

NO CONSENT = SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assault and rape are two of the biggest issues facing society today. 81% of women and 43% of men reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment and/or assault in their lifetime. One reason these numbers are so high is a lack of understanding of consent. For sex to be legal and safe, consent is a must.

BUT WHAT IS CONSENT?

Consent is when two people both agree to have sex. Any sexual activity without consent is rape or sexual assault. There are many conditions to this rule, though, and breaking any of them makes the sex non-consensual.

WHAT IS SEXUAL ASSAULT?

From kissing to touching to having sex—any sexual contact without consent is sexual assault without exception.

Even if:

You think she or he wants it

You are dating, in a relationship, or married

You have had sex before

The person is dressed in sexy clothes

The person said yes the last time

“**For sex to be legal and safe, consent is a must.**”

ENTHUSIASTIC CONSENT.

If either person is hesitant or having doubts about any sexual activity, it is not consensual. Consent must be voluntary, but it must also be enthusiastic. Clearly and firmly reject any unwanted advances.

SOME PEOPLE CAN'T CONSENT.

States have different laws about the age of consent, but one thing is true everywhere. Sex with someone below the age of consent, even if they agree to it, is a serious crime with a severe penalty for the offender and is traumatizing for the victim. If you are a victim of statutory rape or any kind of sexual assault, call a sexual assault hotline and tell someone you trust.

WHAT IF SOMEONE IS INTOXICATED?

Sex with someone under the influence of alcohol or drugs is not consensual. Consent must be enthusiastic, but it must also be made when the person can fully comprehend what they are agreeing to. When you are intoxicated or high your decision-making skills are severely hindered, making it impossible to give consent. About ½ of sexual assault cases involve alcohol use. Consent must come from a place of comfort and sobriety.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network

www.rainn.org/articles/what-is-consent

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/guidance/faq/informed-consent/index.html

U.S. Department of Justice

www.justice.gov/ovw/sexual-assault

Sexual Assault Hotline

800-656-HOPE (4673)

In the know

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WHAT IS CONSENT?

AVOID SEXUAL HARASSMENT & ASSAULT





SILENCE IS NOT CONSENT.

If you feel pressured into sex you do not want, don't stay silent. You have to be clear and firm if you are not interested in someone's sexual advances. Additionally, if the person does not give you an enthusiastic and interested "yes," then you do not have consent. Keep in mind, though, that:

The person may be afraid to say no.

The person may not know how to say no to you.

The person may be overwhelmed or too drunk or high to say no.

Body language and other nonverbal signalling is not a replacement for verbal consent. No matter how good you think you might be at reading people, you have no idea what that person is thinking until you ask them. Consent **MUST** be verbal. The other person should be firm in what they are ok with and in a clear state of mind.

NO ALWAYS MEANS NO.

When someone says "no," they mean it. It doesn't mean that she or he is playing hard to get. Just as consent is

invalid without a verbal and enthusiastic "yes," a "no" is an immediate and clear rejection that must be respected. Always respect "no." if the other person is not interested, stop immediately. To continue after a clear rejection is sexual harassment, and if taken further, sexual assault.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE OFFENDER?

Offenders face many consequences including public humiliation, prison time, and having to register as a sex offender. Activists online in the #MeToo movement on Twitter have exposed hundreds of offenders and changed the culture around sexual assault. People are now more comfortable talking about their experiences with sexual assault. Offenders face long prison sentences especially if the victim is underage. If you interact sexually with someone without proper consent, you could ruin your life and face jail time.

WHAT ABOUT THE VICTIM?

Sexual assault is often a traumatizing experience for the victim mentally, emotionally, and physically. About 70% of rape victims report moderate to severe psychological distress, with 13% attempting suicide.

Some psychological issues sexual assault victims may experience are:

Difficulty trusting or relating experiences to others

Questioning their own judgment or sanity

Feelings of worthlessness

SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

Fortunately, there are many great resources for victims to draw on in times of need. Call 800-656-HOPE (4673) and reach out to someone you trust if you are a victim of sexual assault.

ANYONE CAN BE A VICTIM - ANYONE CAN BE AN OFFENDER

Victims can be any gender, race, age, or economic class and the same goes for offenders. No matter who you are, if you have been sexually assaulted you are a victim of sexual assault. Never discredit someone's story because you know the predator and think "they would never do that." In more than 8 out of 10 rape cases, the rapist is someone the victim knows: a friend, coworker, significant other or family member. In order to help victims and turn the tide on sexual assault, be open-minded to the experiences of all victims. People that come forward after experiencing sexual assault need your support. Sexual assault is mentally traumatizing and outright rejection of the victim's experience is never helpful to



anyone.

HOW CAN I PREVENT SEXUAL ASSAULT?

Every 92 seconds someone is sexually assaulted in the United States. Sexual assault is no doubt a huge problem in our society today. It can happen at school, the workplace, parties- anywhere. When it comes to sex, always show respect to the people you are with. If you hear someone pressuring another person or ignoring consent, step up and do something! Even if it's uncomfortable or will hurt your social standing - you could prevent a lot of suffering by simply being there for the person in trouble. It's better to be in the wrong than to do nothing and later learn that you could have prevented an assault. Get friends to help you, and if you need to, call 9-1-1.

If you are a victim of sexual assault or rape, get help. Reach out to a trusted adult and seek professional counseling.

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