

CONSENT 101

It can be difficult to understand body language signals or implied consent, which is why it's important to have the knowledge and skills to communicate consent clearly. Consent is an ongoing process and can change or be revoked at any time if someone is uncomfortable. Knowing what our boundaries are helps us to understand what we are comfortable with and where we draw the line. In this workbook we will analyze our boundaries, practise asking for and giving consent, and understanding how gender norms and media have affected the ways we ask for consent.

Consent is not only used in sexual contexts. It can be given when giving a hug, taking someone's photo, or hanging out with a friend.

THE MOST VALUABLE THING I LEARNED IN THIS WORKSHOP WAS "HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO RESPECT PEOPLES' BOUNDARIES."

STARTING MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS WHILE STUCK @ HOME

Over the past 22 years, BYTE has been working with young people to learn about their perspectives on a number of important topics from substance use and mental health to relationships and consent.

We love working with youth and hearing all about their skills, strengths and resilience as they navigate their mental health, their relationships, being leaders in their community, worrying about climate change and much more!

In light of Covid-19 and a temporary pause in our in-person work with youth, we'd like to share some ideas and activities to start some important conversations at home!

In these workbooks, we will tackle topics such as Healthy Relationships, Healthy Minds and Safer Partying. Drop us a line at manager@yukonyouth.com if you have any specific requests!

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR TALKING TO YOUTH

When we spend time talking to youth about anything we try to follow these tips and tricks for creating open, honest and non-judgemental conversations:

- Think about your own biases!** Of course as adult allies we all have our own experiences that influence our opinions. Acknowledge where these biases might be present in your conversations and do your best to catch yourself if your thinking turns judgemental.
- Know your purpose!** Why do you want to have this conversation? For us, we want to remind young people that they have already have a lot of skills for navigating the world!
- Be genuine.** Be honest and sincere. It'll be much easier to have these conversations if youth understand there is no hidden agenda.
- There are no bad questions.** We try not to shy away from any questions and do our best to answer everything openly and honestly. If we can answer honestly now, we can build a strong foundation for more serious questions later.

•**Manage your expectations!** Don't strike up this conversation with the goal of teaching a lesson or to change minds. Instead, be open-minded about learning about their perspectives.

•**Be conscious of your tone.** Use a tone and ask questions that encourage honest answers. Try saying things like "I want to understand more about that."

•**Listen!** Be present and set aside enough time to have a meaningful conversation. Listen to understand and not to respond (this has been a super helpful mindset for us)

•**Be comfortable with some silence.** If there is silence in your discussion, don't stress about filling it. Sometimes young people need time to open up, even if you have a close relationship with them already!

•**Be supportive and empower.** You might not necessarily agree with everything they say, but let them know you stand by them and their right to make their own decisions and have their own opinions.



Activity 1: Defining My Boundaries

A good way to start thinking about consent is by analyzing our own boundaries. Review the statements below and check off the actions that you are comfortable doing.



- I'm okay with any of my friends hugging me at any time.
- I'm okay with my siblings punching me when they see a "punch-buggy".
- I like it when my mom plays with my hair.
- I like play-fighting and wrestling with my siblings.
- I'm okay with my friends playing practical jokes on me.
- I'm okay with my partner posting a photo of me on their social media without telling me.
- I'm okay with my siblings hiding and jumping out to scare me.
- I'm okay with sharing a bed with friends at sleepovers.
- I'm okay with changing my clothes in front of my friends.
- I'm okay with my boss asking me to cover a shift on my scheduled days off of work.
- I'm okay with accepting all friend requests or having anyone follow me on social media.



Debrief 1: Defining My Boundaries

Understand that everyone's boundaries will be different and we all have varying levels of comfort. How do we know what other people are comfortable with if we don't ask?



It's important to analyze our own boundaries regularly to check in with our comfort levels in different situations. Our boundaries may be affected by the type of boundaries, the people we set them with, and our values.

Some examples of the different types of boundaries include...

Physical Boundaries: I'm comfortable with kissing or holding hands, but not in public.

Emotional Boundaries: I'm bad at saying "No" to people that I love, but I need to save more time for myself.

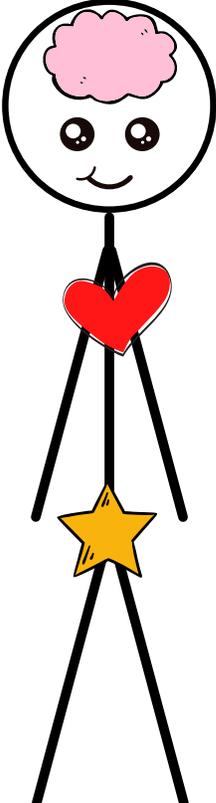
Time Boundaries: I'm okay with receiving emails outside of work time, but I will only respond to them within certain hours.

Digital Boundaries: I'm picky about who I share photos and information with on social media.

Activity 2: Head, Heart, Body

Another way to analyze our boundaries is to look at how we feel with our head, heart, and bodies. In our **head** we may be asking ourselves questions, having thoughts, and assessing our values. In our **heart** we look at our emotions and our feelings. In our **bodies** we recognize what sensations we may feel physically.

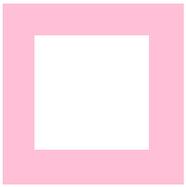
If we feel good about the situation, we can place a checkmark in the box. If we're unsure or need more information, we can put a question mark in the box. If we don't feel good about the situation, we can put an X in the box.

X ? ✓	Head <input type="checkbox"/>		Values, Questions, Thoughts Do I have more questions? What will my parents and friends think?
X ? ✓	Heart <input type="checkbox"/>		Emotions, Feelings Excited, Happy, Proud
X ? ✓	Body <input type="checkbox"/>		Physical sensations Upset stomach, sweaty palms

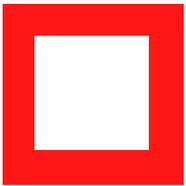
Activity 2: Head, Heart, Body

Before we use this tool, ask yourself a question like, "*Am I ready to date?*" or "*Am I ready to have sex with this person?*" Use the Head, Heart, Body tool to assess how you react to the question and if you think you are ready to make a decision or not.

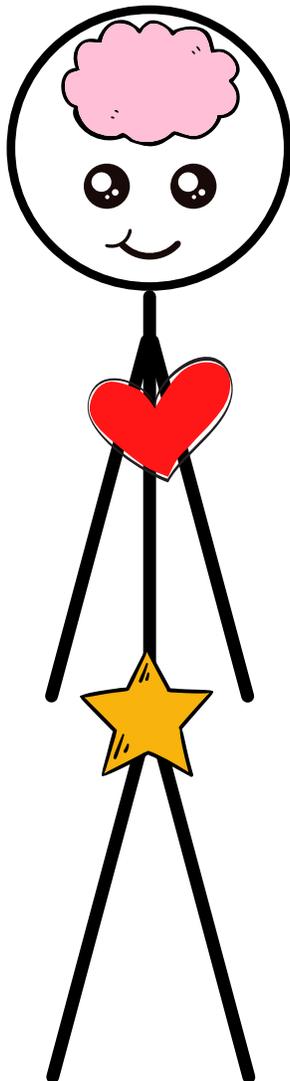
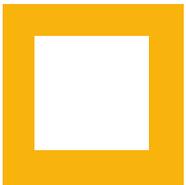
Head



Heart



Body



Values, Questions, Thoughts

Emotions, Feelings

Physical sensations

Debrief 2:

Head, Heart, Body

Ask yourself a few more questions with the Head, Heart, Body diagram and make yourself more aware of your boundaries and comfort levels.

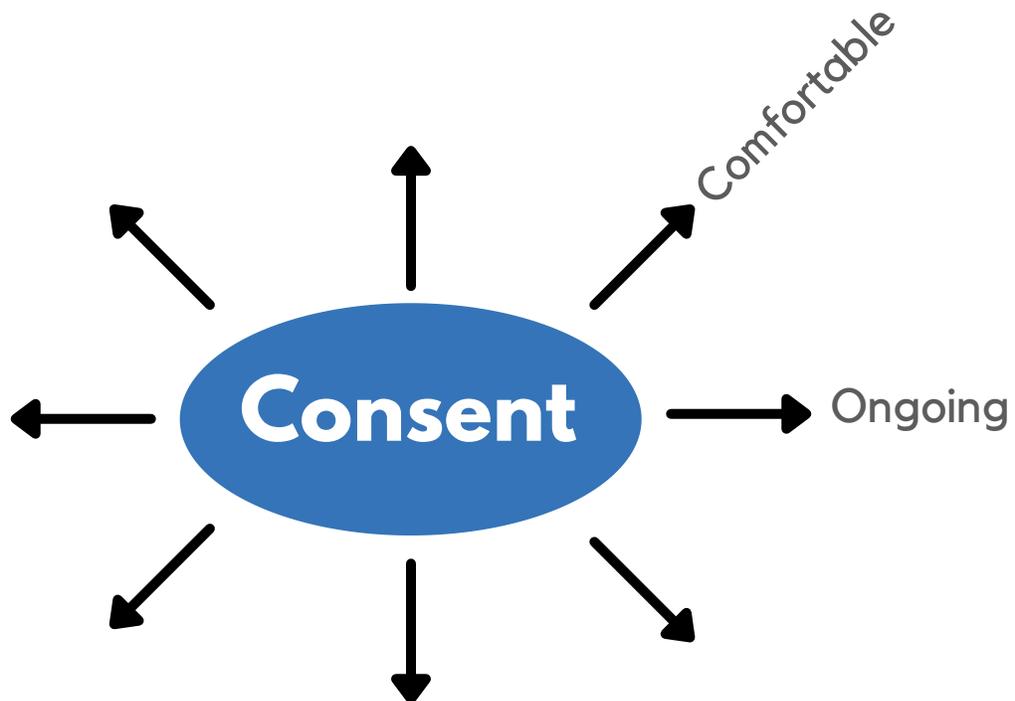
This tool can help us learn things about ourselves or realize something that we may not have known was an uncomfortable boundary. Sometimes we learn that our values are influenced by others more than we think and it's okay to unlearn those ideas and form our own opinions.

When we participate in an activity with someone else, we also have to consider their Head, Heart, and Body reactions. If both people have all checkmarks in their Head, Heart, Body...

That's Consent!

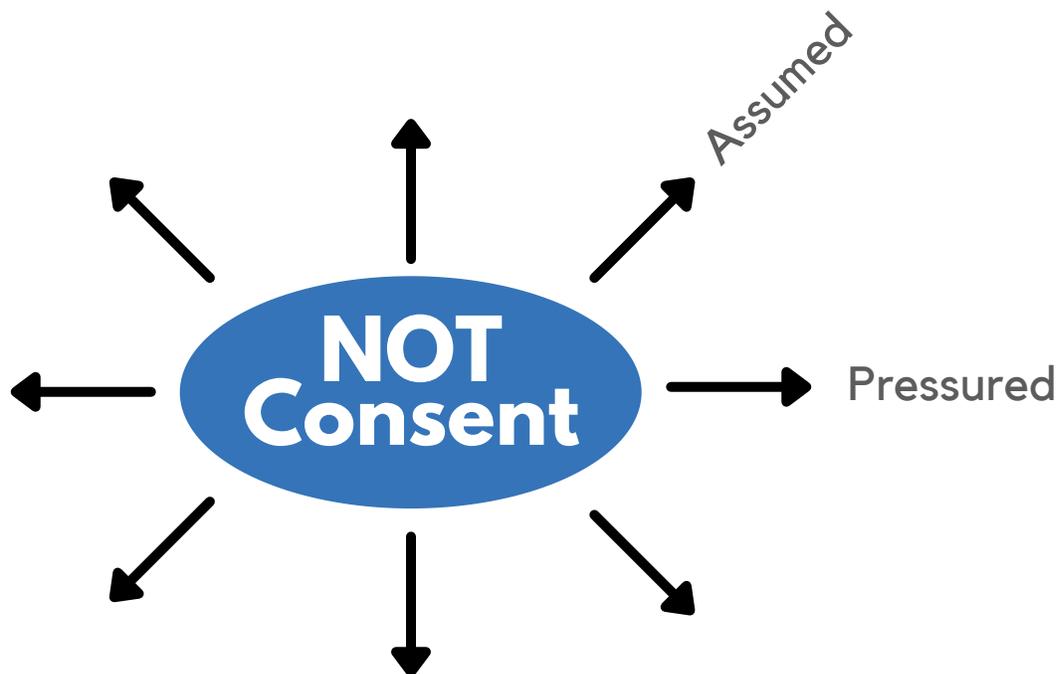
Activity 3: What is Consent?

So what really is consent? Let's spend a few minutes reflecting on what we already know about consent and brainstorm some words or phrases that come to mind when we think about consent. This can include words like "comfortable" and "ongoing" which have been placed on the brainstorm below to help you get started.



Activity 3: What is Not Consent?

On the other hand, consent cannot be given when something is preventing someone from saying a clear and concise "Yes." Let's brainstorm some words or phrases, like before, about what consent is not. This can include words like "assumed" and "pressured" which have been placed on the brainstorm below to help you get started.



Debrief 3: What is & is Not Consent?

It's important to explicitly define consent so it is clear and easy to understand.

- Consent must be clear and enthusiastic. Enthusiastic doesn't have to mean shouting and jumping up and down because you're excited. Consent can be expressed in different ways such as positive body language like smiling, maintaining eye contact, and nodding. It is necessary to still seek verbal confirmation.
- Consent is making sure each other is comfortable, consent is active and on-going, and consent is retractable if someone changes their mind.
- Consent is not given while under the influence of drugs or alcohol; consent is not given when pressured or coerced; consent is not assumed; consent is not given even in a long-term relationship; consent is not given, even if it was previously in the day or last week.
- Consent is all about good communication - It is about asking for permission and comfort, listening to each other and respecting each others choices.

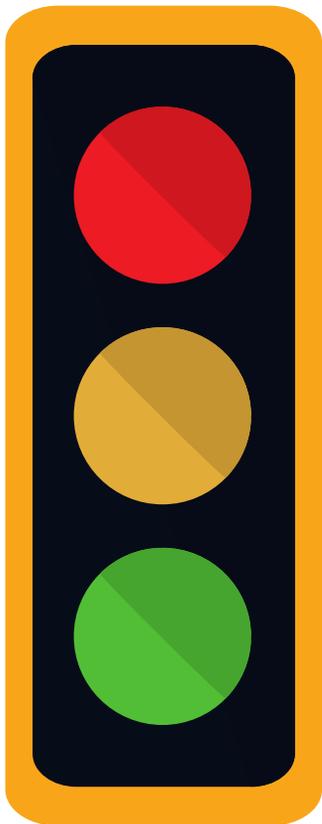
Ask. Listen. Respect.

Activity 4:

Consent Stoplight

Check out the scenarios on the following page. Read the scenarios and check off the green circle if consent was clearly given, the yellow circle if the consent was unclear or the red circle if consent was not given at all or if consent was taken away. Discuss or reflect on why you checked off that circle. This activity is to introduce and encourage conversations on this topic. Not all scenarios in this activity or in real life will be perfectly clear.

If you feel like it, try applying the "Head, Heart, Body" model from page 7 to the stoplight scenarios to see how you would react.



NO consent was given or consent was taken back. STOP everything.

STOP and ASK.

Need more context, it's unclear. Do not assume consent was given

Consent was clear. Carry on.

1. You have been making out with this person all night at the party, they tell you they don't want to go further at the beginning of the night but by the end of the night (with a few too many drinks) they ask you to go somewhere more private with them.



2. A friend asks you if you want another beer. You say ' yes, please' and take the drink.



3. Your partner has been asking over and over all night and pressuring you to send nude photos on Snapchat. They've asked so many times that you're annoyed of them asking and you reluctantly agree.



4. Your partner leans over to kiss you and you both enjoy it. Your partner then starts to touch you. You do like it for a little while, but then start feeling a little uncomfortable and unsure. They ask if you want to go further and you say "Ummm...".



5. While hanging out with your friends, one of them snaps an embarrassing photo of you without you knowing. They share it on snapchat without your knowledge and you see it later in the day on their story. You ask them to take it down, but they don't remove it.



Debrief 4:

Consent Stoplight

1. This would be a **RED** stoplight scenario. Consent was clearly not given at the beginning of the night and someone cannot consent to sexual activity while intoxicated.
2. This would be a **GREEN** stoplight scenario. Consent was given as a clear and enthusiastic "YES".
3. This would be a **RED** stoplight scenario. Sexual coercion is unwanted sexual activity that happens when you are pressured, tricked, threatened, or forced in a nonphysical way. Coercion can make you think you owe sex, or in this case, sexy photos to someone.
4. This would be a **YELLOW** stoplight scenario. Consent was unclear and sounded hesitant. Stop and talk about if you want to continue.
5. This would be a **RED** stoplight scenario. Consent was not given and you asked for the photo to be taken down and your boundary wasn't respected.

Information: Consent Laws in Canada

Under the Canadian Criminal Code, the age of consent is 16. However, there are several exceptions to this where the individuals involved in the sexual activity are close in age:

- A 14 or 15 year old can consent to sexual activity as long as the partner is less than five years older and there is no relationship of trust, authority or dependency or any other exploitation of the young person. This means that if the partner is 5 years or older than the 14 or 15 year old, any sexual activity is a criminal offence.
- There is also a "close in age" exception for 12 and 13 year olds. A 12 or 13 year old can consent to sexual activity with a partner as long as the partner is less than two years older and there is no relationship of trust, authority or dependency or any other exploitation of the young person. This means that if the partner is 2 years or older than the 12 or 13 year old, any sexual activity is a criminal offence.
- A 16 or 17 year old cannot consent to sexual activity if: their sexual partner is in position of trust or authority towards them, for example their teacher or coach, the young person is dependent on their sexual partner, for example for care or support, or the relationship between the young person and their sexual partner is exploitative

Activity 5: Practice Asking for Consent

Asking for consent can feel a little intimidating and sometimes awkward. The truth is, asking for consent in a sexual context doesn't have to be this way. We ask for consent in non-sexual contexts all the time! We may say, "Can I pet your dog?!" if we see someone walking their dog on the street. We ask first before petting the dog because make sure the owner is comfortable and we don't want the dog to bite us.



To practice asking for consent, list 5 different ways you would ask someone if they want to have sex:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Receiving and Respecting a Refusal

Imagine you are on a date with the person that you really like. For your date, you went for dinner and now you're watching a movie at their house. You feel pretty nervous, but you lean over and ask if you can kiss them. Your date lets out an uncomfortable giggle and shakes their head 'no' then goes back to watching the movie.

How would this make you feel?



It's important to also think about what it feels like to receive a refusal or a "no" from somebody. It can take a lot of courage to ask someone for consent, especially for a first kiss or if the relationship is fairly new. You may feel disappointed by their response, angry and feel as though they've led you on, embarrassed that you were refused, or offended that you were rejected. Your feelings are valid, but ultimately, it's important to remember that so are their feelings. Their decision to say "no" is valid and must be respected.

Ask. Listen. Respect.

Support and Resources

If you or someone you know is in an unhealthy relationship, you know it might not always be safe to say no, clearly express your boundaries or walk away. Here is a list of resources you can reach out to for help:

Yukon's Sexualized Assault Response Team: 1-844-967-7275

SART provides a safe and confidential network of services that focus on your needs and choices. If you've experienced a sexualized assault and choose to access services in Whitehorse, they can guide you through the process; or be an ally to talk to.

Kids Help Phone Line: 24/7 Crisis Line. Call 1-800-686-6868 or text 686868 to speak to someone

Yukon Canadian Mental Health Association: drop-in counselling by phone or video. Call (867)668-6429 to schedule an appointment

Residential Schools Resolution Health Support and Crisis Line: support for residential school survivors and their families. Call 1-866-925-4419 or for their Northern specific line call 1-866-509-1769

Youth Emergency Shelter: Safe place to sleep and support services for youth aged 17-23. Call (867)633-7699 after 4pm

Yukon Women's Transition Home Crisis Line: Call (867)668-5733

Support and Resources

Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services:

Offers rapid access counselling services with daily slots available. No previous connection with MWSU necessary. Phone to schedule an appointment.

Whitehorse: Call 867-456-3838

Watson Lake: Call 867-536-3222

Teslin: Call 867-332-4088

Dawson City, Mayo, and Old Crow: 867-993-4300

Carmacks, Pelly Crossing, Ross River and Faro: 867-332-5468

Haines Junction, Destruction Bay, Burwash Landing and Beaver Creek: 867-334-5688

Carcross: 867-332-3157

Phone toll-free in the communities: 1-866-456-3838

24/7 Youth Line - Youth Treatment workers available for talk and text at 867-689-1797