

CONSENT

A quick, positive guide for autistic teens and young adults to help understand consent, understanding and expressing your own boundaries, and how to better understand other's. It's supportive, practical, and designed to make everyday life feel a little easier.



The language and terminology used in this resource has been carefully co-produced with individuals with lived experience and are what we believe to be the most up to date terms at the time of production, based on our research and professional experience. This may not reflect everyone's experience but, we do not wish to cause any offence




'NO THANKS. I'M NOT INTERESTED'



'THANKS FOR CHECKING, I LIKE THIS'



'I WANT TO DO THIS WITH YOU'



Consent is an enthusiastic 'Yes', it's when someone gives permission for someone else to do something



'I DON'T WANT TO ADD YOU ON SOCIAL MEDIA'

Respecting consent means listening to someone's choices about what happens to them and their body. You deserve relationships that are accepting, respectful and kind.

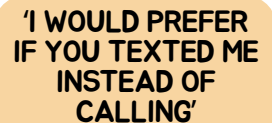


'I WASN'T PREPARED FOR THAT. PLEASE ASK ME FIRST NEXT TIME.'



'I DO NOT WANT TO DRINK THAT'

It is important that you respect the consent of others and know that you can express your own. Consent often comes up with regards to sex, but consent is simply respecting of someone's boundaries. It is important that people in your life are mindful of what you are comfortable with.



'I WOULD PREFER IF YOU TEXTED ME INSTEAD OF CALLING'



'CAN WE TALK ABOUT WHAT WE BOTH WANT?'

Your body belongs to you, and noone should do anything that makes you unhappy or uncomfortable



'I DON'T LIKE PEOPLE TOUCHING ME'



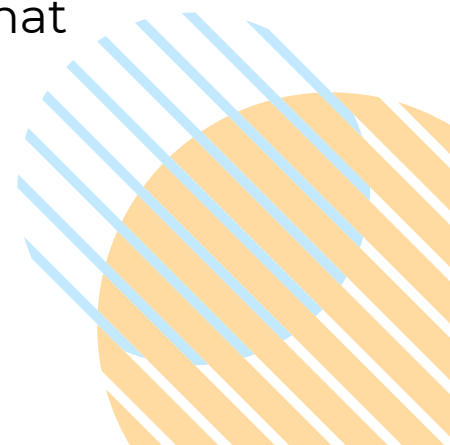
'YES YOU CAN BORROW MY PEN'



'I WOULD LIKE TO WALK HOME WITH YOU'



'YES. I WOULD LIKE THAT'



Consent happens in all types of relationships but asking for physical or sexual consent has extra considerations. When asking for consent, only a clear “yes” means “yes.” There are many ways that people can say “no” without using the word “no.”

'SURE'

NO!

'IF YOU WANT'

NO!

'MAYBE'

NO!

'I GUESS SO'

NO!

Giving consent for sexual or romantic activities should only be a part of certain relationships. People like your teachers, bosses, helpers or family should never ask you for sexual or romantic consent, and you shouldn't ask them. If they do, you should tell them no and then tell someone you trust that it happened.

Consent is ongoing, and everyone can change their mind if they want something or not. For example if someone says they would like to kiss one day and then they say they don't want to the next, it's important that you listen to the most recent statement. It is ok and necessary to check in with someone if they consent to what is happening.

Consent is also specific, if someone consents to one thing that does not mean they have agreed to another (i.e sexual intercourse).

To ask for someone's consent: be specific, be kind, and be ready for a no.

'IS IT OK IF I KISS YOU?'

'ARE YOU COMFORTABLE WITH ME TOUCHING YOU THERE?'

'IS THIS STILL SOMETHING YOU WANT TO HAPPEN?'

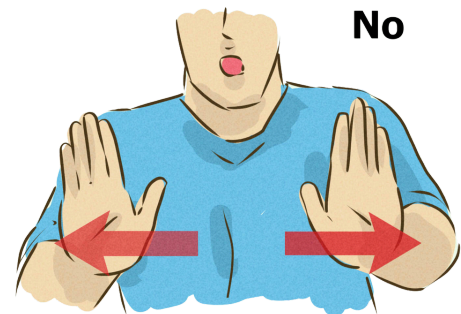
'CAN I SHARE THIS PHOTO WITH YOU?'

If someone says no to something, it is a specific no. If you ask warmly for consent, then you are letting the other person know you respect what they want. Just because you receive a no doesn't mean that the person automatically doesn't like you anymore, it is simply a no to the question

You can say no to something at any point, it is important that you want to do what is happening

You can simply say 'No', or walk away and leave. If you are comfortable with other things happening, you can also explain what they are.

No



'I WOULD PREFER IF WE DIDN'T DO THAT RIGHT NOW'

'I THOUGHT I WANTED TO DO THIS, BUT I HAVE CHANGED MY MIND, WE NEED TO STOP'

'I DON'T WANT TO DO THAT'

'THIS DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT TO ME'

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE DOES SOMETHING WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT?

Make sure you are safe

If you do not feel safe in a situation, remove yourself if you can (leave the room, close the app, walk away from the computer)

Tell someone you trust

It is important that you tell someone you trust about the situation. You do not have to keep any secrets that make you uncomfortable. Telling someone also means that they may be able to help.

Do something you enjoy

Taking time to look after yourself is important, but particularly after something that has upset you

CONSENT AND AUTISM

Consent needs direct, clear questions to get direct answers

If you or the person you are with is autistic, they may need more time to understand and respond to you. Give them this time so they can make the best decision for them. It also means that they may not be able to verbally answer at all. If this happens, make sure to give them their space. Reduce the senses in the environment, make sure they are able to regulate themselves to feel safe.

Sometimes autistic people's senses get overwhelmed by their environment (bright lights, loud noises, body temperature being too high). If a situation makes your senses uncomfortable, you do not have to continue. Your comfort is important.

'DO YOU WANT TO TRY THIS? OR NOT TODAY?'

'CAN WE TURN THE LIGHTS DOWN?'

'YES, BUT PLEASE DON'T TOUCH MY ARMS'

'CAN WE TAKE A BREAK? I'M GETTING OVERWHELMED BUT I LIKE WHAT IS HAPPENING'

'YES, BUT NO SURPRISES, PLEASE EXPLAIN FIRST.'

WHEN CAN'T SOMEONE CONSENT?

In the UK if someone is under 16 they legally cannot consent to sexual activity

Sometimes a person's ability to understand a situation or communicate what they want is reduced. This can be due to the environment, mental health conditions, drugs, or alcohol. If someone is in an altered mental state, they cannot give consent.

If you have sent someone a picture, that is for them only. If they share this without asking, this is without your consent. If this happens: save evidence (screenshots), report it, and if it is an intimate image, contact the police.

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE HELP

Resources for Autism run workshops all the time for autistic young people in Lewisham and Southwark. They cover topics like reasonable adjustments, CV-writing, consent, managing emotions, routine and many more. [Have a look here for more details.](#)

If you are aged 16-25 and live in Lewisham or Southwark, we can provide information and advice about your autism, mentoring, and social groups. [If you are interested, refer yourself here.](#)

For more about consent, Brook have a very good page which explains it simply [at this link.](#)

Phonelines

- Samaritans – 116 123 (24/7 support for anything on your mind)
- The Mix (for under 25s) – Text THEMIX to 85258 for support with relationships, wellbeing, and more
- Childline – 0800 1111 (for under 19s)
- SHOUT – Text 85258 for mental health crisis text support.
- Mindline – 01823 276892 for Emotional support and a safe place to talk