

Consent, explained

Easy · 10 min to read · Free

Consent is a clear, freely given, ongoing yes from someone who is of legal age, sober and alert, and not pressured. You need it every time, for each activity, and anyone can take it back at any point, including by freezing, pulling away or going quiet. Clothing, flirting, past yeses, dating, silence and a yes squeezed out by guilt or threats are not consent. If you're unsure, stop and check in. If something happened to you, it isn't your fault: RAINN's hotline is 800-656-4673, 24/7.

YOU'LL NEED

- ☐ Honest communication
- ☐ Your school's Title IX office and RAINN's number saved in your phone

WHAT TO KNOW

- 1 **Know the definition.** Consent is a mutual agreement that's clear, voluntary, and communicated without pressure, manipulation or fear. Everyone involved must be of legal age, sober and alert, and not under coercion or threat.
- 2 **Ask.** A simple "Is this okay?" before moving forward. You don't have to guess.
- 3 **Look for an enthusiastic yes, not just the absence of a no: "Yes, I want to," relaxed engagement, and comfort.**
- 4 **Listen to words and body language.** Respect a no even if it's quiet, indirect or nonverbal.
- 5 **Check in as things progress.** Yes to one thing isn't yes to everything, and yes last time isn't yes now.
- 6 **Stop the moment someone freezes, pulls away, goes silent or says stop.** Consent can be withdrawn at any time, even in the middle.

Watch out Someone who is underage, asleep, unconscious, intoxicated or manipulated into saying yes can't consent.

DAD NOTE *If you're not sure, ask. If they're not sure, stop.*

Full lesson: aptkeys.com/people/respect-and-consent/consent-explained/

Checked October 2, 2026. Sources: RAINN; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.