



Understanding Consent 1

Learner Outcomes

P10 Examine various attitudes, values and behaviours for developing meaningful interpersonal relationships

P11 *Examine the relationship between commitment and intimacy in all its levels*

- *identify expectations and commitments in various relationships*
- *examine a range of behaviours for handling sexual involvement*

P12 *Examine aspects of healthy sexuality and responsible sexual behaviour*

- *examine a range of behaviours and choices regarding sexual expression*
- *describe sexually healthy actions and choices for one's body, including abstinence*
- *analyze strategies for choosing responsible and respectful sexual expression*

This lesson addresses all of the specific outcomes listed above. Instruction in human sexuality (***bolded and italicized outcomes***) requires schools to provide notice to parents about the learning outcomes, topics and resources.

How To Use

This lesson plan contains numerous activities to achieve the learner outcomes above. You may choose to do some or all of the activities, based on the needs of your students and the time available. Some of the activities build on the ones that come before them, but all can be used alone.

For a quick lesson, combine activities A, C and E.

Content & Timing

- A. Ground Rules (5-10 minutes)
- B. Reviewing Consent (5-10 minutes)
- C. Consent Kahoot! Quiz (20-30 minutes)
- D. Levels of Intimacy Activity (20-30 minutes)
- E. Question Box (5-10 minutes)

Required Materials

[VIDEO](#): Understanding Consent

[KAHOOT! QUIZ](#) AND ANSWER KEY: Consent

CARDS: Levels of Intimacy Activity

Background Information for Teachers

More information about consent and sexual assault can be found on the [Understanding Consent](#) page.

Sexual activity includes kissing, sexual touching, and sex (oral, anal, vaginal). Consent means people agree to participate in an activity and understand what they are agreeing to. Consent is the foundation of sexual relationships and is needed for every sexual activity, every time. The purpose of this lesson is to establish students' understanding of consent and provide opportunities for further knowledge and skill building. This lesson:

- defines the concepts of consent and sexual assault
- encourages students to consider how their own values and experiences impact how they respond to different activities, which underlies the need for explicit and ongoing consent for all types of sexual contact

As human rights and laws change over time, so has language and messaging about consent and sexual assault. Here are some key points about consent:

- Consent is **voluntary, affirmative, freely given** and part of an **ongoing** conversation about **mutual agreement** to do something.
- Consent cannot be assumed or implied by silence, previous sexual history or clothing.
- Permission to do any type of sexual activity needs to be asked for and clearly given before proceeding.
- Sex without consent is sexual assault.
- A person can only consent to activities if they are aware of the risks. If the risks are hidden, the full consent conversation cannot happen.
- Sexual assault can happen to anyone of any gender or age and be committed by anyone of any gender or age.
- It is important to use gender neutral language when discussing consent. Gendered language reinforces unhealthy stereotypes and discourages men, boys and people who have been assaulted by women from disclosing the assault and accessing services.

- Sole responsibility for sexual assault lies with the person who did not obtain consent (the perpetrator). Prevention messages should be directed only at potential perpetrators with the aim of preventing them from assaulting people.
- Prevention messages should focus on obtaining consent. Messages about how to avoid being sexually assaulted should no longer be used. They did not reduce instances of sexual assault. Instead they increased shame in the person who was assaulted, reduced the likelihood of the survivor accessing services, and provided excuses to perpetrators who commit this crime.

[According to Canadian law](#), the age of consent is 16. This is the age when a person can legally agree to sexual activity. Age of consent laws apply to all forms of sexual activity, ranging from kissing and fondling to sexual intercourse. There are “close in age” exceptions to this law.

- 14- and 15-year-olds can consent to sexual activity if the partner is less than 5 years older.
- 12- and 13-year-olds can consent to sexual activity if the partner is less than 2 years older.

Consent cannot be given by anyone under 18 if the:

- other person is in a position of authority (e.g., teacher, coach, or employer).
- sexual activity is exploitative (e.g., pornography, prostitution, or trading sex for safety).

Children younger than 12 cannot consent to any type of sexual activity. Having sex or sexual activities with a child younger than 12 is against the law and is sexual abuse.

Being Prepared for Disclosures and Distress

This topic can be distressing to students, including those who have been involved in or witnessed an assault or abusive situation. Dealing with sensitive issues encourages students to examine their own beliefs and experiences. Teachers need to act with sensitivity and discretion when handling individual student information that is sensitive or could cause embarrassment or distress to the student or family

To maintain both student safety and engagement, it is helpful to be familiar with [trauma informed practice](#), to use inclusive language and to acknowledge feelings and stories. It is also important to strongly emphasize a respect for confidentiality among all class members.

- Respect and reinforce confidentiality and sensitivity in the classroom.
- Anticipate where discussions will lead in order to protect students from revealing inappropriate personal information.

For more information on reporting and responding to disclosure see the video and related materials at [Recognizing, Reporting and Responding to Abuse in Schools](#).

- Before starting these lessons, talk to the school counsellors so they are aware there may be disclosures of abuse.
- Ensure your students understand that disclosures of abuse cannot be kept confidential. Disclosures are the first step to get help for a student who is experiencing abuse.
- Share with students what they can expect if they disclose abuse, e.g., acknowledgement, honouring their disclosure, redirection to discuss further outside of class and assurance of connecting them with support.
- The Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act requires you to report the abuse of a young person to Child and Family Services or Delegated First Nation Agencies. You can locate your local office by visiting <https://www.alberta.ca/childrens-services-offices.aspx>

For more information review [Responding to Child Abuse: A Handbook](#), published by the Government of Alberta or visit [How to Help and Report Child Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Exploitation](#)

Refer to your school division's guidelines about disclosures and reporting.

Inclusive Language

Language is complex, evolving, and powerful. In these lessons, [inclusive language](#) is used to include all students, including those with diverse gender identities, gender expressions and sexual orientations. This includes the use of 'they' as a singular gender-neutral pronoun.

A person's sex can be assigned at birth as male or female. Some people are intersex (the reproductive, sexual, or genetic biology of a person is unclear, not exclusively male or female or otherwise does not fit within traditional definitions of male or female). Assigned sex is independent of gender.

Gender identity is a person's internal sense of identity as girl/woman, boy/man, fluid among genders or no gender (regardless of what sex they were assigned at birth).

For many people, their gender is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth (cisgender). For some, their gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth. They may use terms like transgender, trans, non-binary, gender fluid, gender queer, agender or others, to describe their gender identity. The umbrella term 'trans' is primarily used here, to describe people whose gender identity and sex assigned at birth differ. While this umbrella term does not fit everyone, the intention is to be inclusive as possible.

A. Ground Rules

Ensure [ground rules](#) are established before beginning this lesson. For classes that have already established ground rules, quickly reviewing them can help ensure a successful lesson.

B. Reviewing Consent

This activity will review the concept of consent and introduces the concept of sexual assault.

1. Show your students the **Consent Video** found at <http://teachingsexualhealth.ca/teachers/resource/consent-a-pretty-simple-concept/>
2. Ask students to define consent.
 - *Consent* is permission for something to happen or an agreement to do something.
 - *Sexual consent* is a voluntary agreement for both people to agree to take part in sexual activities. Sexual activities include: kissing, sexual touching, and oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse.
3. Ask students to define sexual assault.
 - Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual act done by one person to another or sexual activity without one person's consent or voluntary agreement. **Sexual activity without consent is sexual assault.** There does not have to be force for it to be a sexual assault.
 - Sexual assault isn't about sex, it is an assault that uses sex as a weapon to gain power and control over another person
4. Ask students why consent is important. What are the personal, social, legal and physical consequences of not getting consent?
 - Asking for, negotiating and giving consent are important parts of a healthy relationship. Healthy relationships include good communication between partners, as part of building trust. Healthy relationships allow for each person to make their own choices about sexual expression and actions.
 - Taking responsibility for clearly communicating your values, needs and wants, and making choices that are congruent with your values, are integral parts of being sexually healthy.
 - Some other words that can be used to describe consent include positive, affirmative, clear and enthusiastic.

- The person initiating sexual activity is responsible for getting consent. Not getting consent may lead to negative outcomes for both the survivor (the person who has been sexually assaulted) and the perpetrator (the person who commits the assault), and even the friends and family of the survivor and perpetrator.

C. Consent Kahoot! Quiz

This quiz can be a great pre-test, review, wrap-up of the lesson, or a fun energizer in between other activities. For more information on using Kahoot!, visit kahoot.com

1. Open the Kahoot! Quiz: [CALM Consent](#)
2. As a class, answer the quiz questions and discuss each question and answer together.
3. Conclude the activity by summarizing the following key messages about consent:
 - Consent is voluntary, affirmative and freely given
 - Consent is clearly communicated and part of an ongoing conversation
 - Consent is about mutual agreement to do something
 - Consent can't be assumed or implied by silence, previous sexual history or clothing
 - Permission for any type of sexual contact needs to be asked for and clearly given before proceeding with any type of sexual contact
 - Sexual activity without consent is sexual assault

D. Levels of Intimacy Activity

This activity will ask students to consider what intimacy in a dating relationship means to them. Additionally they will acknowledge that different people will have different comfort levels with various activities, further showing the importance of asking for and giving consent in every situation.

Ask students to form groups of 3-4. Distribute one set of **Levels of Intimacy** cards to each group. The cards say:

- Giving partner a backrub
- Holding hands at school

- Holding hands in public
 - Hugging
 - Introducing partner to friends
 - Introducing partner to parents
 - Kissing
 - Making out
 - Sex (anal, oral, hand or vaginal)
 - Sexting
 - Talking about condoms and/or birth control
 - Talking about STIs
 - Texting
 - Touching partner's arm or shoulder
1. Review each card to make sure everyone understands all the terms used.
 2. Ask students to discuss the cards and rank them from the least intimate activity to the most intimate activity. Advise students NOT to share their own experiences in any discussions as part of respecting healthy classroom boundaries, to protect their own privacy, and to avoid causing other students to feel unsafe.
 3. Acknowledge that students may disagree with the rankings of others. It is not necessary to come to a group consensus; however, they do need to be respectful of each other.
 4. One at a time, ask groups to share their rankings.
 - Ask groups if there were disagreements.
 - Ask the groups to consider why people might rank the activities differently. For example, a person identifying as an LGBTQ2S+ person who has not come out to their family may not feel comfortable holding hands in public; a person with sweaty palms may not feel comfortable holding another's hand.
 - Emphasize that different people have different comfort levels for different types of intimate activities. It's important to have discussions with partners regarding what is intimate for them and what they are comfortable doing. These types of conversations are critical elements of consent for sexual activity and need to be ongoing.

Activity adapted from AIDS Community Care Montreal. ERC 3: Boundaries, consent, and communication.

E. Question Box

Answer any questions from the [question box](#) in the previous lesson. Have students submit any new questions and address them next class.

Addressing the questions at the next class allows you time to review the questions and prepare responses.

Self-Reflection

During the lesson, were:

- Ground rules being followed?
- Good practices established regarding group work and discussion?

What will you change for future classes with this group?

What will you change for future use of this lesson?

Student Assessment

During the lesson, did students:

Knowledge:

- Define consent and sexual assault?
- Identify the guidelines for consent?

Skills:

- Practice identifying the presence or absence of consent in various situations?

Attitudes:

- Accept the need to ask for and get consent in sexual relationships?

ANSWER KEY: CALM Consent Quiz

Correct answers are in bold text.

1. What are some words that describe consent?

- Coercion, confusion, assume
- Manipulation, fear, threats
- **Mutual, voluntary, clear**
- All of the above

Consent is voluntary and part of an ongoing conversation about a mutual agreement to do something. Permission to do any type of sexual contact needs to be asked for and clearly given before continuing with any type of sexual contact.

If there is any type of coercion or there is something to lose by saying “no” (e.g., safety, or a relationship), it is not consent. If communication is confusing or unclear, it is not consent. If there is any uncertainty that someone is agreeing to do something, the person initiating the activity must ask permission and wait until permission is clearly given before continuing. Consent cannot be assumed or implied.

2. Which statement is an example of coercion?

- **“If you loved me, you’d have sex with me.”**
- **“If you don’t have sex with me, I’m breaking up with you.”**
- “I want to have sex with you. How do you feel about that?”
- I don’t want to have sex with you.

Coercion is making someone do something through force or threats. If there is coercion, consent cannot happen. For consent to occur, a person needs to be given the space to say “no.” Coercion can include:

- pressuring someone (e.g., asking someone repeatedly until they finally give in)
- threatening someone (e.g., “I’ll break up with you if you don’t....”)
- intimidating someone (e.g., making someone afraid through the use of looks, actions or gestures)
- blackmailing someone (e.g., “I’ll tell everyone you’re cold/easy if you don’t”)
- guilt-tripping someone (e.g., “If you cared for me you would...”)

3. Sexual assault is defined only as unwanted sexual intercourse.

- True
- **False**

Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual act done by one person to another or sexual activity without one person’s consent or voluntary agreement. Sexual activity may include kissing, touching someone’s breasts, butt, or genitals, one person making another touch their genitals, and oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse. **Sexual activity without consent is sexual assault.**

4. Yuki asks Jaden, “Do you want to make out?” Which response is a clear example of consent?
- Jaden says “no”
 - Jaden is silent
 - Jaden says “I’m not feeling well, so I should go home.”
 - **Jaden says, “Yeah”**

No always means no whether it’s communicated verbally or not. The absence of a no or silence does not mean yes. For it to be yes, it needs to be clearly and enthusiastically communicated.

5. If both people are drunk or high, they can consent to sexual activity.
- True
 - **False**

People who are drunk, high, sleeping or unconscious are unable to give consent, either legally or practically. In order to have clear communication about consent, both people need to be sober and alert.

6. Most of the time sexual assault happens between strangers.
- True
 - **False**

In most cases of sexual assault, the survivor knows the offender. Most often the offender is a friend, spouse, relative, neighbor, partner/boyfriend/girlfriend, boss or employee. Less than a fifth of sexual assaults involve strangers.

7. It is legal for a person under 18 to have sex in exchange for a place to stay.
- True
 - **False**

Exchanging sex for a place to stay is sexual exploitation. Nobody under 18 can consent to sexual exploitation. This includes any involvement in or exposure to pornography, trading sex for money, safety, necessities of life, substances or sexual contact with a person in authority or who they are dependent on.

8. Giving your consent in the past means you still give consent to sexual activity now and in the future.
- True
 - **False**

Consent is ongoing and can be withdrawn at any time. Therefore, prior consent does not apply to any activities that happen later. The consent conversation is continuous and happens during each instance of sexual contact.

9. Once you've started sexual intercourse, it's too late to change your mind and take away your consent.
- True
 - **False**

Consent is an ongoing conversation. One person asks permission for an activity and another gives it. This conversation continues as the activity continues or changes. At any point, people can change their mind and withdraw consent.

10. A 15 year old can legally consent to sex with a 19 year old.
- **True**
 - False

According to Canadian law, the **age of consent** is 16. This is the age when a person can legally consent to sexual activity. There are "close in age" exceptions to this law.

- 14 and 15 year olds can consent to sexual activity if the partner is less than 5 years older.
- 12 and 13 year olds can consent to sexual activity if the partner is less than 2 years older.

As the 19 year old is less than 5 years older than a 15 year old, this would be legal. However, if the 19 year old is in a position of authority over the 15 year old, such as their coach or teacher, the 15 year old cannot legally consent.

11. Which of the following means that someone is consenting to sexual activity:
- They are sexting
 - They are wearing revealing clothes
 - They say, "Do you want to spend time in my room alone?"
 - **None of the above**

Consent cannot be assumed or implied. Flirting, how a person dresses, sexual texts or social media communication cannot be confused with consent. A person wanting to spend time with another in a bedroom may just mean they want to talk in privacy. Permission must be requested and granted for an activity to proceed.

12. When there is consent, both people feel
- Safe
 - Comfortable
 - Confident
 - **All of the above**

Feelings of confidence, safety and comfort (with themselves, their body, the other person and the situation), creates an environment where people are able to participate in the ongoing consent conversation of asking and giving permission.

Giving partner a backrub

Holding hands at school

Holding hands in public

Hugging

Introducing partner to friends

Introducing partner to parents

Kissing

Making out

Sex (anal, oral, hand or vaginal)

Sexting

**Talking about condoms
and/or birth control**

Talking about STIs

Texting

**Touching partner's
arm or shoulder**
