

Communicating Consent



Consent is needed when one person wants to do something to another person or with another person. It is about asking someone for permission to do something to them or with them and the other person choosing to give you their permission or not. Consent is important for every part of your life, but it is especially important for sexual activity. This information sheet is about **asking** for consent and **giving** consent.



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Asking for consent

Asking for consent is about asking someone for their permission to do something to them or with them. If you want to do anything to someone or with someone, you need to make sure they are okay with that.

Here are some examples of when you need to ask for consent:



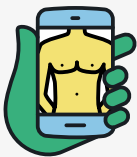
If you want to give your friend a hug, you need to ask them if they are okay with that.



If you want to play a game with a friend, you need to ask them if they want to play with you.



If you want to touch, hug, kiss, or have sex with your partner, you need to ask them if they are okay with it before you do anything.



If you want to send someone a naked or sexy picture of yourself, you need to ask them if they want to see the picture before you send it.



Check out the **Sexting: Information Sheet** to learn more about the laws in Canada about sexting.

Important things to remember when you are asking someone for their consent:



After you ask someone for their consent, the person can choose if they want to give you their consent or not.



Do not pressure a person to give you their consent. **If the person says “no,” that means *no*.** Do not ask them again and again. Do not ask them to change their mind. Do not say things like “it would make me really happy if you said ‘yes’.”

You can only be sure that someone is giving you their consent if they say “yes.” If you are asking someone who does not speak to consent, it is important that they clearly show you that they consent.







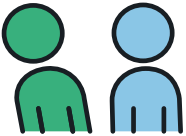


Some ways non-speaking Autistic youth can show you they consent include:

- The person types “yes” on their phone.
- The person is nodding.
- The person points to the symbol for “yes” on their augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) board.



Sometimes people might not give you a direct answer. If you are not sure, that means ***no***.

Here is an example of what can happen if you ask someone for their consent to hug them:

When you ask a person “Can I give you a hug?”		
	<i>The person might :</i>	<i>What you can do:</i>
	Say “yes!” or nod.	Go ahead and give them a hug!
	Give you a hug.	You can hug them back!
	Say “I do not like hugs, but you can touch my shoulder.”	You can only touch their shoulder. Do not give them a hug and do not touch them anywhere else.
	Say “Hmm, I do not know.”	If the person is not sure, that means no . Do not give them a hug. You can say “It looks like you are not sure. Maybe you can tell me if you want a hug later.”
	Say “Hmm, okay, I guess,” but they start to move away from you.	Even though the person said “okay,” their body language says they are not comfortable with a hug. Do not give them a hug. You can say “It looks like you are not sure. I will not give you a hug if you are not comfortable.”
	Say “no” or shake their head.	Do not give them a hug.
	Not respond.	Do not give them a hug.

Giving consent

If anyone wants to do something to you or with you, they need to ask you for your consent.

Here are some examples of when someone needs to ask you for your consent:



If a person you are on a date with wants to touch you, they need to ask you if you are okay with being touched first.



If a person you do not know wants to give you a hug or touch you in some other way, they need to ask you if you want a hug or to be touched first.

You can decide if you want to give that person consent or not.

You can say yes or no – it is your choice.

It is also okay to change your mind after saying yes and the other person must respect your choice to say “no.”

The person must respect what you choose. The person is not allowed to do anything to you or with you that you do not want. If you feel like someone is not respecting what you want or do not want, you can tell someone you trust and ask for help.

Consent to sexual activity

When two people want to do any sexual activity (or “have sex”), each person needs to clearly communicate that they want to do the sexual activity.



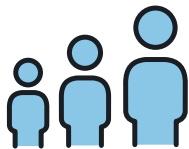
Check out **Sensory Sensitivities During Sex: Information Sheet** for examples of sexual activity.

When a person says they want to do a sexual activity that means they are consenting to the sexual activity.

For someone to be able to consent to sexual activity:

The person must be 16-years-old or over.

There are some exceptions:



- If a person is 12- or 13-years-old, they **can** consent to having sex with someone who is 1 - 2 years older than them.
- If a person is 14- or 15-years-old, they **can** consent to having sex with someone who is 1 – 5 years older than them.
- If a person is 18-years-old or under, they **cannot** consent to having sex with someone who has power over them like a caregiver, a teacher, a doctor, or a boss at work.



The person must understand what they are being asked to do.



The person must not be sleeping.



The person must not be drunk or high.



The person must not feel pressured to say “yes” to something they do not want to do.

It is against the law *for anyone to force you to do a sexual activity that you do not want to do, at any age.*

It is also against the law *for you to force anyone to do a sexual activity that they do not want to do, at any age.*

Asking for consent to sexual activity

When one person asks another person if they want to have sex, they are asking for consent to sexual activity.

If you want to have sex with someone, you need to ask them for their consent before having sex with them.

Important things to remember about asking for consent to sexual activity:



The person can choose to have sex with you or not. They can choose to give you consent or not.



You must respect the other person's choice to say "no."



Do not pressure the person to change their mind if they say "no."



Check in with the person during sex to make sure they still want to continue. The person can choose to stop having sex with you whenever they want. If you start having sex with the person and they say they want to stop, you must stop.



The only way you can be sure that someone is giving you their consent is if they say they want to have sex with you. If you are asking someone who does not speak to consent, you need to make sure that they are clearly showing you that they want to have sex with you.

Here are some examples of questions you can ask a person to make sure they consent:



I want to have sex with you. Do you want to have sex with me?



This feels really good. Does it feel good to you? Do you want to continue?



You seem nervous. Do you want to stop?



Do you want to go further?

Giving consent to sexual activity

If someone wants to have sex with you, the person needs to ask you for your consent.

Things to remember about giving consent to sexual activity:



You can choose to have sex with someone or not. You can choose to give the person your consent or not.



The other person must respect your choice to say “no.”

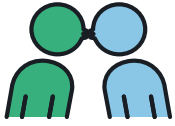


Be as clear and direct as possible.



You can give someone consent and change your mind later. If you say “yes” to having sex, and then tell the person you want to stop, the person must respect your choice and stop.

Here are some examples of things you can say if you want to stop or slow down:



We can kiss, but I do not want to do anything else.



I am not ready to have sex with you. Can we just cuddle?



I do not like this. Can we try something else?



I want to be with you, but I don't want to have sex right now.



I want to stop.



I don't want to stop, but can we slow down?



No.

If someone touches your body or does something sexual to you that you did not say “yes” to and that you did not want, this is sexual assault. You should tell someone you trust that you were sexually assaulted and ask for help.

