



Home Office



Government
Equalities Office

Session Two

Consent



DISRESPECT NOBODY

PSHE
Association

Note: Please read the Discussion guide in full before starting this session to ensure safe delivery. These sessions are not intended to be taught in isolation but should be part of a planned programme of learning about positive, healthy relationships.

Approximate delivery time for the full session is 80 minutes. Those with limited time available should focus on the following sections, drawing out key points from the remaining sections throughout the activities (approx. 40 minutes):

- Starter activity
- Understanding consent
- Myths activity
- Key messages
- 'Revisit starter activity' section of the plenary

Session objective:

To learn:

- what we mean by 'consent'
- how and where to access support

Intended learning outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- explain what is meant by 'consent', and what this means within healthy relationships
- explain some consequences of not giving consent to sexual activity
- describe how and where to access support and how to support a friend who may be experiencing abuse

Introduction

Agree or re-cap on ground rules, including what to do if students feel upset or uncomfortable (see Discussion guide)

Note: The films focus on male characters as the abuser and female characters as the target. While evidence shows that most abuse in relationships is perpetrated by males against females, it is important to highlight that abuse can happen within any relationship (including heterosexual relationships where the female is the abuser and the male is the target), as well as within lesbian, gay and bisexual relationships. Trans people are also disproportionately vulnerable to abuse.

Starter activity - baseline assessment (10 minutes)

- Using Q&A, re-cap on what students learned in Session 1, and re-visit the class list of features of a healthy relationship.
- In small groups, ask students to agree a definition of the word 'consent', to gauge their current understanding. Take feedback from each group, and agree a class definition to display.
- Ask pupils to compare their class definition of 'consent' with the following definition and key messages:

Consent is defined as an agreement made by someone with the freedom and ability to decide something. Under the law, it is the person seeking consent who is responsible for ensuring that these conditions are met.

Consent has to be given freely and no one can be made to consent to something. It's not consent if someone does something because they feel they have to.

- British law says that both people need to give their consent before sex or any physical closeness
- the law also says that to consent to sex a person must be 16 or over and have the ability to make informed decisions for themselves (i.e. they have to be mature enough to make the decision and not be impaired by e.g. drugs or alcohol)



Understanding consent (10 minutes)

Show the short film. Facilitate a group discussion to get a spontaneous reaction to what they have just seen. Suggested questions to prompt discussion include:

- What are your initial thoughts?
- What do you think about the way the characters (puppets) are behaving
- What do you think about the behaviours which were mentioned in the film?

Using the class and official definitions of 'consent', discuss where or how in the film consent was or was not given.



True or false? Myths and misconceptions about rape (15-20 minutes)

In small groups, ask students to sort the 'True or false?' cards (Activity 2) into three piles: True, False and Not sure. Afterwards, go through each statement in turn and discuss the groups' placings. After the feedback for each statement, read the true information about it to the class (this can be found in **Session 2 Appendix 1**).

Does anything surprise students in particular?

A rapist is usually a stranger who rapes someone in a dark alley

The majority of rapes are committed by people known to, and often trusted by, the person who is raped. They could be friends, partners, family members or known from school, college or work.

If two people have had sex before, it's always OK to have sex again

Even if two people have had sex before, they must both be consenting each time they subsequently have sex and consent can be withdrawn at any time.

People who are raped 'ask for it' by wearing revealing or provocative clothing.

The clothes a person wears never mean they are 'asking for it'. Rape or sexual assault are never the victim's fault. It is always the fault of the attacker. People who are assaulted and attackers can be any age, sex, religion, gender identity and sexual orientation; and come from any culture or background.

If someone is raped while drunk, they are also somewhat responsible

If someone is drunk, they may not be able to give consent to having sex (they must have the 'ability' or 'capacity' to consent. It is not acceptable for an attacker to blame drink or drugs for their actions.

When it comes to sex 'no' sometimes means 'yes'

If two people want to have sex with each other it must be something that they both consent to. They show this through their words and through their body language. Saying 'No' means consent has not been given (although not saying no does not mean consent has been given). The seeker of consent must look out for an enthusiastic or active 'yes' with either the other person's words or body language to be sure they have consent. If someone says 'yes' under pressure, it does not count as consent.

Alcohol and drugs turn people into rapists

Drugs and alcohol are never the cause of rape or sexual assault. The attacker commits the crime, not the drugs and/or alcohol.

If you go back to someone's house, you are saying you want to have sex with that person

Going home with someone is not giving consent to have sex with that person. Consent must be sought and given, never assumed. Misplaced assumptions are no excuse, either ethically or in the eyes of the law.

Rape is only rape if someone gets physically injured

In some cases, people who have been raped have physical injuries outside or inside their bodies, but not always. Just because someone hasn't got any injuries doesn't mean they weren't raped.

It is not rape if the target does not clearly say 'no'

There are many ways that someone can show that they do not want sex as well as saying the word 'No'. Consent means giving permission for something to happen or agreeing to do something

Men don't usually mean to force sex on anyone but sometimes they get carried away

Consent to one sexual activity is not consent to another activity. Consent should not be assumed or treated as a 'one off' but rather as a continual process of checking a partner is happy to proceed. Withdrawal of consent at any point must always be respected and acted upon.

People often lie about being raped as they regret having sex with someone

Research suggests that very few cases of rape complaints are false – most people who have been raped tell the truth. Many people also do not report rapes – sometimes because they are scared, or embarrassed, or because they are unsure how to do so, or what will happen if they do. Explain that in fact it is more common for rape cases to go unreported than be falsified.

It is only rape if someone is physically or violently forced into sex

Rape happens when someone doesn't consent to sex. Rapists may threaten violence, or may take advantage of their target being unable to consent (for example because they're drunk or asleep).

Boys and men don't get raped

While the majority of rapes and sexual assaults are committed against females, it also happens to a significant number of males.



Checking for consent (15 minutes)

In pairs or small groups, ask students to make a list of ways that someone could show non-verbally that they are not consenting to sex or another sexual act.

Examples may include:

- stop kissing
- pulling away from the other person
- don't want to be hugged
- nervous/frightened
- 'freeze' or become unresponsive
- stop speaking

Key consent messages

In pairs, ask students to match up the quotations with the 'Key consent messages' (Activity 3 – instructions on sheet)

Take feedback and go through the correct answers ensuring all key messages are discussed.

Answers:

1: F

2: C

3: G

4: A

5: B

6: H

7: D

8: E

Emphasise to students:

- the importance of getting consent for sexual activity
- looking out for the signs that a partner is consenting (and to keep checking)
- the legal and ethical responsibility on the seeker of consent to do this.
- that saying 'No' is just one way of not consenting to something and not saying 'No' does not mean they have given consent.

During feedback, reinforce the following additional points:

- Good communication between both partners ensures understanding about sex or physical closeness. Check with your partner by asking if they are enjoying what you are doing and ask if they want to continue.
- Reading body language is also important. If your partner is relaxed it is likely that they feel comfortable. If they are tense, they may be nervous or frightened and trying to hide how they really feel.
- Look out for signs of someone not consenting to sex or any sexual/intimate act – sometimes people might find it hard to say anything at all if they don't want to do something. If someone stops kissing another person or doesn't want to be hugged or held, this could be a sign of non-consent. Don't ignore it.
- If one person doesn't want to have sex, the other person needs to accept that. It's not ok to try and change their mind, as pressuring someone into sex is rape or sexual assault. This also applies to pressurising someone to have sex without using contraception.
- When discussing statement E, the question of why this only refers to male perpetrators may arise. It may be helpful to refer to the legal definition of rape (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/section/1>) which only refers to males.

See **Resource D** for details of organisations providing advice and guidance to young people about sexual activity and relationships.

Consequences (15 minutes)

What are 'consequences'?

Explain that every action has consequences – an effect on something or someone.

Consequences can either be positive or negative, and can have a lasting impact on people's lives. Sex or physical closeness without consent can have extremely damaging consequences for both people involved.

Split the class into pairs or small groups, and give each a set of 'Consequences' cards (Activity 4)). These are some potential consequences of having sex or other sexual activity without consent.

Ask them to sort the cards into three piles: 'Physical'; 'Emotional' and 'Legal'. Can they think of any others to add to each list?

When students have sorted the cards, read out the answers which can be found in **Session 2 Appendix 1** below.

See **Resource F** for information on crimes within the Sexual Offences Act. Remind students that if someone is unable to consent to sex for any reason (e.g. intoxicated), this may lead to a charge of rape. It is the responsibility of the person seeking consent to make sure that the other person has the capacity to give their consent – this includes being sober enough to do so.

Also see **Resource F** for the legal definitions of rape and sexual assault.

Draw attention to organisations which provide support and advice for young people who may be in an abusive relationship. Make sure that the list of sources in **Resource D** is available to the class.

Plenary and reflection on learning (10 minutes)

Revisit the starter activity. Is there anything students would change in their definitions of consent?

Additional plenary discussion or private reflection questions could include:

- Do you feel differently about anything as a result of what you have seen and heard in this session?
- Has anything surprised or shocked you?
- Can you describe signs of consent/non-consent?
- If you thought someone was being pressured into having sex, or any sexual activity, could you explain where they could get help?

Re-emphasise that it is the person seeking consent's responsibility to get consent/act on the signs of consent/non-consent.

Check that the session's objectives have been met and students:

- understand and can explain what is meant by the term 'consent' and what it means within healthy relationships
 - have some ideas about how to get help if they experience abuse and how to support a friend who may be experiencing abuse
-

Session 2 Appendix 1

Myths and misconceptions: true or false?

Consequences cards: answers

Physical:

- sexually transmitted infections for both people and any other future partners
- physical injury
- internal injury
- mental health problems including depression
- unwanted pregnancy

Emotional

- lower self-esteem and sense of worth
- humiliation
- fear
- hurt
- embarrassment
- problems trusting future partners
- problems forming new relationships

Legal:

- possible custodial sentence if found guilty of rape
 - sexual assault could lead to a community order, fine or prison sentence
 - having sex without consent and sexual assault could result in the perpetrator being added to the Sex Offender Register
 - having a criminal record, and/or being put on the Sex Offender Register will have a major impact on future life events such as getting work
-

