 1: Sally is sitting in the yard at recess with her friends when one of them starts playing with her hair. She doesn't like it and pulls away. The friend laughs at her and makes a joke at her expense in front of all their friends. She then starts playing with her hair again.

1. Is this consensual?
2. Do you think Sally's friend should have touched her hair?
3. What do you think Sally should do next?

Scenario 2: Jane and Natalie have been friends for a while. In Maths class, Jane has forgotten her calculator and asks Natalie to lend hers. Natalie, who is using her calculator, says no because she needs it. Later, while Natalie is distracted, Jane takes her calculator and starts using it. When Natalie notices that Jane is using it, she wants it back but is too scared to say anything in case Jane stops being her friend.

1. Is this consent?
2. How do you think Natalie feels?
3. Do you think Jane is respecting Natalie here?
4. How can a person who feels pressured manage in this situation?

Scenario 3: Ollie is lined up at the canteen. Two older students come up and ask him if they can borrow some money. He shakes his head no because he only has enough for his lunch. The two boys keep asking, but Ollie continues to say no. When Ollie comes out with food, the two students begin grabbing at his food, saying that he should have lent them money and now he owes them. Ollie is uncomfortable and agrees to let them have some of his chips.

1. Is this consent? Why/ why not?
2. What would you do in this situation?

Leftovers

Some more interesting resources to check out:

- **[Department of Education's Sexuality Education Policy](#)**
- **[Respectful Relationships Teaching Materials](#)**
- **[Growing and Developing Healthy Relationships](#)**