Lesson Plan: Sexual Consent

Objective:

* Participants will understand when sexual consent is needed and how to recognize it.
* Participants will practice asking for and recognizing consent.

Target audience: 14+

## **Total estimated time**: 60 minutes

## **Materials:**

* Open space
* Chart paper
* Markers
* “Sexual Consent: Ask, Listen, Respect” pamphlet
* “TRUE” and “FALSE” cards
* Tape

Preparation:

* You may wish to contact your local mental health consultant or nurse to sit in on this lesson (optional).
* Write the Group Agreement on piece of chart paper.
* Write “TRUE” and “FALSE” on two pieces of paper/ construction paper and tape them on either side of the room.

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| **Time** | **Slides** | **Topic** | **Key Points and Speaker’s Notes** |
| 5 min | 1-3 | Introduction  Group Agreement | Introduce yourself and let the participants know that the group will be talking about sexual consent.  Establish a group agreement that students should respect while participating in the workshop. Some suggestions include:   * All questions are ok: At any time * Confidentiality: Personal information and stories shared in the group stays in the group. * Duty to report: There are limits to confidentiality. Facilitators must report any cases or suspected cases of child abuse of someone under 18 years old to the RCMP. * It’s ok to pass: Participants may choose not to participate in a specific activity or leave the room at any time. Some topics may be difficult for some participants to listen to and talk about, so do not force anyone to participate. * No judgement: Be respectful of each other, and do not laugh at other participants’ questions or stories. |
| 5 min | 4-5 | Discussion: What is consent? | **Speaker’s Note:** Consent is an important part of all healthy relationships – whether your relationship is with a friend, a sibling, or a boyfriend/ girlfriend/ common-law/ husband/ wife. Today we will be talking about consent in sexual relationships. When I say “consent” in sexual relationships, what do I mean?  **Key Points:**   * Giving and getting permission * Voluntary (not forced or pressured) * Enthusiastic * Ongoing * The law * Applies to every sexual activity – including touching, kissing and having sex. * Consent is important for every relationship, not just sexual relationships   It is your responsibility to get consent from your partner before any sexual activity. There are three steps to asking for consent.   * Step 1: Ask your partner for consent before any sexual activity * Step 2: Listen to your partner’s response * Step 3: Respect your partner’s decision |
| 10 min | 6-7 | Activity: True or False | **Speaker’s Note:**  If you’ve never thought about consent before, you might not know when you need to ask for consent. In this activity, we’ll learn more about when consent can and cannot be given.  See activity instructions below.  **Key points to summarize at end of activity:**   * A person can only consent if they are awake and aware of what they are agreeing to (not if they are asleep, unconscious, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs) * A person can only consent if they are not under pressure, forced or influenced to say yes. * Consent is needed for every person no matter the relationship - married, common-law, dating, friend, best friend, or strangers. * Consent is needed for each new sexual activity. A person has the right to change their mind at any time. * Age is important when it comes to consent. |
| 5 min | 8 | Age of Consent | **Speaker’s Note:** Everyone has the right to say “no” to sexual activity, but age matters when it comes to who can say “yes.” There are consent laws in place to help protect young people from others who might take advantage of them (for example, someone who is older, bigger, or more powerful could influence someone to have sex with them).   * + The law says that no one under 12 years old can consent to sexual activity with anyone.   + 12 or 13 year olds can consent to someone less than two years older   + 14 or 15 year olds can consent to someone less than 5 years older   + 16 years and older can consent to someone older   + A person in a position of trust, power or authority (for example a teacher, coach, RCMP officer, or healthcare worker) cannot have sexual activity with anyone under 18 years old   Remind students that just because they can give consent or say “yes” to sexual activity, it doesn’t mean they should or have to. |
| 15 min | 9 | Activity: Parallel Lines | **Speaker’s Note:** Now that you know when you need to ask for consent, we’re going to practise actually asking.  **See activity instructions below.**  **Speaker’s Note at end of activity:** This activity allowed you to practice giving and getting consent for a simple action - “taking steps forward”. These same basic rules of consent apply to sexual activity, including kissing, touching, and having sex. Sexual consent means:   * Step 1: Asking your partner for permission before starting any sexual activity * Step 2: Listening to your partner * Step 3: Respecting your partner’s decision   We will now talk about each of these 3 steps in more detail. |
| 5 min | 10-12 | Ask, listen, respect | **Step 1: Ask**  Before you start any sexual activity, it is your responsibility to ask your partner for consent. You can make this fun and sexy, by asking:   * Do you want to try this? * Do you like this? * Does this feel good? * How far do you want to go?   **Step 2: Listen**  After asking for consent, listen to what your partner says. Only an enthusiastic “YES!” means consent. An enthusiastic yes is a willing agreement to a specific sexual activity that is not pressured or forced. Everything else is no.  Ask/ Remind students of what “no” looks and sounds like:   * “I liked it last time, but right now I’m not in the mood.” * “Can we do something else instead? * “I like this, but not that” * “I’m not sure” or “I don’t know” * “Not now” * “No” or “Stop” * Drunk, unconscious or asleep * Silent, crying or pushing away   **Step 3: Respect**   * If you hear an enthusiastic “YES!” continue to check-in with your partner with each sexual activity. Your partner has the right to change their mind at any time. * If you hear or see “no”, stop what you are doing and respect your partner’s decision. Waiting until you are both ready makes the experience more fun and safe for everyone.   It is better to be 100% sure that you have consent than risk the experience being sexual violence. |
| 5 min | 13-16 | Video  Where to get help  Conclusion | Show Cup of Tea Consent Video <http://www.irespectmyself.ca/sites/default/files/public/video/tea_and_consent_clean-sd.mp4>  Remind the students that consent is an important part of healthy relationships and that they can practice “ask-listen-respect” in all their relationships, not just with sex.  **Speaker note:** If you have experienced sexual violence, remember it is not your fault. You can get help from:   * Health centre * Mental health nurse or counsellor * RCMP * nunavuthelpline.ca or 1-800-265-3333 * kidshelpphone.ca or 1-800-668-6868   Thanks very much for participating today! Any questions?  If you want more information about sexual consent, you can speak to me or a nurse at the health centre. You can also go to websites like [www.irespectmyself.ca](http://www.irespectmyself.ca)  If you want condoms, you can get them (list locations in your community where condoms are available) |

**Activity 1: True or False**

Instructions:

1. Tape two pieces of paper on either side of the room. One paper will have “TRUE” written on it, and the other will have “FALSE” written on it.
2. Read out each scenario below and ask students to move to the side of the room that they believe is the correct answer.
3. Allow students on both sides of the room a chance to explain their choices. Facilitator’s notes are provided to help guide discussions.

**True or False Scenarios**

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| **Scenario** | **Correct Response** | **Facilitator’s Notes** |
| A person sees their best friend in the school hallway and decides to grab her bum. This is an act of sexual violence. | **True** | Any sexual activity without consent is sexual violence, and it is against the law. Examples of sexual violence include:   * Unwanted kissing or touching * Following * Making sexual comments * Taking and sharing sexual pictures * Forced sex (rape) * Any sexual activity with someone underage   It doesn’t matter if the other person is your best friend, your girlfriend/boyfriend, date, husband/wife, common-law partner or stranger – consent is important for every person. |
| A person who is very drunk can consent to sexual activity. | **FALSE** | A person who is drunk, asleep or unconscious cannot give consent to any type of sexual activity. A person can only give consent if they are awake and fully aware of what they are agreeing to. |
| Someone who feels pressured or forced to say “yes” cannot consent to sexual activity. | **TRUE** | Only an enthusiastic “YES!” means consent. Signs of non-consent:   * “I liked it last time, but right now I’m not in the mood.” * “Can we do something else instead?” * “I like this, but not that.” * “I’m not sure.” Or “I don’t know” * “Not now.” * “No” or “Stop” * Drunk, unconscious or asleep * Silent, crying or pushing away   A person’s age and who they are having sex with (for example, a person in a position of power, trust, or authority) also has an influence on whether or not they can consent. |
| Married couples do not need consent for sexual activities. | **False** | Consent is important for every person and every situation. People who are married, on a date, common-law, dating, best friends, on-and-off, or strangers still need consent for any type of sexual activity. |
| A person who consents to kissing and touching also consents to other types of sexual activity. | **False** | Consent is important for every sexual activity. A person can say yes to one sexual activity, and no to a different sexual activity. Always ask your partner and don’t make assumptions. |
| A person who consents to sexual activity has the right to change their mind at any time. | **True** | Consent doesn’t happen just one time – it is ongoing. A person who says yes at one moment can change their minds at any time, even during sexual activity. Keep asking and checking-in with your partner. They have a right to change their minds, and it is your responsibility to stop and respect their decision. |
| A person of any age can consent to sexual activity. | **False** | There are laws in place to protect young people from others who may take advantage of them. The legal age of consent is 16, but there are some exceptions. We will talk more about age of consent in a moment. |

**Activity 2: Parallel Lines**

**Instructions:**

1. Ask for pairs of volunteers (at least 3-4 pairs, and ideally the whole class if you have space).
2. Get pairs to line up facing each other, on either side of the room.
3. Assign students on one line partner “A” and students on the opposite line partner “B”.
4. All “A” students will begin by taking slow and small steps towards partner “B”. With each step, partner A will ask partner B, “Can I take another step?”
5. Partner B can tell Partner A to stop at any time. Partner A can also stop on their own at any time.
6. Once all partners have stopped moving, ask students to look around at the other partners and notice how far apart each pair is (most pairs will be at different distances apart).
7. Repeat the exercise, with partner B asking partner A for permission to move closer.
8. Have all students re-group and sit in a circle or at their desks for discussion questions.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Why do you think people stopped at different points? Why didn’t everyone in line “A” stop at the same spot?

Possible responses:

* + Different relationships (Best friends, strangers, opposite sex)
  + Everyone has different comfort zones or boundaries

1. How does partner A know when to stop moving?

**Possible responses:**

* + Verbal (partner B says “stop”, “no”)
  + Non-verbal (shaking head, moves away, scrunches nose)

1. For all partner B’s, how did it feel to say stop and have your partner respect your decision?

**Possible responses:**

* + Safe, respected, powerful

1. How would you feel if your partner didn’t listen and kept moving closer?

**Possible responses:**

* + Disrespected, hurt, afraid, distrust, weak

1. If partner A asks “Can I take a step forward?”, and partner B says “Yes” once, can partner A assume that partner B will say yes every time?

No. Partner A must continue to ask for consent. Partner B has the right to say no any time and for any reason. If partner B doesn’t consent, Partner A must respect their decision and stop what they are doing.

1. What if partner B says “yes”, but changes their mind? Can partner B say stop at any time?

Yes. Even if partner B says “yes”, they can change their mind and say “no” any time and for any reason. Partner A must respect their decision.

1. If partner A and B were a couple/married/common-law/best friends, how might that change the distance between them?

**Possible responses:**

* + Partners may be closer together
  + Partner B may feel more comfortable with partner A moving closer

1. Does being a couple/married/common-law/best friends mean that partner A doesn’t need to ask for consent (for sexual activity)?

No. No matter what the relationship is, you need to ask consent before any sexual activity.