

Let's Talk Consent

March 2024

Sexual consent, or consent, is when people agree to a sexual activity before it happens. It's not just about saying "yes" one time—it also means checking in along the way to make sure everyone still feels comfortable. Consent is important to building healthy and respectful relationships. With consent, everyone knows what is and is not okay.

Consent is...

Voluntary

Give consent when you want to, not because you feel you have to or are tired of saying "no." It is never automatic, even if you're in a relationship. If someone is in a position of power over you, that can get in the way of your ability to consent.

Ongoing

Consent is an ongoing conversation about what you and your partner feel comfortable doing. Part of that conversation may be one of you changing your mind or deciding to stop.

Informed

To give consent, you need to have all the information about how it impacts you and your sexual health. It's not consent if someone lies or hides important information, like secretly removing a condom or lying about a sexually transmitted infection.

Coherent

Drugs and alcohol impact your decision making, so you and your partner must be coherent to give consent. A person cannot consent when they are drunk or high, even if they say "yes."

Essential

Consent is essential to any sexual activity, including genital touching, oral sex, and vaginal or anal penetration. If someone engages in sexual activity with you without your consent, it is sexual assault, which is a crime.



You have a right to refuse or give consent, so remember to use your **V.O.I.C.E!** Also, remember, it is NEVER your fault if you are sexually assaulted. If you think you have been sexually assaulted, reach out to a trusted adult or contact one of the hotlines on the next page to get support.

Did you know?

Each state has its own age of consent law, which states the minimum age someone must be before they are legally capable of consenting to sex. These laws are designed to prevent adults from taking advantage of minors (people under the age of 18). However, some states have laws that make it [illegal for two minors to have sex if one or both are under the age of consent](#). Therefore, it is important to know the [age of consent laws in your state](#).

Want to learn more about consent?

Check out these resources!

Family and Youth Services Bureau, *We Think Twice*[™]: [Dating and Relationships](#)

Collection of resources on how to have healthy relationships with friends, family members, and romantic partners.

Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN): [What Consent Looks Like](#)

Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN): [Consent Laws \(by state\)](#)

State laws regarding consent, including information on age of consent in each state.

Rape Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN): [Sexual Assault](#)

Have you been affected by sexual assault?

Get confidential support.

Rape Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN): [National Sexual Assault Hotline](#)

If you or someone you know has been sexually assaulted, call 800-656-4673 (800-656-HOPE) or use the online chat hotline in [English](#) or [Spanish](#) for confidential 24/7 support.

RALIANCE: [Rape Crisis Centers](#)

Directory of local rape crisis and sexual assault organizations in 56 U.S. states and territories that provide free and low-cost support, including counseling and legal assistance.

National Domestic Violence Hotline: [love is respect](#)

Call 866-331-9474, text "LOVEIS" to 22522, or use TTY: 800-787-3224 to access 24/7 support if you or someone you know may be experiencing or is at risk for dating abuse. Remember that dating abuse is a pattern of behaviors used to gain or maintain power and control over a partner—physical violence is just one example of dating abuse.

This resource was developed by RTI International and its subcontractor partners under contract #GS-00F-354CA/75ACF122F80015 Task 4 with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau.

Suggested Citation: Wulah, A., Tallant, J., Offiong, A., & Dickinson, D. (2024). *Let's talk consent*. Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau.



KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

Acts **JEALOUS** and frequently accuses you of things

Constantly **CHECKS UP** on you by calling or texting

Calls you names or **PUTS YOU DOWN**

Tells you **WHAT TO DO**, what to wear or how to act

THREATENS to harm themselves if you ever break up with them

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you are in a violent, or potentially violent relationship, do this:

- * Make a safety plan and get help.
 - * Talk with someone you trust: a teacher, guidance counselor, doctor, friend or parent.
 - * Contact the police or a local domestic violence center or call the National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline at (866)331-9474 or the National Domestic Violence Hotline at (800) 799-SAFE.
 - * Realize that violence will not just stop or go away. You cannot change your boyfriend/girlfriend by changing your behavior.
 - * You are not responsible for the abuse. Your boyfriend/girlfriend may need counseling or other help to change.
- IF YOU HAVE A FRIEND WHO YOU SUSPECT IS IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP**
DON'T KEEP QUIET!

Take the Healthy Relationship Quiz

Answer the following questions by checking either "yes" or "no" next to each statement. The person I'm with...

		Yes	No	# of Points
1.	Is very supportive of things I do.			
2.	Encourages me to try new things.			
3.	Likes to listen when I have things on my mind.			
4.	Understands that I have my own life.			
5.	Is not liked very well by my friends.			
6.	Says I am too involved in different activities.			
7.	Texts me or calls me all the time.			
8.	Thinks I spend too much time trying to look nice.			
9.	Gets extremely jealous or possessive.			
10.	Accuses me of flirting or cheating.			
11.	Constantly checks up on me or makes me check in.			
12.	Controls what I wear or how I look.			
13.	Tries to control what I do or who I see.			
14.	Tries to keep me from seeing or talking with family or friends.			
15.	Has big mood swings, getting angry and yelling at me one minute but being sweet and apologetic the next.			
16.	Makes me feel nervous or like I'm "walking on egg shells."			
17.	Puts me down, calls me names, or criticizes me.			
18.	Makes me feel like I can't do anything right or blames me for problems.			
19.	Makes me feel like no one else would want me.			
20.	Threatens to hurt me, my friends, or family.			
21.	Threatens to hurt him or herself because of me.			
22.	Threatens to destroy my things.			
23.	Grabs, pushes, shoves, chokes, punches, slaps, holds me down, throws things, or hurts me in some way.			
24.	Breaks or throws things to intimidate me.			
25.	Yells, screams, or humiliates me in front of other people.			
26.	Pressures or forces me into having sex or going farther than I want to.			

* Quiz and answers developed by Love is Respect

SCORING

Give yourself one point for every "no" response to statements 1-4, one point for every "yes" response to numbers 5-8, and five points for every "yes" response to numbers 9-26. Now that you've finished and have a total score, the next step is to find out what it means. Simply take the total score and learn more about what it means below.

Score: 0 Points

You got a score of zero? Don't worry-it's a good thing! It sounds like your relationship is on a pretty healthy track. Maintaining healthy relationships takes some work-keep it up! Remember that while you may have a healthy relationship, it's possible that a friend of yours does not. If you know someone who is in an abusive relationship, find out how you can help them by visiting loveisrespect.org

Score: 1-2 Points

If you scored one or two points, you might be noticing a couple of things in your relationship that are unhealthy, but it doesn't necessarily mean they are warning signs. It's still a good idea to keep an eye out and make sure there isn't an unhealthy pattern developing. The best thing to do is to talk to your partner and let them know what you like and don't like. Encourage them to do the same. Remember, communication is always important when building a healthy relationship. It's also good to be informed so you can recognize the different types of abuse.

Score: 3-4 Points

If you scored three or four points, it sounds like you may be seeing some warning signs of an abusive relationship. Don't ignore these red flags. Something that starts small can grow much worse over time. No relationship is perfect-it takes work! But in a healthy relationship, you won't find abusive behaviors.

Score: 5 or More Points

If you scored five or more points, you are definitely seeing warning signs and may be in an abusive relationship. Remember, the most important thing is your safety-consider making a safety plan. You don't have to deal with this alone. We can help. Chat with DVSSP Counselor Advocate to learn about your different options. All calls are free and confidential.

Everyone deserves to feel safe and respected in their relationships.

Healthy Relationships are Built on Equality and Respect

RESPECT
GOOD COMMUNICATION
TRUST
HONESTY
EQUALITY

You make decisions together and can openly discuss whatever you're dealing with, like relationship problems and sexual choices. You enjoy spending time together, but can be happy apart.

Unhealthy Relationships are Based on Attempts to Control the Other Person.

BREAKS IN COMMUNICATION
PRESSURE
DISHONESTY
STRUGGLES FOR CONTROL
INCONSIDERATE BEHAVIOR

One person tries to make most of the decisions. He or she may pressure their partner about sex or refuse to see how their actions can hurt. In an unhealthy relationship, you may feel like you should only spend time with your partner.

Abusive relationships are based on an imbalance of power and control

ACCUSATIONS
BLAME SHIFTING
ISOLATION
PRESSURE
MANIPULATION

One person is making all the decisions, friend groups, boundaries, even what's true and what's not. You spend all of your time together and feel like you can't talk with other people, especially about what's really happening in your relationship.¹

¹information from: loveisrespect.org

1 in 3 adolescents in the U.S is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner.¹

1 in 10 high school students has been purposefully hit, slapped or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend.¹

Only 33% of teens who were in an abusive relationship ever told anyone about the abuse.²

48% of 12 to 18 yr olds who have been in a relationship have been stalked or harassed by a partner, and 42% have stalked or harassed a partner.³

The burden of TDV is not shared equally across all groups--sexual minority groups are disproportionately affected by all forms of violence, and some racial/ethnic minority groups are disproportionately affected by many types of violence.⁴

¹Loveisrespect.org Dating Abuse Statistics (LIVEYOURDREAM.ORG)
²Liz Claiborne Inc., conducted by Teenage Research Unlimited (February 2005) (www.loveisrespect.org)
³<http://www.bu.edu/articles/2020/almost-half-of-us-teens-have-been-stalked-or-harassed-by-their-partners/>
⁴<https://www.reclaimintheinternet.com/dating/teen-dating-violence-statistics/>

307-514-4450
info@sfsw.org
www.sfsw.org



Strong Families Strong Wyoming

A Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Project

Created by the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, and the National Center for Family and Marriage Studies, Administration for Children and Families.

teen dating

"Be the person who plants positive flowers in others"



STUDENT ART CONTRIBUTORS:
Marisol Gomez, Keegan Huston,
Malinah Nunmaley, and Madeleine Prince

CLASS:
Morgan Martin, Child Development,
Laramie High School

5 Forms of Technology ABUSE

- Digital Disrespect**
Bad mouthing through social networking sites, text messages, IMs, or other.
- Constant messaging/threatening text messages**
Obsessively texting to keep track of whereabouts, requesting calls/texts when leaving or going places.
- Cyberstalking**
Sends harassing emails, instant or text messages, or social media posts.
- Threatening to share pictures**
Sexting may seem harmless but it can be used as a form of control when someone threatens to share or expose the images.
- Impersonating through social networking**
Using someone's username and password to get into their account, creating fake pages, etc.



- @infosfsw
- @strongfamiliesstrong
- @sfsw7
- @StrongFamiliesStrongWY